

**Defending the objectivity of ontology**  
December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2002

**1. Charity and “eligibility” in the theory of interpretation**

**2. The argument from analyticity**

T Any sentence that can be translated as an analytic truth is itself analytic.

H No sentence that logically entails ‘There is something’ is analytic.

C No sentence is analytic unless it can be transformed into a truth of standard logic by replacing predicates with their definitions (correct conceptual analyses).

Suggestion: C applies to the language of the metaphysics room, even though it doesn’t apply to all languages.

**3. Problems with the argument from analyticity**

Against T: example of aliens whose only word for water is a term of chemistry.

**4. “Metaphysical analysis”**

T Any sentence that can be translated as an analytic truth is itself *metaphysically* analytic.

C No sentence is metaphysically analytic unless it can be transformed into a truth of standard logic by replacing predicates with their *metaphysical* analyses.

**5. Empty predicates**

Translating ‘phlogiston’

C No sentence is metaphysically analytic unless it can be transformed into a truth of standard logic by replacing predicates with their *metaphysical* analyses, or replacing empty predicates (like ‘phlogiston’) with arbitrarily chosen logically contradictory predicates.

**6. Are Carnapians really Nihilists?**

Nihilists should count ‘is part of’ as an empty predicate.

Hence, “Nihilese”—the language the Carnapian initially wanted to interpret the Nihilists as speaking—does after all obey C , unlike the languages imputed to the other tribes.

Thus, if the right interpretation of the metaphysicians is as speaking a language that obeys C , they should be interpreted as speaking Nihilese. So, the metaphysicians who say ‘nothing is [a proper] part of anything’ are right, and the others are wrong!