Philosophische Semantik

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Vorlesung 3

Ontologie (I): Grundlagen und Terminologie

Erste Philosophie

- Traditionell galt die Ontologie/Metaphysik als die erste Philosophie

- Mit philosophischen Paradigmenwechseln wechselte auch diese Auszeichnung – auf die Bewusstseinsphilosophie, auf die Erkenntnistheorie und im 20. Jahrhundert auf die Sprachphilosophie

Ontologischer Rahmen

Jede Theorie bringt ein ontologisches Rahmenwerk und spezielle Existenzannahmen mit sich.

Die Ontologie einer Theorie führt die Kategorien von Entitäten ein, welche in der Theorie(sprache) verwendet werden.

Die Theorie selbst wird – sofern sie nicht von einer anderen Grundlagentheorie abhängt – selbst rechtfertigen müssen, welche Entitäten, Entitätensorten sie einführt.

Insofern müssen die zunächst einfach verwendeten Kategorien im Laufe der Theorieentwicklung und Erläuterung der Zusammenhänge gerechtfertigt und eingeholt werden.

<u>Zwei Sorten von Ontologie/Metaphysik</u>

1. Metaphysics in analytic philosophy traditionally (starting with Frege) could be seen as *deriving from semantics* or an account of the truth of statements/propositions.

   Frege, for example, posits concepts as entities in their own right and with their peculiar feature of being 'ungesättigt' (having a gap to be filled by some argument), because he needs this ontological assumption in his account of assertions/statements and their cohesiveness.

2. With the increasing interest in ontological questions in their own right metaphysics nowadays if often seen as *independent from semantics*, not to speak of epistemology.
   Metaphysics in this newer tradition advances as *axiomatic ontology*.
   "Axiomatic" is meant in theories of this type in a sense close to the sense of laying down axioms in logic or mathematics.
   Axioms may be useful (say in applying mathematics in science), but foremost are stipulations concerning either the concepts or the entities contained in them.
   As Carnap saw 'no morals' in logic, so that according to his *principle of tolerance* every system had a right to be developed, so the axiomatic ontologist may see no morals in ontology so that there are no restrictions on ontological postulates.

Abhängige Ontologie

Hier wird eher Ansatz (1) verfolgt. Das hängt auch mit der verfolgten
Variante eines internen Realismus zusammen. Trotzdem wird (im Abschnitt
„Ontologie (II)") die Frage aufgeworfen werden müssen, inwiefern
metaphysische Strukturen evtl. nicht zu sprachlichen Strukturen passen.

In diesem Sinne sind ontologische Annahmen zu rechtfertigen.

To decide between ontological proposals we need *criteria* to judge their
respective merits.
These criteria may take up the tenet for which the respective ontology was
developed (ob z.B. Ansatz (1) im Vordergrund steht).

Zwei Hinsichten ontologischer Einfachheit

With respect to ontological economy one may distinguish between *ideological economy* and *ontological economy proper*.

• Ontological economy proper concerns the number of introduced *types of entities*.

• Ideological economy concerns the number of undefined *basic concepts* of a theory.

Ein *trade-off*-Problem:

We can increase the ontological economy proper of a theory if we introduce undefined operators and relations instead of basic types of entities (say, if we do not define "necessary" and so forsake the introduction of possible worlds). And vice versa: We can define former undefined concepts by introducing new types of entities to occur in their definitions. This is even true of methodological concepts (say, if we substitute "being a relation" by ordered pairs or tuples). How can we decide then the degree of simplicity of an ontology?

Kriterien zur Ontologiewahl

„One constraint is the provision of fruitful conceptual analyses of concepts we
employ in our ordinary thought and discourse. ... Here, as in all philosophical
inquiry, we must adopt the method of reflective equilibrium, balancing the demands
of theory against the preservation of commonsensical beliefs. .. [O]ne cannot hope
to defend a metaphysical theory by constructing knock-down arguments against
each of its competitors. There are numerous ways to trade off ideological and
ontological economy and to balance these theoretical benefits against the
preservation of common-sense belief. One can only hope to draw up a cost and
benefit score sheet, it being a very real possibility that there will be ties for first
place."
(Oliver 1996, pp.4-5)

Systematicity (and thus a higher degree of ideological simplicity) yields more
explanatory power, since less fundamental principles (those containing the undefined
basic concepts) have to be used. Conceptual analysis provides a decrease in the number
of undefined concepts.

<u>Bedingung (O1):   Begriffsanalyse</u>

We explain a fact by conceptual analysis by being explicit about the concepts which are used to describe the fact.

So a high number of definitional links increases explanatory power. Therefore, one usually may prefer higher ideological economy over higher ontological economy proper, as regularly theories are chosen for their explanatory power.

Thus one will accept those (types of) entities which are introduced in building up the framework of such a theory.

These considerations lead to one criterion of a successful ontological theory:

(O1)   *Legitimation by Conceptual Analysis*

         Exactly those (types of) entities are to be assumed, which have to be introduced by the best conceptual analysis of the target domain of concepts.

<u>Bedingung (O2):</u>   *Linguistic Turn*, <u>keine reine Metaphysik</u>

(O2)   *Epistemological Constraint*

An ontology which introduces (types of) entities has to contain a theory how we know of these entities.

This constraint will not be endorsed by someone following a 'pure' axiomatic approach to ontology. Giving up (O2) on the other hand means giving up the approach to ontology which ties it to our conceptual system and our use of language (as any theory of these will have to contain a theory of how we refer or 'hook up to' entities of some kind). Not subjecting a conceptual analysis to the epistemological constraint seems to miss that the target of analysis are our concepts and linguistic abilities. Any analysis of our concepts should contain a part explaining how we can use these concepts or manifest our knowledge of their proper employment. If our possessing some concept is reduced to some type of entity then a comprehensive theory of our concept possession should contain how we can stand into contact with entities of this type.

Terminologie

Neben der Vorstellung eines ontologischen Grundgerüstes muss auch die Terminologie, sofern sie theoretisch relevante Unterscheidungen enthält, eingeführt werden.

Dies gilt umso mehr als sich in einem Gebiet oft eine uneinheitliche Terminologie ergeben hat.

<u>Satz, Aussage, Äußerung …</u>

A *sentence* (like "Germany is north of Africa" or "I see a rabbit") is used in a declarative *utterance* to make *a statement* in some situation, the full structure of which is something like 'I believe/claim that …'.
Such a (declarative) utterance is a physical event.
A declarative utterance is one kind of *speech act*, the main other kind being imperatives (in various sub-types, as there are sub-types of declaratives like assertions or belief-reports).
The 'I believe/want … that' *performative part* of the full structure of an utterance expresses its *illocutionary mode* (corresponding to some kind of speech act, respectively illocutionary act).
The sentence used in the speech act (being the part following the 'that') results from the *locutionary act*.

Sentences are either *simple* (using elementary general singular or general terms) or *complex* (being quantifications or built with connectives).

Situation, Kontext, Gehalt, Sachverhalte

The *situation* in which the sentence is uttered is a chunk of the (physical) universe. It often contains the speaker and the audience.

The *context* of an utterance may include relevant but not or no longer present background conditions (like social position, prior history …).

The *content* of the statement is determined by *the meaning* of the sentence used *as applied* to the situation of usage and the context. Indexical expressions (like "I", "that" but also temporal order) are *anchored* to parts of the situation.

The content of a statement can be given either by an *eternal sentence* (like "Germany is north of Africa" or "George Bush sees exactly one rabbit right in front of the left most window of the Oval Office on March, 26th, 2006") or by a *state of affairs*.

A *state of affairs* is an abstract *set theoretical entity* which represents what a statement claims by putting the referents of the expressions used into a tuple like <North-Of, Germany, Africa, 1>, where '1' stands for a *polarity* expressing that the relation is supposed to hold ('0' being the opposite).

<u>Wahrheit von Aussagen, Tatsachen, Infone</u>

A statement is *true* only if its content is an *obtaining state of affairs, a fact*.
A fact is a *structured part of the universe*.

Statements are thus taken as *truth-bearers* in virtue of their content.
A statement is true only if its content is a fact. A statement consists in claiming that some sentence is true, respectively that some state of affairs obtains.
One may judge or consider whether the illocutionary classification of an act (like 'I assert that') is appropriate, but evaluation in terms of truth concerns the content of a statement only.
A true statement *refers* primarily to the fact described with it. The fact is its *reference*, its truth-value is its *evaluation*.
Situations as used above are concrete, i.e. are facts themselves.
State of affairs might be called *abstract situations* or *infons*.
Infons, abstract situations and sets in general can occur in other infons and thus can be referred to as existents. An obtaining state of affairs containing these abstract entities is an *abstract fact*.

Parametrisierte Sachverhalte/Infone

If an abstract situation contains a *parameter* (the state of affairs equivalent to a variable in a sentence) we have a *situation type*.

A parameter may relate to some typical *role* in a speech act (like being the speaker, the audience, the ascribed property etc.).

Such roles are connected to the framework or a typical utterance (taking place at some time and place, made by a speaker using a sentence towards an audience, given some shared context…).

Inasmuch as sentences use indexical expressions of some type they have a sentence content that is a parametrical infon like <The-speaker-of-this, tired, 1>, which expresses of the speaker of that very sentence that he or she is tired.

Contents that refer back to the very utterance are *reflexive contents*.

According to anchoring the parameter, the content of the statement that results from using that sentence (content) in some situation of usage differs from the content of some statement made on another occasion. The content of these statements includes the referent of the parameter (as anchored).

Propositionale Einstellungen, *Direction of fit*

Whereas *beliefs* have a *direction of fit* that judge the content relative to the presence of the described situation other propositional attitudes, namely *pro-attitudes* (like wishing, commanding …) aim at having the world in a state that corresponds to their content.

Someone who honestly utters a statement believes that it is true.

A belief is the *disposition* to assent to some statement that shares with the belief its content.
An *occurring belief* is a mental event (an act) that takes some time.

Verwendungssituation, beschriebene Situation

A statement has a *situation of usage* and *a described situation*.

Even with true statements these need not be the same.

Feinkörnigkeit des Gehalts

Contents can be *fine-grained*: The content of some sentence involves the referents of its constituents (the referents *inter alia* of the singular and the general terms or the roles expressed by some of its constituents).
Some of the properties involved may be *co-extensional/co-referring* in a given situation/world or, without being co-extensional/co-referring in all worlds.
We distinguish the *narrow content* (intensional content) *of a sentence*, which it shares with all logically equivalent sentences, from the *broad content* (referential content/informational content), which it shares with all co-extensional sentences.
As some sentence is used the content relevant to assess the truth of the statement made is referential content (in relation to the situation described).
As we ask whether some sentences mean the same thing intensional content has to be taken into account. Statements properly translated – and derivatively so sentences – share their intensional content. Intensional content has to depict some way or *mode of presentation* of the informational content.
Infons concern the informational content *only* (as their constituents – although put on paper by some expressions – are the very objects referred to).

<u>Argumente</u>

An *argument* relates one, zero or more premises to a conclusion.

In a formal presentation of an argument the relata of the argument are formulas of the language used, standing for eternal sentences or statements being logically connected in virtue of their content or evaluation.
Since in most arguments one reasons within the scope of one illocutionary modus (i.e. does not – as in some versions of practical syllogisms – combine imperatives and statements) the formulas representing premises and conclusions are usually just the sentences used disregarding a representation of the illocutionary part.

Arguments can also be represented by relating state of affairs because of connections in their content (partly represented by abstract situations).

<u>Gegenstände, Ereignisse und Eigenschaften, Relationen</u>

In referring to some fact *singular terms* pick out some region, *a thing*, and general terms ascribe some structure to this region, its *properties*.
More than 1-ary general terms express/refer to *relations*.

A *predication* is an application of a general term to one or more singular terms, according to the arity of the general term.

Again things and properties are parts of the universe, in as much as several things share a structure they share having that property.

The nominalizations of general terms, which are used in infons, refer to this common structure. A general term as used in an individual statement may be said to refer to *the specific property instance* in the region referred to by the used singular term (a *trope*).
As a situation may also be a temporal part of the universe we have *events as a sequence of facts*. Events may also be referred to by singular terms. Facts, things, properties or events may be the objects of some content.

Mentale Inhalte

The occurring belief content in a conscious belief is given from *the subjective perspective* as a *noema*. The object of the act is the *intended object*, the noema is *how it is intentionally given*. Sentences (as in *inner speech*) and all kind of noema are inner *representations*. Representations need not be *linguistic*, but may be *pictorial*. Representations need not be conscious. Noema are always conscious and intentional. There are *mental events* that are not (conscious) acts. These mental events proceed at some level of *information processing*. Typically it is supposed that the noema of several acts can be united as perspectives on one and the same object. Every act (*noesis*) has a content, a noema, an *awareness of the occurrence of the act*, a *mood* (like seeing, considering …) and some (implicit) awareness of *the agent of the act*. Some acts (especially those of perception) present the noema as an image-like representation: *a percept*. The percept is to be distinguished from the act of perception. The percept is a *qualia-complex*, where a *quale* corresponds to some of our sensual faculties' ways to present *situational input* in our acts. Qualia are *abstract moments* of a noema that is tied to some content. The totality of inter-modally synchronised percepts is the *perceptual scene*.