

AN APOLOGY OF CARNAP*

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Abstract: This paper is focused on dismissive metaontological views about ontology. The paper's first section deals with radical dismissivism: a view which I interpret as Carnap's (1956). The second section approaches moderate dismissivism: a view which I interpret as Hirsch's (2011). My first claim is stated in section three: that there are significant differences between the mentioned authors. However, current literature on metaontology, not only does not emphasize such differences, but also insinuates that they do not exist. The authors I have in mind here are Eklund (2007, 2009) and Bennett (2009). In the fourth section, I compare Carnap's radical dismissivism with Hirsch's moderate dismissivism. My second claim is stated in section five: that Carnap's radical dismissivism is more persuasive than Hirsch's moderate one.

Keywords: Ontology; metaontology; dismissivism; Carnap; Hirsch.

INTRODUCTION

I start by assuming that ontology stands for the study of what there is and metaontology stands for the study of what ontology is¹.

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¹ I am following Quine (1948) in defining ontology like this.

One way to illustrate the difference between these two disciplines is by relying on the following toy example which I will call *OntoMeta Bar*. Imagine a bar in which there are two tables: the O-table and the MO-table. In O-table, two speakers dialogue: namely, O₁-speaker and O₂-speaker. O₁-speaker states that ‘there is a _____’. O₂-speaker disagrees with O₁-speaker by stating that ‘there is *not* a _____’. O₁-speaker and O₂-speaker are respectively a realist and an anti-realist regarding _____. The dialogue between O₁-speaker and O₂-speaker can be called an ontological dispute. In MO-table, two other speakers, say, MO₁-speaker and MO₂-speaker, engage in another dialogue while listening to the dialogue between O₁-speaker and O₂-speaker. MO₁-speaker claims that the ontological dispute between O₁-speaker and O₂-speaker is substantive. MO₂-speaker disagrees in pointing out that the dispute between O₁-speaker and O₂-speaker is either trivial or lacks cognitive content². MO₁-speaker and MO₂-speaker respectively have a robust view and a dismissive view about the ontological dispute between O₁-speaker and O₂-speaker³. The dialogue between MO₁-speaker and MO₂-speaker can be called a metaontological dispute.

This paper is focused on dismissive metaontological views about ontology. I would like to consider two views that MO₂-speaker might have adopted to justify a dismissive position. The first view I call radical dismissivism. The second view I call moderate dismissivism. I interpret Carnap (1956) to have assumed the former and Hirsch (2011)

² Hirsch calls trivial disputes “verbal” (Hirsch, 2011, p.146). As I explain in subsection A of section 4, I take this terminology to be misleading. Thus, I will not rely on it.

³ I use the term “dismissive” (instead of “deflationary” or “skeptical” which are also found in the literature) after Bennett (2009: 39). She, Eklund (2007), Chalmers (2009) and Thomason (2009) have also recently developed dismissive views, but I cannot discuss their positions here.

to have endorsed the latter⁴. I argue that radical dismissivism is different and more persuasive than moderate dismissivism.

1. RADICAL DISMISSIVISM

Radical dismissivism is radical because it claims that *all* ontological disputes are either trivial or lack cognitive content. The radical dismitter is the one who speaks like this. It does *not* matter how one expands the *OntoMeta Bar* by completing the blank spaces of the statements of O₁-speaker ('there is a _____') and of O₂-speaker ('there is *not* a _____'). This is to say that the fulfillment of '_____' with any entity whatsoever does not force one to approach each ontological dispute separately. The radical dismitter achieves such a conclusion by taking two steps. The first step is to embrace the following three theses.

Thesis 1. Ordinary languages (e.g. English) are 'messy.' Their syntactic and semantic rules are not always clear so that it is not always easy to determine which sentences are true and false within ordinary languages. In fact, part of our everyday talk may be meaningless.

Thesis 2. We are free to think beyond our ordinary languages and everyday conversation by adopting artificially created particular linguistic frameworks that have sense. A linguistic framework is a linguistic system subjected to its own logical rules. It is used by a

⁴ By 'Carnap', I will understand the view he defended in the 1956 version of his paper "Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology" published in *Meaning and Necessity: A Study of Semantics and Modal Logic*. The first version of this paper was published in 1950 in the *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 4. There are minor differences between the two versions. I cannot deal with this issue here. Haack (1976) does so. By 'Hirsch', I will have in mind his 2011 collection of essays, *Quantifier Variance and Realism*.

specific community for specific purposes. It endorses a restricted set of sentences by assuming the existence of entities that are useful for the community at stake. It ignores other sets of sentences by not assuming the existence of other entities that are useless for the community at stake. There is a plurality of linguistic frameworks.

Thesis 3. Two types of ontological dispute can be distinguished. An *internal ontological dispute* takes place when two speakers have different answers to an internal question. Internal questions regard what entities are taken to exist by a particular linguistic framework. What is there according to this particular linguistic framework? This is the basic form of an internal question. An *external ontological dispute* takes place when two speakers have different answers to an external question. External questions regard what entities exist prior to the acceptance of any particular linguistic framework. What is there over and above any particular linguistic framework? This is the basic form of an external question.

The radical dismitter's second step is to deal with the *OntoMeta Bar* by means of the following argument.

P.1. One way to make sense of the conversation between O₁-speaker and O₂-speaker is by assuming that they are using linguistic frameworks.

So, let us assume that O₁-speaker and O₂-speaker have respectively adopted a Yes-Framework and a No-framework. The Yes-framework assumes for a priori or empirical reasons that there is _____. The No-framework assumes for a priori or empirical reasons that there is *not* _____.

P.2. O_1 -speaker and O_2 -speaker can be having either an internal ontological dispute or an external ontological dispute over_____.

P.3. If O_1 -speaker and O_2 -speaker are having an internal ontological dispute over_____, their dispute has a trivial solution.

Let me underline that it is obviously true that ‘there is_____’ and obviously false that ‘there is not_____’ within the Yes-framework. Another way to put it is by saying that the Yes-framework is trivially realist regarding_____. It is also obviously false that ‘there is_____’ and obviously true that ‘there is *not*_____’ within the No-framework. In other words, the No-framework is trivially anti-realist regarding_____. Given an ontological dispute over_____, all frameworks can be identified either with the Yes-framework or with the No-framework.

P.4. If O_1 -speaker and O_2 -speaker are having an external ontological dispute over_____, their dispute lacks cognitive content.

Now call *Logos* a way of thinking capable of formulating sentences over and above any ordinary language or linguistic framework. If there were a Logos, it would not be artificially created by a certain community of a certain culture at a certain historical time. Rather, it would be something that all beings naturally have. It seems that we have no reason to assume that there is a Logos. Human beings can only think by relying on their messy ordinary languages or by adopting artificially created particular frameworks. The former sometimes give rise to non-sense. The latter can only raise and answer internal ontological questions. In this sense, the traditional debate over

realism and anti-realism can be approached as follows. Realism as well as anti-realism share a common premise: that there is a Logos according to which certain sentences are true and other sentences are false. Consider the following sentence:

R: There is a reality independent of the human mind and language that can be objectively understood by the human mind and described by the human language.

R is a true sentence according to Logos in the realist view. On the other hand, $\sim R$ is a true sentence according to Logos in the anti-realist view. However, it is impossible to think from the perspective of Logos: all human thinking relies on a messy ordinary language or presupposes a linguistic framework. Hence, the traditional debate realism / anti-realism has to be dismissed due to it lacks cognitive content⁵. It follows that

C.1. The ontological dispute between O_1 -speaker and O_2 -speaker over _____ is either trivial or lacks cognitive content.

C.2. What O_1 -speaker and O_2 -speaker have is the practical problem of choosing which particular linguistic framework best serves their divergent or convergent purposes.

⁵ Carnap (2003, 281-287; and 1995, 256) points to this line of reasoning.

2. MODERATE DISMISSIVISM

Moderate dismissivism is moderate because it claims that only *some*, but *not all* ontological disputes are trivial. The moderate dismitter is the one who speaks like this. It *does* matter how one expands the *OntoMeta Bar* by completing the statements of O₁-speaker ('there is a _____') and O₂-speaker ('there is *not* a _____'). This is to say that the fulfillment of '_____' with a specific entity does force one to approach each ontological dispute separately. Here is how the moderate dismitter achieves this conclusion.

First, the moderate dismitter revises radical dismissivism's *thesis 1* by claiming the following. It is true that ordinary languages (e.g. English) are 'messy'. Yet, it is also true that they rely on what may be called the framework of common sense ontology⁶. Within this framework, some sentences are obviously true, while others are obviously false. Here are two examples. The sentence 'there are ordinary objects such as cars, trees and chairs' is obviously true within the framework of common sense ontology. The sentence 'there are extraordinary objects such as the sum of Bill Clinton's nose and the Eiffel tower' is obviously false within the framework of common sense ontology⁷.

⁶ Hirsch does not use the expression 'linguistic framework', which is part of the Carnapian terminology. He prefers to use simply the word 'language'. However, I fail to see the significant difference between Carnap's linguistic frameworks and Hirsch's languages. For the sake of terminological consistency, then, I will use the term 'linguistic framework' in the sense defined in the first section throughout the paper.

⁷ This example is given by Hirsch (2011, p.69).

Second, the moderate dismisser attaches the following line of reasoning to radical dismissivism's *thesis 2*. Consider, again, a Yes-framework and a No-framework. Let us assume that the Yes-framework is one that has the first-order logic's linguistic apparatus of constants for individual (such as a, b, c , etc.), predicates (such as P, F, G , etc.), variables (e.g., x, y, z , etc.), connectives ($\sim, \wedge, \leftrightarrow$, etc.) and quantifiers (\forall, \exists). Moreover, let us assume that the quantifiers of Yes-framework range over a certain domain that includes _____ by assuming a constant (say, a) that refers to _____. The Yes-framework, then, allows one to articulate formulas regarding _____ such as Pa or Fa . Let us also assume that the No-framework is one that relies on the first-order logic's linguistic apparatus of constants, predicates, variables and quantifiers. However, the quantifiers of the No-framework do *not* range over a certain domain that includes _____. The No-framework's constant (say) b refers to something else, say _ _ _ _ . The No-framework, then, allows one to articulate formulas regarding _ _ _ _ such as Pb or Fb . It follows that quantification works one way within the Yes-framework and another way within the No-framework. This is to say that the Yes-framework and the No-framework have different existential resources by means of which 'to exist', 'existence', 'there is', etc., gain different meanings. Yet, these frameworks are equally good in depicting the world. This thesis can be called *quantifier variance*.

Third, the moderate dismisser does not rely on radical dismissivism's *thesis 3* for reasons which I will spell out in part A of section four.

Forth, the moderate dismisser deals with the *OntoMeta Bar* by developing a different argument. The argument starts by presenting the following four principles of interpretation. Principle of Charity: O_1 -speaker ought to interpret an assertion by O_2 -speaker in a way that makes most of O_2 -speaker's other assertions come out true within the

framework adopted by O₂-speaker (and vice versa). Charity to Perception: O₁-speaker ought to interpret O₂-speaker's assertions as making an accurate perceptual report (and vice versa). Charity to Understanding: O₁-speaker ought not to interpret O₂-speaker's assertions as a priori conceptually false (and vice versa). Charity to Retraction: O₁-speaker ought to assume that O₂-speaker will retract if further evidence forces O₂-speaker to do so (and vice versa)⁸. The argument, then, proceeds like this.

P.1. An interpretation is plausible iff it assumes the above four principles of interpretation.

P.2. An ontological dispute is trivial iff the disputants can plausibly interpret one another's sentences as true within their respective frameworks.

Otherwise, P.3. The ontological dispute is substantive.

In this sense, consider two examples⁹.

First, a standard example of a trivial ontological dispute. Imagine that O₁-speaker and O₂-speaker are pointing to _____ and complete their divergent ontological sentences as follows. "Look, there is a glass which is a kind of cup over there", says O₁-speaker. "I do not see it, there is *not* a glass which is a kind of cup over there", responds O₂-speaker. Let us assume that O₂-speaker follows the principles of charity, perception and understanding —the principle of retraction would not be needed here. If this were the case, O₂-speaker would not think that O₁-speaker is making an absurd, up-front perceptually

⁸ See Hirsch (2011, p.154-161).

⁹ Both examples are given by Hirsch (2011, p.149 and p.151).

inaccurate or an a priori conceptually false assertion. Sooner or later, O₂-speaker would realize the following: “I am using the words ‘cup’ and / or ‘glass’ in senses distinct from the ones used by O₁-speaker”. This indicates that O₂-speaker and O₁-speaker have adopted distinct linguistic framework which quantify differently. Thus, O₂-speaker would conclude that, in O₁-speaker’s framework, the sentence ‘there is a glass which is a kind of cup’ comes out as true, helps O₁-speaker to perceive the word accurately and is not a priori conceptually false. Regarding this last point, note that a sentence such as ‘for every x such that x is a glass, x is a kind of cup’ would be a priori true, not false within O₁-speaker’s framework. If O₁-speaker applies the same principles of interpretation when dealing with O₂-speaker’s assertions, O₁-speaker would also conclude that O₂-speaker is telling the truth, accurately perceiving the world and not making a priori conceptually false assertions within O₂-speaker’s framework —a framework in which the sentence for ‘every x such that x is a glass, x is a kind of cup’ is indeed a priori false. Thus, O₁-speaker and O₂-speaker would realize that their ontological dispute is trivial.

Second, a standard example of a substantial ontological dispute. Imagine that O₁-speaker and O₂-speaker are pointing to_____ and complete their divergent ontological sentences as follows. “Look, there is a ball that, when thrown into the air at a certain speed, hits the ground at a much greater speed over there”, says O₁-speaker. “I do not see it, there is *not* a ball that, when thrown into the air at a certain speed, hits the ground at a much greater speed over there”, responds O₂-speaker. Note that basic physics tells us that, when a ball is thrown into the air at a certain speed, it hits the ground roughly at the same speed. It follows that O₁-speaker is simply “ignorant of basic physics” (Hirsch, 2011, p. 151). Furthermore, if O₂-speaker tried to interpret O₁-speaker as asserting a “true sentence in a different language”, O₂-speaker would be “quickly faced with cascading complications”

(Hirsch, 2011, p. 151). This means that O₂-speaker would *not* be able to make O₁-speaker's sentence come out as true within O₁-speaker's framework, even if O₂-speaker followed the principles of charity, perception and understanding. In this case, then, O₁-speaker's and O₂-speaker's ontological dispute would be substantial. However, O₂-speaker might solve the dispute by applying the principle of retraction. In this sense, O₂-speaker would not assume that O₁-speaker has a "perversely irrational confidence in his untutored physical intuitions" (Hirsch, 2011, p. 151). Rather, O₂-speaker would conclude that, given further empirical evidence provided by physics, O₁-speaker would simply retract.

P.4. If an ontological dispute is trivial, it can be solved by appealing to the framework of common sense ontology.

In this sense, think again about the standard example of a trivial ontological dispute. Note that in this case the *only* problem that is at stake, according to the moderate dismitter, is which one of the two speakers is telling the truth within the framework of common sense ontology. It is obvious that O₁-speaker is wrong within the framework of common sense ontology. It is obvious that O₂-speaker is right within the framework of common sense ontology. For the sake of common sense, hence, one ought to speak like O₂-speaker. It follows that

C.1. The ontological dispute between O₁-speaker and O₂-speaker over _____ is trivial iff they can both plausibly interpret one another's sentences as true within their respective framework.

Otherwise, C.2. Their ontological dispute is substantial.

Moreover, C.3. If the ontological dispute between O_1 -speaker and O_2 -speaker is trivial, it can be solved by appealing to the framework of common sense ontology.

3. 1st CLAIM: CARNAP \neq HIRSCH

My first claim is that Carnap is a radical dismitter, while Hirsch is a moderate dismitter. This is to say that their views are significantly different, even though the current literature on metaontology does not emphasize this difference and even seems to indicate otherwise. The authors I have in mind here are Eklund (2007, 2009) and Bennett (2009).

4. RADICAL DISMISSIVISM VS. MODERATE DISMISSIVISM

In what follows, I would like to compare Carnap's radical dismissivism and Hirsch's moderate dismissivism.

A. The Moderate Dismitter on Radical Dismissivism

My view is that the moderate dismitter *cannot* make a case against radical dismissivism. Let me back up my position by dealing with Hirsch's reservations toward Carnap on two matters.

1. *Realism / Anti-Realism*. Hirsch states that Carnap "seems to suggest an anti-realist or verificationist perspective" (Hirsch, 2011, p. 220) which he opposes to his "robustly realist" stand. In Hirsch's (2011, p.39-41) view, anti-realism seems to entail "linguistic idealism": the thesis that language create reality so that, if one utters the sentence 'there is an alien surfing on an extraterrestrial ocean', there will be an alien surfing on an extraterrestrial ocean. If Hirsch's reading of Carnap

follows, the moderate dismitter might object that the radical dismitter's view leads to an absurd position. Yet, this objection does not seem to hold. First, the radical dismitter is neither a realist nor an anti-realist. Rather, he rejects the debate realism / anti-realism as I have already stated in the paper's first section. Moreover, even if I am wrong in reading Carnap as a radical dismitter, I simply fail to see in which passages he would even be suggesting something like linguistic idealism. Second, the radical dismitter does not have to be committed to verificationism. In fact, this notion does not even have to be mentioned when formulating radical dismissivism¹⁰.

2. *Ontological Disputes as Verbal Disputes.* Hirsch thinks that for Carnap “*all* issues of ontology are *verbal*” (Hirsch, 2011, p. 221, my emphasis). This is not the case according to Hirsch who thinks that only *some* ontological matters are *verbal*¹¹. His point is that Carnap

Says that ontological questions are ‘external’, but this seems merely to give a name to the problem. It’s evident that he [Carnap] considers some a priori (or non-empirical) issues to be external and some not, but it seems unclear how he explains which are and which aren’t. If the explanation is verificationist, appealing to the idea that ontological issues are hard or impossible to resolve, I reject the explanation (Hirsch, 2011, p. 221).

In this sense, consider that the moderate dismitter might formulate the following second objection to the radical dismitter's view. P.2., P.3. and P.4. of the radical dismitter's argument regarding

¹⁰ Hirsch does not define ‘verificationism’, but I am assuming that verificationism is the view that a question is meaningful iff its veracity or falsity can be verified by means of an empirical experiment.

¹¹ For example, Hirsch (2011, p.162) argues that the dispute of Platonists and Nominalists over abstract objects (like numbers) is substantial, whereas the dispute of contemporary analytic metaphysicians over the ontology of physical objects is trivial.

the *OntoMeta Bar* depend on the distinction between internal and external questions. Nevertheless, it is unclear what makes a question be external. Thus, one ought not to adopt the distinction between internal / external question. Without this distinction, P.2., P.3. and P.4. cannot be formulated. Without P.2., P.3. and P.4., the radical dismitter's argument regarding the *OntoMeta Bar* falls apart. I claim that this objection also does not hold. Let me start to justify my view by pointing out that 'verbal' means 'trivial' for Hirsch (2011, p.146). Carnap does not use this terminology. Most importantly, this terminology is somewhat misleading. For it indicates that a non-trivial ontological dispute would be non-verbal which is absurd, since all ontological disputes take place in language and are inevitably verbal in this sense. Carnap's point is rather that internal ontological (inevitably verbal) disputes are trivial, while external ontological (also inevitably verbal) disputes lack cognitive content. Verificationism is also not necessary to formulate the notion of external question. This question can be explained as above: that is, as a question concerning what entities exist prior to the acceptance of any particular linguistic framework. Carnap himself points to this position when claiming that philosophers "purport to assert the existence of entities [...] not merely within a given a language, but, so to speak, before a language has been constructed" (Carnap, 1966, p. 870). This is to claim that external questions lack cognitive content. The one who formulates them mistakenly assumes that it is possible to think beyond any ordinary language or particular linguistic framework by unjustifiably presupposing that there is a Logos. Thus, I fail to understand why Hirsch holds that the distinction between internal and external question is unclear. In other words, I do not accept the moderate dismitter's second objection.

B. The Radical Dismissal on Moderate Dismissivism

On the other hand, I claim that the radical dismisser does have a case against moderate dismissivism. My point is that the radical dismisser can argue that Hirsch's defense of the framework of common sense ontology leads to two paradoxes.

The first paradox is that the framework of common sense ontology seems to be *artificially created* and yet *more natural* than other frameworks in Hirsch's view.

Let me focus on the following expression used by Hirsch: "*common sense sanity*" (Hirsch, 2011, p. 37, p.41, my emphasis). If the framework of common sense ontology is merely an artificially created framework that has spread itself in the culture, Hirsch's expression does not need to be taken very seriously. Moreover, it would follow that (i) we are free to speak any artificially created framework that we wish; (ii) we have the practical problem of choosing which framework best fits the purpose at stake; and (iii) there is a plurality of "sanities" each one of them bounded to a specific framework. In other words, there is a common sense sanity, but also a sanity of nihilism and a sanity of mereological essentialism¹². I fail to find passages in which Hirsch endorses (ii) and (iii). Yet, it is hardly deniable that he is committed to (i). For instance, consider the following passage by Hirsch: "of course they [the ones who do not use the framework of common sense ontology] are entitled to introduce a technical language if they wish" (Hirsch, 2011, p. 100).

¹² Nihilism and essentialism are the theses that "there are no composite objects" and that "an object cannot persist with any of its parts replaced", respectively (Hirsch, 2011, p.145).

On the other hand, if the framework of common sense ontology is *more natural* than other frameworks, Hirsch's expression ought to be taken very seriously. In this sense, it is important to emphasize the following. Hirsch calls what I have been calling 'framework of common sense ontology', simply 'plain English'. This terminology is problematic because it seems more plausible to believe that there are many "Englishs" (sic) within English. None of which are entitled to be called English as such. For instance, there is the English spoken by Brazilian Umbandist immigrants in the USA whose quantifiers range over entities (such as "Iansã") that would not be a part of Hirsch's common sense ontology at all. Furthermore, note that Hirsch rejects the philosophical speeches of the ones who are not speaking "plain English" and yet "pretend that are expressing in plain English a substantive and controversial philosophical discovery" (Hirsch, 2011, p. 100). The matter is that, by making this type of claim, Hirsch seems to insinuate that the ones who speak a framework different from the framework of common sense ontology deformedly leave our natural linguistic home (English) and lose our "common sense sanity". Note that, in this sense, the framework of common sense ontology would have strong family resemblances with Logos. For this (so to speak) *Doxa* would also have to be understood as a way of thinking capable of formulating sentences over and above any particular ordinary language and particular linguistic framework: one which all beings are naturally bounded to. Hirsch is not explicitly committed to this stand, but his line of reasoning seems to lead to this direction. Therefore, the radical dismitter has reasons to speak as follows. It is quite hard (if not impossible) to decide if Hirsch takes English as the artificially created framework of common sense ontology that has spread itself in culture or as a *Doxa* naturally shared by all beings. I call this last claim *RD Main Claim*.

The second paradox is that Hirsch's realism seems to be *weak* and yet *robust*. Consider again the following sentence.

R: There is a reality independent of the human mind and language that can be objectively understood by the human mind and described by the human language.

I call weak realism after the view which states that *R* is true within the artificially created linguistic framework of common sense ontology, but might be false within other artificially created linguistic frameworks. Moreover, *R* might one day turn out to be false even within the framework of common sense ontology if cultural changes force our common sense views to vary. I call robust realism after the view which argues that *R* is true within a supposedly natural *Doxa*. This is to say that *R* holds true over and above any spoken language and such a fact is a-historical. If the radical dismitter is right in assuming *RD Main Claim*, he can also endorse the following. It is quite hard (if not impossible) to decide if Hirsch's (in his own words) "robustly realist" (Hirsch, 2011, p.220) view is weak or robust in the senses used above.

I take that the moderate dismitter could still respond to the radical dismitter by claiming that it is useful to rely on the above two paradoxes. This response, however, would not be backed up by Hirsch. As he does not seem to be aware of the above paradoxes, he cannot help the one who attempts to justify that they are useful. Furthermore, I fail to see exactly how the moderate dismitter might proceed in such a way.

5. 2nd CLAIM: CARNAP OVER HIRSCH

My second claim, then, is that Carnap's radical dismissivism is more persuasive than Hirsch's moderate dismissivism. In other words, I take that MO₂-speaker would have a stronger case by accepting radical dismissivism as opposed to moderate dismissivism. Let me emphasize that I am not making the stronger claims that radical dismissivism is the best dismissive view or that it can respond to all of the objections that MO₁-speaker might raise. In order to back up these claims, I would have to approach other dismissive views that MO₂-speaker might have adopted and robust views that MO₁-speaker might have taken to resist any dismissive conclusion¹³. This would lead us far beyond this essay's scope.

CONCLUSION

The paper's line of reasoning allows me to conclude that Carnap's radical dismissivism is *different* and *more persuasive* than Hirsch's moderate dismissivism. I would like to end the paper by emphasizing six points. The first is that it might be claimed that Carnap was committed to *thesis 4*: ontology is a pseudo-discipline exclusively concerned with useless external ontological disputes and questions. The second point is that it might also be argued that Carnap endorsed *thesis 5*: a framework is useful iff it is adopted by a special field of investigation which will verify the veracity and the falsity of sentences by means of empirical experiments —assuming that x is a special field of investigation iff x is a so called hard science like physics and chemistry or a so called soft sciences such as psychology and

¹³ For dismissive views, see Eklund (2007, 2009), Bennett (2009), Chalmers (2009) and Thomasson (2009). For robust ones, see Lewis (1984) and Sider (2011).

economics. The third point is that I am not committed to these two last stated theses. The fourth point is that these theses do not necessarily follow from the radical dismitter's line of reasoning presented above. My fifth point, then, is that instead of eliminating ontology by assuming *thesis 4*, the radical dismitter could redefine ontology's role by endorsing the following *radical view 1*: ontology ought to be concerned with the creation of linguistic frameworks. My sixth and last point is that rather than adopting *thesis 5* in claiming that only the sciences are capable of formulating useful frameworks, the radical dismitter can endorse the following *radical view 2*: a framework is always useful even if it is adopted only by a single person to speak whatever pleases him or her. Arguably, Carnap himself can be read as already pointing to these radical views¹⁴. Unfortunately, I do not have the space to discuss this exegetical matter in detail or to make a case for the radical views here. I aim to do so in a future research. For now, I hope that I have given enough reason to justify an apology of Carnap —at least if his only “accuser” is a moderate dismitter in the way I interpret Hirsch to be.

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¹⁴ See especially (Carnap, 1963, 868-889).

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