

20th Century Analytic Philosophy
Spring, 2019
P. Bricker

Second Paper Assignment

The second paper assignment is due Friday, March 1 at 5:00 in my e-mail inbox: bricker@philos.umass.edu. Same rules as the first paper. It should be around 800 words (2-3 double spaced pages), but anything between 600 and 1000 words is fine. You should choose some specific issue or argument from one of the articles we have read and try to clearly say in your own words what that issue or argument is. Then try to say something of your own about the issue or argument. It could be something critical, or it could be just asking a question raised by the issue or argument. You can write on any article we have done up to now *except* for the article you wrote your first paper on.

Here are some “prompts” to add to the list I put out for the first paper assignment. They are meant to suggest topics you might write on. You do not need to gear the paper to specifically answering the questions asked.

1. According to Kripke, identity statements involving proper names are necessary and a posteriori. Explain what he means by this, and why he thinks it is true. How does his view about identity statements differ from Frege?
2. What does Putnam mean by “meanings aren’t in the head”? Explain how Putnam uses the “twin earth” thought experiment to argue that meanings aren’t in the head. How is the “division of linguistic labor” relevant?
3. What is Ayer’s criterion of verifiability? Give some examples of your own of statements that are, and are not, cognitively (or factually) meaningful according to the criterion. A familiar critique of Ayer’s criterion is that is that, when it is applied to itself, it seems not be either factual or analytic, and so should be eliminated along with other metaphysics. How might Ayer respond?
4. Carnap, following Frege, does semantics in a way that refers to, and quantifies over, abstract entities, such as propositions and properties. Explain how Carnap thinks this can be justified while maintaining his logical positivism which takes all claims about whether abstract entities “really exist” to be meaningless.
5. One aspect of Quine’s claim that there is no distinction between analytic and synthetic statements comes in the final section 6 when he says “any statement can be held true come what may” and “no statement is immune from revision”. Try to explain why Quine believes these things, and how they relate to the analytic/synthetic distinction.