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Testability and Meaning*

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I. Introduction

1. Our Problem: Confirmation, Testing and Meaning

Two CHIEF PROBLEMS of the theory of knowledge are the question of meaning and the question of verification. The first question asks under what conditions a sentence has meaning, in the sense of cognitive, factual meaning. The second one asks how we get to know something, how we can find out whether a given sentence is true or false. The second question presupposes the first one. Obviously we must understand a sentence, i.e. we must know its meaning, before we can try to find out whether it is true or not. But, from the point of view of empiricism, there is a still closer connection between the two problems. In a certain sense, there is only one answer to the two questions. If we knew what it would be for a given sentence to be found true then we would know what its meaning is. And if for two sentences the conditions under which we would have to take them as true are the same, then they have the same meaning. Thus the meaning of a sentence is in a certain sense identical with the way we determine its truth or falsehood; and a sentence has meaning only if such a determination is possible.

If by verification is meant a definitive and final establishment of truth, then no (synthetic) sentence is ever verifiable, as we shall see. We can only confirm a sentence more and more. Therefore we shall speak of the problem of *confirmation* rather than of the problem of verification. We distinguish the *testing* of a sentence from its confirmation, thereby understanding a procedure—e.g. the carrying out of certain experiments—which leads to a confirmation in some degree either of the sentence itself or of its negation. We shall call a sentence *testable* if we know such a method of testing for it; and we call it *confirmable* if we know under what conditions the sentence would be confirmed. As we shall see, a sentence may be confirmable without being testable; e.g. if we know that our observation of such and such a course of events would confirm the sentence, and such and such a different course would confirm its negation without knowing how to set up either this or that observation.

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In what follows, the problems of confirmation, testing and meaning will be dealt with. After some preliminary discussions in this Introduction, a logical analysis of the chief concepts connected with confirmation and testing will be carried out in Chapter I, leading to the concept of reducibility. Chapter II contains an empirical analysis of confirmation and testing, leading to a definition of the terms 'confirmable' and 'testable' mentioned before. The difficulties in discussions of epistemological and methodological problems are, it seems, often due to a mixing up of logical and empirical questions; therefore it seems desirable to separate the two analyses as clearly as possible. Chapter III uses the concepts defined in the preceding chapters for the construction of an empiricist language, or rather a series of languages. Further, an attempt will be made to formulate the principle of empiricism in a more exact way, by stating a requirement of confirmability or testability as a criterion of meaning. Different requirements are discussed, corresponding to different restrictions of the language; the choice between them is a matter of practical decision.

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2. *Confirmation instead of Verification*

If verification is understood as a complete and definitive establishment of truth then a universal sentence, e.g. a so-called law of physics or biology, can never be verified, a fact which has often been remarked. Even if each single instance of the law were supposed to be verifiable, the number of instances to which the law refers—e.g. the space-time-points—is infinite and therefore can never be exhausted by our observations which are always finite in number. We cannot verify the law, but we can test it by testing its single instances i.e. the particular sentences which we derive from the law and from other sentences established previously. If in the continued series of such testing experiments no negative instance is found but the number of positive instances increases then our confidence in the law will grow step by step. Thus, instead of verification, we may speak here of gradually increasing *confirmation* of the law.

Now a little reflection will lead us to the result that there is no fundamental difference between a universal sentence and a particular sentence with regard to verifiability but only a difference in degree. Take for instance the following sentence: "There is a white sheet of paper on this table." In order to ascertain whether this thing is paper, we may make a set of simple observations and then, if there still remains some doubt, we may make some physical and chemical experiments. Here as well as in the case of the law, we try to examine sentences which we infer from the sentence in question. These inferred sentences are predictions about future observations. The number of such predictions which we can derive from the sentence given is infinite; and therefore the sentence can never be completely verified. To be sure, in many cases we reach a practically sufficient certainty after a small number of positive instances, and then we stop experimenting.

But there is always the theoretical possibility of continuing the series of test-observations. Therefore here also *no complete verification is possible* but only a process of gradually increasing *confirmation*. We may, if we wish, call a sentence disconfirmed [1] in a certain degree if its negation is confirmed in that degree.

The impossibility of absolute verification has been pointed out and explained in detail by *Popper*.[2] In this point our present views are, it seems to me, in full accordance with *Lewis* [3] and *Nagel*.[4]

Suppose a sentence S is given, some test-observations for it have been made, and S is confirmed by them in a certain degree. Then it is a matter of practical decision whether we will consider that degree as high enough for our acceptance of S, or as low enough for our rejection of S, or as intermediate between these so that we neither accept nor reject S until further evidence will be available. Although our decision is based upon the observations made so far, nevertheless it is not uniquely determined by them. There is no general rule to determine our decision. Thus the acceptance and the rejection of a (synthetic) sentence always contains a *conventional component*. That does not mean that the decision—or, in other words, the question of truth and verification—is conventional. For, in addition to the conventional component there is always the non-conventional component—we may call it, the objective one—consisting in the observations which have been made. And it must certainly be admitted that in very many cases this objective component is present to such an overwhelming extent that the conventional component practically vanishes. For such a simple sentence as e.g. "There is a white thing on this table" the degree of confirmation, after a few observations have been made, will be so high that we practically cannot help accepting the sentence. But even in this case there remains still the theoretical possibility of denying the sentence. Thus even here it is a matter of decision or convention. . . .

II. Logical Analysis of Confirmation and Testing

3. Some Terms and Symbols of Logic

In carrying out methodological investigations especially concerning verification, confirmation, testing, etc., it is very important to distinguish clearly between logical and empirical, e.g. psychological questions. The frequent lack of such a distinction in so-called epistemological discussions has caused a great deal of ambiguity and misunderstanding. In order to make quite clear the meaning and nature of our definitions and explanations, we will separate the two kinds of definitions. In this Chapter II we are concerned with logical analysis. We shall define concepts belonging to

[1] "Erschüttert," Neurath [6].

[2] Popper [1].

[3] Lewis [2] p. 137, note 12: "No verification of the kind of knowledge commonly stated in propositions is ever absolutely complete and final."

[4] Nagel [1] p. 144f.

logic, or more precisely, to logical syntax, although the choice of the concepts to be defined and of the way in which they are defined is suggested in some respects by a consideration of empirical questions—as is often the case in laying down logical definitions. The logical concepts defined here will be applied later on, in Chapter III, in defining concepts of an empirical analysis of confirmation. These descriptive, i.e. non-logical, concepts belong to the field of biology and psychology, namely to the theory of the use of language as a special kind of human activity. [*Note*, 1950. According to present terminology, we divide the theory of language (semiotic) into three parts: pragmatics, semantics, and logical syntax. The descriptive concepts mentioned belong to pragmatics; logical analysis belongs either to semantics (if referring to meaning and interpretation) or to syntax (if formalized).]

In the following logical analysis we shall make use of some few *terms of logical syntax*, which may here be explained briefly.[5] The terms refer to a language-system, say L, which is supposed to be given by a system of rules of the following two kinds. The formative rules state how to construct sentences of L out of the symbols of L. The transformative rules state how to deduce a sentence from a class of sentences, the so-called premisses, and which sentences are to be taken as true unconditionally, i.e. without reference to premisses. The transformative rules are divided into those which have a logico-mathematical nature; they are called logical rules or L-rules (this 'L-' has nothing to do with the name 'L' of the language); and those of an empirical nature, e.g. physical or biological laws stated as postulates; they are called physical rules or P-rules.

We shall take here 'S', 'S_1', 'S_2' etc. as designations of sentences (not as abbreviations for sentences). We use '$\sim$S' as designation of the negation of S. (Thus, in this connection, '$\sim$' is not a symbol of negation but a syntactical symbol, an abbreviation for the words 'the negation of'.) If a sentence S can be deduced from the sentences of a class C according to the rules of L, S is called a *consequence* of C; and moreover an L-consequence, if the L-rules are sufficient for the deduction, otherwise a P-consequence. S_1 and S_2 are called *equipollent* (with each other) if each is a consequence of the other. If S can be shown to be true on the basis of the rules of L, S is called *valid* in L; and moreover L-valid or *analytic*, if true on the basis of the L-rules alone, otherwise P-valid. If, by application of the rules of L, S can be shown to be false, S is called *contravalid*; and L-contravalid or *contradictory*, if by L-rules alone, otherwise P-contravalid. If S is neither valid nor contravalid S is called *indeterminate*. If S is neither analytic nor contradictory, in other words, if its truth or falsehood cannot be determined by logic alone, but needs reference either to P-rules or to the facts outside of language, S is called *synthetic*. Thus the totality of the sentences of L is classified in the following way:

[5] For more exact explanations of these terms see Carnap [4]; some of them are explained also in [5].

'$\sim$', '$\vee$' etc. and each of which consists of a predicate with 'x' as argument, we allow omission of the operator and the arguments. Thus e.g. instead of '$(x)\ (P_1(x) \supset P_2(x))$' we shall write shortly '$P_1 \supset P_2$'; and instead of '$(x)\ [Q_1(x) \supset (Q_3(x) \equiv Q_2(x))]$' simply '$Q_1 \supset (Q_3 \equiv Q_2)$'. The form '$P_1 \supset P_2$' is that of the simplest physical laws; it means: "If any space-time-point has the property of P_1, it has also the property of P_2." . . .

4. Definitions

By an (explicit) definition of a descriptive predicate 'Q' with one argument we understand a sentence of the form

(D:) $$Q(x) \equiv \ldots x \ldots$$

where at the place of '. . . x . . . ' a sentential function – called the definiens – stands which contains 'x' as the only free variable. For several arguments the form is analogous. We will say that a definition D is based upon the class C of predicates if every descriptive symbol occurring in the definiens of D belongs to C. If the predicates of a class C are available in our language we may introduce other predicates by a chain of definitions of such a kind that each definition is based upon C and the predicates defined by previous definitions of the chain.

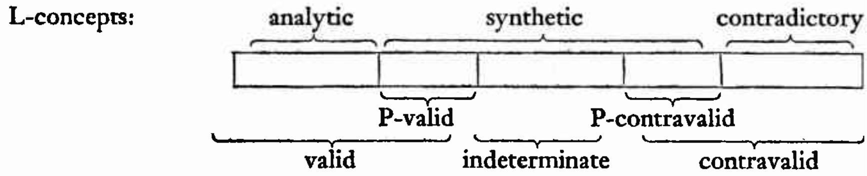
Definition 9. A definition is said to have atomic (or molecular, or generalized, or essentially generalized) form, if its definiens has atomic (or molecular, or generalized, or essentially generalized, respectively) form.

Theorem 5. If 'P' is defined by a definition D based upon C, 'P' is reducible to C. If D has molecular form, 'P' is completely reducible to C. If D has essentially generalized form, 'P' is incompletely reducible to C.

Proof. 'P' may be defined by '$P(x) \equiv \ldots x \ldots$'. Then, for any b, '$P(b)$' is equipollent to '. . . b . . .' and hence in the case of molecular form, according to Theorem 2, completely reducible to C, and in the other case, according to Theorems 3 and 4, reducible to C.

Let us consider the question whether the so-called *disposition-concepts* can be defined, i.e. predicates which enunciate the disposition of a point or body for reacting in such and such a way to such and such conditions, e.g. 'visible', 'smellable', 'fragile', 'tearable', 'soluble', 'indissoluble' etc. We shall see that such disposition-terms cannot be defined by means of the terms by which these conditions and reactions are described, but they can be introduced by sentences of another form. Suppose, we wish to introduce the predicate 'Q_3' meaning "soluble in water." Suppose further, that 'Q_1' and 'Q_2' are already defined in such a way that '$Q_1(x, t)$' means "the body x is placed into water at the time t," and '$Q_2(x, t)$' means "the body x dissolves at the time t." Then one might perhaps think that we could define 'soluble in water' in the following way: "x is soluble in water" is to mean "whenever x is put into water, x dissolves," in symbols:

(D:) $$Q_3(x) \equiv (t)[Q_1(x, t) \supset Q_2(x, t)].$$



A sentence S_1 is called incompatible with S_2 (or with a class C of sentences), if the negation $\sim S_1$ is a consequence of S_2 (or of C, respectively). The sentences of a class are called mutually independent if none of them is a consequence of, or incompatible with, any other of them.

The most important kind of predicates occurring in a language of science is that of the predicates attributed to space-time-points (or to small space-time-regions). For the sake of simplicity we shall restrict the following considerations—so far as they deal with predicates—to those of this kind. The attribution of a certain value of a physical function, e.g. of temperature, to a certain space-time-point can obviously also be expressed by a predicate of this kind. The following considerations, applied here to such predicates only, can easily be extended to descriptive terms of any other kind.

In order to be able to formulate examples in a simple and exact way we will use the following symbols. We take 'a', 'b', etc. as names of space-time-points (or of small space-time-regions), i.e. as abbreviations for quadruples of space-time-coördinates; we call them *individual constants.* 'x', 'y', etc. will be used as corresponding variables; we will call them *individual variables.* We shall use 'P', 'P_1', 'P_2' etc., and 'Q', 'Q_1' etc. as *predicates*; if no other indication is given, they are supposed to be predicates of the kind described. The sentence '$Q_1(b)$' is to mean: "The space-time-point b has the property Q_1." Such a sentence consisting of a predicate followed by one or several individual constants as arguments, will be called a *full sentence* of that predicate.

Connective symbols: '$\sim$' for 'not' (negation), 'V' for 'or' (disjunction), '$\cdot$' for 'and' (conjunction), '$\supset$' for 'if – then' (implication), '$\equiv$' for 'if – then –, and if not – then not –' (equivalence). '$\sim Q(a)$' is the negation of a full sentence of 'Q'; it is sometimes also called a full sentence of the predicate '$\sim Q$'.

Operators: '$(x)P(x)$' is to mean: "every point has the property P" (*universal* sentence; the first '(x)' is called the universal *operator*, and the sentential function 'P(x)' its *operand*). '$(\exists x)P(x)$' is to mean: "There is at least one point having the property P" (*existential* sentence; '$(\exists x)$' is called the existential operator and 'P(x)' its operand). (In what follows, we shall not make use of any other operators than universal and existential operators with individual variables, as described here.) In our later examples we shall use the following abbreviated notation for universal sentences of a certain form occurring very frequently. If the sentence '(x) [– – –]' is such that '– – –' consists of several partial sentences which are connected by

But this definition would not give the intended meaning of 'Q_3'. For, suppose that c is a certain match which I completely burnt yesterday. As the match was made of wood, I can rightly assert that it was not soluble in water; hence the sentence '$Q_3(c)$' (S_1) which asserts that the match c is soluble in water, is false. But if we assume the definition D, S_1 becomes equipollent with '$(t)\ [Q_1(c, t) \supset Q_2(c, t)]$' ($S_2$). Now the match c has never been placed into water and on the hypothesis made never can be so placed. Thus any sentence of the form '$Q_1(c, t)$' is false for any value of 't'. Hence S_2 is true, and, because of D, S_1 also is true, in contradiction to the intended meaning of S_1. 'Q_3' cannot be defined by D, nor by any other definition. But we can introduce it by the following sentence:

$$(R:) \qquad (x)(t)[Q_1(x,t) \supset (Q_3(x) \equiv Q_2(x,t))],$$

in words: "if any thing x is put into water at any time t, then, if x is soluble in water, x dissolves at the time t, and if x is not soluble in water, it does not." This sentence belongs to that kind of sentences which we shall call reduction sentences.

5. *Reduction Sentences*

Suppose, we wish to introduce a new predicate 'Q_3' into our language and state for this purpose a pair of sentences of the following form:

$$(R_1) \qquad Q_1 \supset (Q_2 \supset Q_3)$$
$$(R_2) \qquad Q_4 \supset (Q_5 \supset \sim Q_3)$$

Here, 'Q_1' and 'Q_4' may describe experimental conditions which we have to fulfill in order to find out whether or not a certain space-time-point b has the property of Q_3, i.e. whether '$Q_3(b)$' or '$\sim Q_3(b)$' is true. 'Q_2' and 'Q_5' may describe possible results of the experiments. Then R_1 means: if we realize the experimental condition Q_1 then, if we find the result Q_2, the point has the property Q_3. By the help of R_1, from '$Q_1(b)$' and '$Q_2(b)$', '$Q_3(b)$' follows. R_2 means: if we satisfy the condition Q_4 and then find Q_5 the point has not the property Q_3. By the help of R_2, from '$Q_4(b)$' and '$Q_5(b)$', '$\sim Q_3(b)$' follows. We see that the sentences R_1 and R_2 tell us how we may determine whether or not the predicate 'Q_3' is to be attributed to a certain point, provided we are able to determine whether or not the four predicates 'Q_1', 'Q_2', 'Q_4'; and 'Q_5' are to be attributed to it. By the statement of R_1 and R_2 'Q_3' is reduced in a certain sense to those four predicates; therefore we shall call R_1 and R_2 reduction sentences for 'Q_3' and '$\sim Q_3$' respectively. Such a pair of sentences will be called a reduction pair for 'Q_3'. By R_1 the property Q_3 is attributed to the points of the class $Q_1 \cdot Q_2$, by R_2 the property $\sim Q_3$ to the points of the class $Q_4 \cdot Q_5$. If by the rules of the language – either logical rules or physical laws – we can show that no point belongs to either of these classes (in other words, if the universal sentence '$\sim [(Q_1 \cdot Q_2) \vee (Q_4 \cdot Q_5)]$' is valid) then the pair of sentences does not determine Q_3 nor $\sim Q_3$ for any point and therefore does not give a reduction for the predicate Q_3. Therefore, in the definition of 'reduction pair' to be stated, we must exclude this case.

In special cases 'Q_4' coincides with 'Q_1', and 'Q_5' with '$\sim Q_2$'. In that case the reduction pair is '$Q_1 \supset (Q_2 \supset Q_3)$' and '$Q_1 \supset (\sim Q_2 \supset \sim Q_3)$'; the latter can be transformed into '$Q_1 \supset (Q_3 \supset Q_2)$'. Here the pair can be replaced by the one sentence '$Q_1 \supset (Q_3 \equiv Q_2)$' which means: if we accomplish the condition Q_1, then the point has the property Q_3 if and only if we find the result Q_2. This sentence may serve for determining the result '$Q_3(b)$' as well as for '$\sim Q_3(b)$'; we shall call it a bilateral reduction sentence. It determines Q_3 for the points of the class $Q_1 \cdot Q_2$, and $\sim Q_3$ for those of the class $Q_1 \cdot \sim Q_2$; it does not give a determination for the points of the class $\sim Q_1$. Therefore, if '$(x)(\sim Q_1(x))$' is valid, the sentence does not give any determination at all. To give an example, let '$Q_1'(b)$' mean "the point b is both heated and not heated", and '$Q_1''(b)$': "the point b is illuminated by light-rays which have a speed of 400,000 km/sec". Here for any point c, '$Q_1'(c)$, and '$Q_1''(c)$' are contravalid – the first contradictory and the second P-contravalid; therefore, '$(x)\ (\sim Q_1'(x))$' and '$(x)\ (\sim Q_1''(x))$' are valid – the first analytic and the second P-valid; in other words, the conditions Q_1' and Q_1'' are impossible, the first logically and the second physically. In this case, a sentence of the form '$Q_1' \supset (Q_3 \equiv Q_2)$' or '$Q_1'' \supset (Q_3 \equiv Q_2)$' would not tell us anything about how to use the predicate 'Q_3' and therefore could not be taken as a reduction sentence. These considerations lead to the following definitions.

Definition 10. a. A universal sentence of the form

(R) $$Q_1 \supset (Q_2 \supset Q_3)$$

is called a *reduction sentence* for 'Q_3' provided '$\sim (Q_1 \cdot Q_2)$' is not valid.

b. A pair of sentences of the forms

(R_1) $$Q_1 \supset (Q_2 \supset Q_3)$$
(R_2) $$Q_4 \supset (Q_5 \supset \sim Q_3)$$

is called a ***reduction pair*** for 'Q_3' provided '$\sim [(Q_1 \cdot Q_2) \vee (Q_4 \cdot Q_5)]$' is not valid.

c. A sentence of the form

(R_b) $$Q_1 \supset (Q_3 \equiv Q_2)$$

is called a ***bilateral reduction sentence*** for 'Q_3' provided '$(x)(\sim Q_1(x))$' is not valid.

Every statement about reduction pairs in what follows applies also to bilateral reduction sentences, because such sentences are comprehensive formulations of a special case of a reduction pair.

If a reduction pair for 'Q_3' of the form given above is valid – i.e. either laid down in order to introduce 'Q_3' on the basis of 'Q_1', 'Q_2', 'Q_4', and 'Q_5', or consequences of physical laws stated beforehand – then for any point c '$Q_3(c)$' is a consequence of '$Q_1(c)$' and '$Q_2(c)$', and '$\sim Q_3(c)$' is a consequence of '$Q_4(c)$' and '$Q_5(c)$'. Hence 'Q_3' is completely reducible to those four predicates.

Theorem 6. If a reduction pair for 'Q' is valid, then 'Q' is completely reducible to the four (or two, respectively) other predicates occurring.

We may distinguish between logical reduction and physical reduction, dependent upon the reduction sentence being analytic or P-valid, in the latter case for instance a valid physical law. Sometimes not only the sentence '$Q_1 \supset (Q_3 \equiv Q_2)$' is valid, but also the sentence '$Q_3 \equiv Q_2$'. (This is e.g. the case if '$(x)Q_1(x)$' is valid.) Then for any b, '$Q_3(b)$' can be transformed into the equipollent sentence '$Q_2(b)$', and thus 'Q_3' can be eliminated in any sentence whatever. If '$Q_3 \equiv Q_2$' is not P-valid but analytic it may be considered as an explicit definition for 'Q_3'. Thus an *explicit definition* is a special kind of a logical bilateral reduction sentence. A logical bilateral reduction sentence which does not have this simple form, but the general form '$Q_1 \supset (Q_3 \equiv Q_2)$', may be considered as a kind of conditional definition.

If we wish to construct a language for science we have to take some descriptive (i.e. non-logical) terms as primitive terms. Further terms may then be introduced not only by explicit definitions but also by other reduction sentences. The possibility of *introduction by laws*, i.e. by physical reduction, is, as we shall see, very important for science, but so far not sufficiently noticed in the logical analysis of science. On the other hand the terms introduced in this way have the disadvantage that in general it is not possible to eliminate them, i.e. to translate a sentence containing such a term into a sentence containing previous terms only.

Let us suppose that the term 'Q_3' does not occur so far in our language, but 'Q_1', 'Q_2', 'Q_4', and 'Q_5' do occur. Suppose further that either the following reduction pair R_1, R_2 for 'Q_3':

$$(R_1) \qquad Q_1 \supset (Q_2 \supset Q_3)$$
$$(R_2) \qquad Q_4 \supset (Q_5 \supset \sim Q_3)$$

or the following bilateral reduction sentence for 'Q_3':

$$(R_b) \qquad Q_1 \supset (Q_3 \equiv Q_2)$$

is stated as valid in order to introduce 'Q_3', i.e. to give meaning to this new term of our language. Since, on the assumption made, 'Q_3' has no antecedent meaning, we do not assert anything about facts by the statement of R_b. This statement is not an assertion but a convention. In other words, the factual content of R_b is empty; in this respect, R_b is similar to a definition. On the other hand, the pair R_1, R_2 has a positive content. By stating it as valid, beside stating a convention concerning the use of the term 'Q_3', we assert something about facts that can be formulated in the following way without the use of 'Q_3'. If a point c had the property $Q_1 \cdot Q_2 \cdot Q_4 \cdot Q_5$, then both '$Q_3(c)$' and '$\sim Q_3(c)$' would follow. Since this is not possible for any point, the following universal sentence S which does not contain

'Q_3', and which in general is synthetic, is a consequence of R_1 and R_2:

(S:) $$\sim (Q_1 \cdot Q_2 \cdot Q_4 \cdot Q_5).$$

In the case of the bilateral reduction sentence R_b 'Q_4' coincides with 'Q_1' and 'Q_5' with '$\sim Q_2$'. Therefore in this case S degenerates to '$\sim (Q_1 \cdot Q_2 \cdot Q_1 \cdot \sim Q_2)$' and hence becomes analytic. Thus a bilateral reduction sentence, in contrast to a reduction pair, has no factual content.

6. Introductive Chains

For the sake of simplicity we have considered so far only the introduction of a predicate by one reduction pair or by one bilateral reduction sentence. But in most cases a predicate will be introduced by either several reduction pairs or several bilateral reduction sentences. If a property or physical magnitude can be determined by different methods then we may state one reduction pair or one bilateral reduction sentence for each method. The intensity of an electric current can be measured for instance by measuring the heat produced in the conductor, or the deviation of a magnetic needle, or the quantity of silver separated out of a solution, or the quantity of hydrogen separated out of water etc. We may state a set of bilateral reduction sentences, one corresponding to each of these methods. The factual content of this set is not null because it comprehends such sentences as e.g. "If the deviation of a magnetic needle is such and such then the quantity of silver separated in one minute is such and such, and vice versa" which do not contain the term 'intensity of electric current', and which obviously are synthetic.

If we establish one reduction pair (or one bilateral reduction sentence) as valid in order to introduce a predicate 'Q_3', the meaning of 'Q_3' is not established completely, but only for the cases in which the test condition is fulfilled. In other cases, e.g. for the match in our previous example, neither the predicate nor its negation can be attributed. We may diminish this region of indeterminateness of the predicate by adding one or several more laws which contain the predicate and connect it with other terms available in our language. These further laws may have the form of reduction sentences (as in the example of the electric current) or a different form. In the case of the predicate 'soluble in water' we may perhaps add the law stating that two bodies of the same substance are either both soluble or both not soluble. This law would help in the instance of the match; it would, in accordance with common usage, lead to the result "the match c is not soluble," because other pieces of wood are found to be insoluble on the basis of the first reduction sentence. Nevertheless, a region of indeterminateness remains, though a smaller one. If a body b consists of such a substance that for no body of this substance has the test-condition – in the above example: "being placed into water" – ever been fulfilled, then neither the predicate nor its negation can be attributed to b. This region may then be diminished still further, step by step, by stating new laws.

These laws do not have the conventional character that definitions have; rather are they discovered empirically within the region of meaning which the predicate in question received by the laws stated before. But these laws are extended by convention into a region in which the predicate had no meaning previously; in other words, we decided to use the predicate in such a way that these laws which are tested and confirmed in cases in which the predicate has a meaning, remain valid in other cases.

We have seen that a new predicate need not be introduced by a definition, but may equally well be introduced by a set of reduction pairs. (A bilateral reduction sentence may here be taken as a special form of a reduction pair.) Consequently, instead of the usual chain of definitions, we obtain a chain of sets of sentences, each set consisting either of one definition or of one or several reduction pairs. By each set a new predicate is introduced.

Definition 11. A (finite) chain of (finite) sets of sentences is called an *introductive chain* based upon the class C of predicates if the following conditions are fulfilled. Each set of the chain consists either of one definition or of one or more reduction pairs for one predicate, say 'Q'; every reduction pair is valid; every predicate occurring in the set, other than 'Q', either belongs to C or is such that one of the previous sets of the chain is either a definition for it or a set of reduction pairs for it.

Definition 12. If the last set of a given introductive chain based upon C either consists in a definition for 'Q' or in a set of reduction pairs for 'Q', 'Q' is said to be *introduced* by this chain on the basis of C.

For our purposes we will suppose that a reduction sentence always has the simple form '$Q_1 \supset (Q_2 \supset Q_3)$' and not the analogous but more complicated form '$(x)\ [---x--- \supset (\ldots x \ldots \supset Q_3(x))]$' where '$---x---$' and '$\ldots x \ldots$' indicate sentential functions of a non-atomic form. This supposition does not restrict the generality of the following considerations because a reduction sentence of the compound form indicated may always be replaced by two definitions and a reduction sentence of the simple form, namely by:

$$Q_1 \equiv ---x---$$
$$Q_2 \equiv \ldots x \ldots$$
$$Q_1 \supset (Q_2 \supset Q_3).$$

The above supposition once made, the nature of an introductive chain is chiefly dependent upon the form of the definitions occurring. Therefore we define as follows.

Definition 13. An introductive chain is said to have atomic form (or molecular form) if every definition occurring in it has atomic form (or molecular form, respectively); it is said to have generalized form (or essentially generalized form) if at least one definition of generalized form (or essentially generalized form, respectively) occurs in it.

Theorem 7. If 'P' is introduced by an introductive chain based upon

C, 'P' is reducible to C. If the chain has molecular form, 'P' is completely reducible to C; if the chain has essentially generalized form, 'P' is incompletely reducible to C. – This follows from Theorems 5 (§ 7) and 6 (§ 8).

We call *primitive symbols* those symbols of a language L which are introduced directly, i.e. without the help of other symbols. Thus there are the following kinds of symbols of L:

1) *primitive symbols* of L,
2) *indirectly introduced symbols*, i.e. those introduced by introductive chains based upon primitive symbols; here we distinguish:
   a) *defined symbols*, introduced by chains of definitions,
   b) *reduced symbols*, i.e. those introduced by introductive chains containing at least one reduction sentence; here we may further distinguish:
      α) *L-reduced symbols*, whose chains contain only L-reduction pairs,
      β) *P-reduced symbols*, whose chains contain at least one P-reduction pair.

Definition 14. a. An *introductive chain* based upon primitive predicates of a language L and having atomic (or molecular, or generalized, or essentially generalized, respectively) form is called an atomic (or molecular, or generalized, or essentially generalized, respectively) introductive chain of L.

b. A *predicate* of L is called an *atomic* (or *molecular*) predicate if it is either a primitive predicate of L or introduced by an atomic (or molecular, respectively) introductive chain of L; it is called a *generalized* (or essentially generalized) predicate if it is introduced by a generalized (or essentially generalized, respectively) introductive chain of L.

Definition 15. a. A sentence S is called an *atomic sentence* if S is a full sentence of an atomic predicate. – b. S is called a *molecular sentence* if S has molecular form and contains only molecular predicates. – c. S is called a *generalized sentence* if S contains an (unrestricted) operator or a generalized predicate. – d. S is called an essentially generalized sentence if S is a generalized sentence and is not equipollent with a molecular sentence.

It should be noticed that the term 'atomic sentence', as here defined, is not at all understood to refer to ultimate facts.[6] Our theory does not assume anything like ultimate facts. It is a matter of convention which predicates are taken as primitive predicates of a certain language L; and hence likewise, which predicates are taken as atomic predicates and which sentences as atomic sentences.

7. *Reduction and Definition*

In § 8 the fact was mentioned that in some cases, for instance in the case of a disposition-term, the reduction cannot be replaced by a definition.

[6] In contradistinction to the term 'atomic sentence' or 'elementary sentence' as used by Russell or Wittgenstein.

We now are in a position to see the situation more clearly. Suppose that we introduce a predicate 'Q' into the language of science first by a reduction pair and that, later on, step by step, we add more such pairs for 'Q' as our knowledge about 'Q' increases with further experimental investigations. In the course of this procedure the range of indeterminateness for 'Q', i.e. the class of cases for which we have not yet given a meaning to 'Q', becomes smaller and smaller. Now at each stage of this development we could lay down a definition for 'Q' corresponding to the set of reduction pairs for 'Q' established up to that stage. But, in stating the definition, we should have to make an arbitrary decision concerning the cases which are not determined by the set of reduction pairs. A definition determines the meaning of the new term once for all. We could either decide to attribute 'Q' in the cases not determined by the set, or to attribute '$\sim$ Q' in these cases. Thus for instance, if a bilateral reduction sentence R of the form '$Q_1 \supset (Q_3 \equiv Q_2)$' is stated for '$Q_3$', then the predicate '$Q_3$' is to be attributed to the points of the class $Q_1 \cdot Q_2$, and '$\sim Q_3$' to those of the class $Q_1 \cdot \sim Q_2$, while for the points of the class $\sim Q_1$ the predicate 'Q_3' has no meaning. Now we might state one of the following two definitions:

$$(D_1) \qquad Q_3 \equiv (Q_1 \cdot Q_2)$$
$$(D_2) \qquad Q_3 \equiv (\sim Q_1 \vee Q_2)$$

If c is a point of the undetermined class, on the basis of D_1 '$Q_3(c)$' is false, and on the basis of D_2 it is true. Although it is possible to lay down either D_1 or D_2, neither procedure is in accordance with the intention of the scientist concerning the use of the predicate 'Q_3'. The scientist wishes neither to determine all the cases of the third class positively, nor all of them negatively; he wishes to leave these questions open until the results of further investigations suggest the statement of a new reduction pair; thereby some of the cases so far undetermined become determined positively and some negatively. If we now were to state a definition, we should have to revoke it at such a new stage of the development of science, and to state a new definition, incompatible with the first one. If, on the other hand, we were now to state a reduction pair, we should merely have to add one or more reduction pairs at the new stage; and these pairs will be compatible with the first one. In this latter case we do not correct the determinations laid down in the previous stage but simply supplement them.

Thus, if we wish to introduce a new term into the language of science, we have to distinguish two cases. If the situation is such that we wish to fix the meaning of the new term once for all, then a definition is the appropriate form. On the other hand, if we wish to determine the meaning of the term at the present time for some cases only, leaving its further determination for other cases to decisions which we intend to make step by step, on the basis of empirical knowledge which we expect to obtain in the future, then the method of reduction is the appropriate one rather than that of a definition. A set of reduction pairs is a partial determination of meaning only and can therefore not be replaced by a definition. Only if we reach, by adding more and more reduction pairs, a stage in which all cases are determined, may we go over to the form of a definition.

We will examine in greater detail the situation in the case of several reduction pairs for 'Q_3':

(R_1)	$Q_1 \supset (Q_2 \supset Q_3)$
(R_2)	$Q_4 \supset (Q_5 \supset \sim Q_3)$
(R_1')	$Q_1' \supset (Q_2' \supset Q_3)$
(R_2')	$Q_4' \supset (Q_5' \supset \sim Q_3)$
etc.	

Then 'Q_3' is determined by R_1 for the points of the class $Q_1 \cdot Q_2$, by R_1' for the class $Q_1' \cdot Q_2'$, etc., and therefore, by the totality of reduction sentences for 'Q_3', for the class $(Q_1 \cdot Q_2) \vee (Q_1' \cdot Q_2') \vee \ldots$. This class may shortly be designated by '$Q_{1,2}$'. Analogously '$\sim Q_3$' is determined by the reduction sentences for '$\sim Q_3$' for the points of the class $(Q_4 \cdot Q_5) \vee (Q_4' \cdot Q_5') \vee \ldots$, which we designate by '$Q_{4,5}$'. Hence 'Q_3' is determined either positively or negatively for the class $Q_{1,2} \vee Q_{4,5}$. Therefore the universal sentence '$Q_{1,2} \vee Q_{4,5}$' means, that for every point either 'Q_3' or '$\sim Q_3$' is determined. If this sentence is true, the set of reduction sentences is complete and may be replaced by the definition '$Q_3 \equiv Q_{1,2}$'. For the points of the class $\sim (Q_{1,2} \vee Q_{4,5})$, '$Q_3$' is not determined, and hence, in the stage in question, 'Q_3' is without meaning for these points. If on the basis of either logical rules or physical laws it can be shown that all points belong to this class, in other words, if the universal sentence '$\sim (Q_{1,2} \vee Q_{4,5})$' is valid – either analytic or P-valid – then neither 'Q_3' nor '$\sim Q_3$' is determined for any point and hence the given set of reduction pairs does not even partly determine the meaning of 'Q_3' and therefore is not a suitable means of introducing this predicate.

The given set of reduction pairs asserts that a point belonging to the class $Q_{4,5}$ has the property $\sim Q_3$ and hence not the property Q_3, and therefore cannot belong to $Q_{1,2}$ because every point of this class has the property Q_3. What the set asserts can therefore be formulated by the universal sentence saying that no point belongs to both $Q_{1,2}$ and $Q_{4,5}$, i.e. the sentence '$\sim (Q_{1,2} \cdot Q_{4,5})$'. This sentence represents, so to speak, the factual content of the set. In the case of one reduction pair this representative sentence is '$\sim (Q_1 \cdot Q_2 \cdot Q_4 \cdot Q_5)$'; in the case of one bilateral reduction sentence this becomes '$\sim (Q_1 \cdot Q_2 \cdot Q_1 \cdot \sim Q_2)$' or '$(x)\ (\sim Q_1(x) \vee Q_2(x) \vee \sim Q_2(x))$', which is analytic.

The following diagram shows the tripartition of the class of all points by a reduction pair (or a bilateral reduction sentence, or a set of reduction pairs, respectively). For the first class 'Q_3' is determined, for the second class '$\sim Q_3$'. The third class lies between them and is not yet determined: but some of its points may be determined as belonging to Q_3 and some others as belonging to $\sim Q_3$ by reduction pairs to be stated in the future.

reduction pair:	$Q_1 \cdot Q_2$	$\sim[(Q_1 \cdot Q_2) \vee (Q_4 \cdot Q_5)]$	$Q_4 \cdot Q_5$
bilat. reduction sentence:	$Q_1 \cdot Q_2$	$\sim Q_1$	$Q_1 \cdot \sim Q_2$
set of reduction pairs:	$Q_{1,2}$	$\sim(Q_{1,2} \vee Q_{4,5})$	$Q_{4,5}$
	Q_3	**not determined**	$\sim Q_3$

If we establish a set of *reduction pairs* as new valid sentences for the introduction of a new predicate 'Q_3', are these valid sentences *analytic* or *P-valid?* Moreover, which other sentences containing 'Q_3' are analytic? The distinction between analytic and P-valid sentences refers primarily to those sentences only in which all descriptive terms are primitive terms. In this case the criterion is as follows: [7] a valid sentence S is analytic if and only if every sentence S′ is also valid which is obtained from S when any descriptive term wherever it occurs in S is replaced by any other term whatever of the same type; otherwise it is P-valid. A sentence S containing defined terms is analytic if the sentence S′ resulting from S by the elimination of the defined terms is analytic; otherwise it is P-valid. A definition, e.g. '$Q(x) \equiv \ . \ . \ . \ x \ . \ . \ .$' is, according to this criterion, itself analytic; for, after it has been stated as a valid sentence, by the elimination of 'Q' we get from it '$. \ . \ . \ x \ . \ . \ . \equiv . \ . \ . \ x \ . \ . \ .$', which is analytic.

In the case of a new descriptive term introduced by a set of reduction pairs, the situation is not as simple as in the case of a definition because elimination is here not possible. Let us consider the question how the criterion is to be stated in this case. The introduction of a new term into a language is, strictly speaking, the construction of a new language on the basis of the original one. Suppose that we go over from the language L_1, which does not contain 'Q', to the language L_2 by introducing 'Q' by a set R of reduction pairs, whose representative sentence (in the sense explained before) may be taken to be S. Then S as not containing 'Q' is a sentence of L_1 also; its logical character within L_1 does not depend upon 'Q' and may therefore be supposed to be determined already. By stating the sentences of R as valid in L_2, S becomes also valid in L_2 because it is a consequence of R in L_2. If now S is analytic in L_1, it is also analytic in L_2; in this case R does not assert anything about facts, and we must therefore take its sentences as analytic. According to this, every bilateral reduction sentence is analytic, because its representative sentence is analytic, as we have seen before. If S is either P-valid or indeterminate in L_1, it is valid and moreover P-valid in L_2 in consequence of our stating R as valid in L_2. In this case every sentence of R is valid; it is P-valid unless it fulfills the general criterion of analyticity stated before (referring to all possible replacements of the descriptive terms, see above). If S is either P-contravalid or contradictory in L_1, it has the same property in L_2 and

[7] Carnap [4] §51.

is simultaneously valid in L_2. It may be analytic in L_2, if it fulfills the general criterion. In this case every sentence of R is both valid and contravalid, and hence L_2 is inconsistent.[8] If S is contradictory in L_1 and at least one sentence of R is analytic according to the general criterion, then L_2 is not only inconsistent but also L-inconsistent. The results of these considerations may be exhibited by the following table; column (1) gives a complete classification of the sentences of a language (see the diagram in § 3).

The representative sentence S		a reduction sentence of R (in L_2)	L_2
in L_1	in L_2		
1. analytic	analytic	analytic	consistent (if L_1 is consistent)
2. P-valid	P-valid	valid *	
3. indeterminate	P-valid	valid *	
4. P-contravalid	valid and P-contravalid	valid * and P-contravalid	inconsistent
5. contradictory	valid and contradictory	valid * and contradictory	inconsistent †

* analytic if fulfilling the general criterion (p. 61); otherwise P-valid.
† and moreover L-inconsistent if at least one sentence of R is analytic on the basis of the general criterion (p. 61).

Now the *complete criterion for 'analytic'* can be stated as follows:

Nature of S	Criterion for S being *analytic*
1. S does not contain any descriptive symbol.	S is valid.
2. All descriptive symbols of S are primitive.	Every sentence S′ which results from S when we replace any descriptive symbol at all places where it occurs in S by any symbol whatever of the same type—and hence S itself also—is valid.
3. S contains a defined descriptive symbol 'Q'.	The sentence S′ resulting from S by the elimination of 'Q' is valid.
4. S contains a descriptive symbol 'Q' introduced by a set R of reduction pairs; let L′ be the sub-language of L not containing 'Q', and S′ the representative sentence of R (comp. p. 61).	S′ is analytic in L′, and S is an L-consequence of R (e.g. one of the sentences of R); in other words, the implication sentence containing the conjunction of the sentences of R as first part and S as second part is analytic (i.e. every sentence resulting from this implication sentence where we replace 'Q' at all places by any symbol of the same type occurring in L′ is valid in L′).

[8] Compare Carnap [4] §59.

III. Empirical Analysis of Confirmation and Testing

8. Observable and Realizable Predicates

In the preceding chapter we analyzed logically the relations which subsist among sentences or among predicates if one of them may be confirmed with the help of others. We defined some concepts of a syntactical kind, based upon the concept 'consequence' as the chief concept of logical syntax. In what follows we shall deal with *empirical methodology*. Here also we are concerned with the questions of confirming and testing sentences and predicates. These considerations belong to a theory of language just as the logical ones do. But while the logical analysis belongs to an analytic theory of the formal, syntactical structure of language, here we will carry out an empirical analysis of the application of language. Our considerations belong, strictly speaking, to a biological or psychological theory of language as a kind of human behavior, and especially as a kind of reaction to observations. We shall see, however, that for our purposes we need not go into details of biological or psychological investigations. In order to make clear what is understood by empirically testing and confirming a sentence and thereby to find out what is to be required for a sentence or a predicate in a language having empirical meaning, we can restrict ourselves to using very few concepts of the field mentioned. We shall take two descriptive, i.e. non-logical, terms of this field as *basic terms* for our following considerations, namely '*observable*' and '*realizable*'. All other terms, and above all the terms 'confirmable' and 'testable', which are the chief terms of our theory, will be defined on the basis of the two basic terms mentioned; in the definitions we shall make use of the logical terms defined in the foregoing chapter. The two basic terms are of course, as basic ones, not defined within our theory. Definitions for them would have to be given within psychology, and more precisely, within the behavioristic theory of language. We do not attempt such definitions, but we shall give at least some rough explanations for the terms, which will make their meaning clear enough for our purposes.

Explanation 1. A predicate 'P' of a language L is called *observable* for an organism (e.g. a person) N, if, for suitable arguments, e.g. 'b', N is able under suitable circumstances to come to a decision with the help of few observations about a full sentence, say 'P(b)', i.e. to a confirmation of either 'P(b)' or '$\sim$ P(b)' of such a high degree that he will either accept or reject 'P(b)'.

This explanation is necessarily vague. There is no sharp line between observable and non-observable predicates because a person will be more or less able to decide a certain sentence quickly, i.e. he will be inclined after a certain period of observation to accept the sentence. For the sake of simplicity we will here draw a sharp distinction between observable and non-observable predicates. By thus drawing an arbitrary line between observable and non-observable predicates in a field of continuous degrees of observability we partly determine in advance the possible answers to questions such as whether or not a certain predicate is observable by a given person. Nevertheless the general philosophical, i.e. methodological question about the nature of meaning and testability will, as we shall see, not be distorted by our over-simplification. Even particular questions as to whether or not a given sentence is confirmable, and whether or not it is testable by a certain person, are affected, as we shall see, at most to a very small degree by the choice of the boundary line for observable predicates.

According to the explanation given, for example the predicate 'red' is observable for a person N possessing a normal colour sense. For a suitable argument, namely a space-time-point *c* sufficiently near to N, say a spot on the table before N, N is able under suitable circumstances – namely, if there is sufficient light at *c* – to come to a decision about the full sentence "the spot *c* is red" after few observations – namely by looking at the table. On the other hand, the predicate 'red' is not observable by a colour-blind person. And the predicate 'an electric field of such and such an amount' is not observable to anybody, because, although we know how to test a full sentence of this predicate, we cannot do it directly, i.e. by a few observations; we have to apply certain instruments and hence to make a great many preliminary observations in order to find out whether the things before us are instruments of the kind required.

Explanation 2. A predicate 'P' of a language L is called '*realizable*' by N, if for a suitable argument, e.g. 'b', N is able under suitable circumstances to make the full sentence 'P(b)' true, i.e. to produce the property P at the point b.

When we use the terms 'observable', 'realizable', 'confirmable', etc. without explicit reference to anybody, it is to be understood that they are meant with respect to the people who use the language L to which the predicate in question belongs.

Examples. Let 'P_1(b)' mean: 'the space-time-point b has the temperature 100°C'. 'P_1' is realizable by us because we know how to produce that temperature at the point b, if b is accessible to us. – 'P_2(b)' may mean: 'there is iron at the point b'. 'P_2' is realizable because we are able to carry a piece of iron to the point b if b is accessible. – If 'P_3(b)' means: 'at the point b is a substance whose index of light refraction is 10', 'P_3' is not realizable by anybody at the present time, because nobody knows at present how to produce such a substance.

9. Confirmability

In the preceding chapter we have dealt with the concept of reducibility of a predicate 'P' to a class C of other predicates, i.e. the logical relation which subsists between 'P' and C if the confirmation of 'P' can be carried out by that of predicates of C. Now, if confirmation is to be feasible at all, this process of referring back to other predicates must terminate at some point. The reduction must finally come to predicates for which we can come to a confirmation directly, i.e. without reference to other predicates. According to Explanation 1, the observable predicates can be used as such a basis. This consideration leads us to the following definition of the concept 'confirmable'. This concept is a descriptive one, in contradistinction to the logical concept 'reducible to C' – which could be named also 'confirmable with respect to C'.

Definition 16. A *sentence* S is called *confirmable* (or completely confirmable, or incompletely confirmable) if the confirmation of S is reducible (or completely reducible, or incompletely reducible, respectively) to that of a class of observable predicates.

[*Note*, 1950. Today I should prefer to replace Def. 16 by the following definition, based on Def. 18: A *sentence* S is *confirmable* (or . . .) if every descriptive predicate occurring in S is confirmable (or . . .).]

Definition 17. A sentence S is called *bilaterally confirmable* (or bilaterally completely confirmable) if both S and $\sim$ S are confirmable (or completely confirmable, respectively).

Definition 18. A *predicate* 'P' is called *confirmable* (or completely confirmable, or incompletely confirmable) if 'P' is reducible (or completely reducible, or incompletely reducible, respectively) to a class of observable predicates.

Hence, if 'P' is confirmable (or completely confirmable) the full sentences of 'P' are bilaterally confirmable (or bilaterally completely confirmable, respectively).

When we call a sentence S confirmable, we do not mean that it is possible to arrive at a confirmation of S under the circumstances as they actually exist. We rather intend this possibility under some *possible circumstances*, whether they be real or not. Thus e.g. because my pencil is black and I am able to make out by visual observation that it is black and not red, I cannot come to a positive confirmation of the sentence "My pencil is red." Nevertheless we call this sentence confirmable and moreover completely confirmable for the reason that we are able to indicate the – actually non-existent, but possible – observations which would confirm that sentence. Whether the real circumstances are such that the testing of a certain sentence S leads to a positive result, i.e. to a confirmation of S, or such that it leads to a negative result, i.e. to a confirmation of $\sim$ S, is irrelevant for the questions of confirmability, testability and meaning of the sentence though decisive for the question of truth, i.e. sufficient confirmation.

Theorem 8. If 'P' is introduced on the basis of observable predicates, 'P' is confirmable. If the introductive chain has molecular form, 'P' is completely confirmable. – This follows from Theorem 7 (§ 9).

Theorem 9. If S is a sentence of molecular form and all predicates occurring in S are confirmable (or completely confirmable) S is bilaterally confirmable (or bilaterally completely confirmable, respectively). – From Theorem 2 (§ 6).

Theorem 10. If the sentence S is constructed out of confirmable predicates with the help of connective symbols and universal or existential operators, S is bilaterally confirmable. – From Theorems 2, 3, and 4 (§ 6).

10. Method of Testing

If 'P' is confirmable then it is not impossible that for a suitable point *b* we may find a confirmation of 'P(b)' or of '$\sim$ P(b)'. But it is not necessary that we know a method for finding such a confirmation. If such a procedure can be given – we may call it a *method of testing* – then 'P' is not only confirmable but – as we shall say later on – testable. The following considerations will deal with the question how to formulate a method of testing and thereby will lead to a definition of 'testable'.

The description of a method of testing for 'Q_3' has to contain two other predicates of the following kinds:

1) A predicate, say 'Q_1', describing a *test-condition* for 'Q_3', i.e. an experimental situation which we have to create in order to test 'Q_3' at a given point.

2) A predicate, say 'Q_2', describing a *truth-condition* for 'Q_3' with respect to 'Q_1', i.e. a possible experimental result of the test-condition Q_1 at a given point *b* of such a kind that, if this result occurs, 'Q_3' is to be attributed to *b*. Now the connection between 'Q_1', 'Q_2', and 'Q_3' is obviously as follows: if the test-condition is realized at the given point *b* then, if the truth-condition is found to be fulfilled at *b*, *b* has the property to be tested; and this holds for any point. Thus the method of testing for 'Q_3' is to be formulated by the universal sentence '$Q_1 \supset (Q_2 \supset Q_3)$', in other words, by a reduction sentence for 'Q_3'. But this sentence, beside being a reduction sentence, must fulfill the following two additional requirements:

1) 'Q_1' must be realizable because, if we did not know how to produce the test-condition, we could not say that we had a method of testing.

2) We must know beforehand how to test the truth condition Q_2; otherwise we could not test 'Q_3' although it might be confirmable. In order to satisfy the second requirement, 'Q_2' must be either observable or explicitly defined on the basis of observable predicates or a method of testing for it must have been stated. If we start from observable predicates – which, as we know, can be tested without a description of a method of testing being necessary – and then introduce other predicates by explicit definitions or by such reduction sentences as fulfill the requirements stated above and hence are descriptions of a method of testing, then we know how to test each of these predicates. Thus we are led to the following definitions.

Definition 19. An introductive chain based upon observable predicates of such a kind that in each of its reduction sentences, say '$Q_1 \supset$

According to the usual positivist opinion, this sentence can be translated into the conjunction of the following conditional sentences (2) about (possible) perceptions. (For the sake of simplicity we eliminate in this example only the term "table" and continue to use in these sentences some terms which are not perception terms e.g. "my room", "eye" etc., which by further reduction would have to be eliminated also.)

(2a) "If on May . . . somebody is in my room and looks in such and such direction, he has a visual perception of such and such a kind."

(2a′), (2a″), etc. Similar sentences about the other possible aspects of the table.

(2b) "If . . . somebody is in my room and stretches out his hands in such and such a direction, he has touch perceptions of such and such a kind."

(2b′), (2b″), etc. Similar sentences about the other possible touchings of the table.

(2c) etc. Similar sentences about possible perceptions of other senses.

It is obvious that no single one of these sentences (2) nor even a conjunction of some of them would suffice as a translation of (1); we have to take the whole series containing all possible perceptions of that table. Now the first difficulty of this customary positivistic reduction consists in the fact that it is not certain that the series of sentences (2) is finite. If it is not, then there exists no conjunction of them; and in this case the original sentence (1) cannot be translated into one perception sentence. But a more serious objection is the following one. Even the whole class of sentences (2) – no matter whether it be finite or infinite – is not equipollent with (1), because it may be the case that (1) is false, though every single sentence of the class (2) is true. In order to construct such a case, suppose that at the time stated there is neither a round black table in my room, nor any observer at all. (1) is then obviously false. (2a) is a universal implication sentence:

"(x) [(x is . . . in my room and looks . . .) ⊃ (x perceives . . .)]",

which we may abbreviate in this way:

$$(x)[P(x) \supset Q(x)] \tag{3}$$

which can be transformed into

$$(x)[\sim P(x) \vee Q(x)] \tag{4}$$

((2a) can be formulated in words in this way: "For anybody it is either not the case that he is in my room on May . . . and looks . . . or he has a visual perception of such and such a kind".) Now, according to our assumption, for every person x it is false that x is at that time in my room and looks . . . ; in symbols:

$$(x)(\sim P(x)). \tag{5}$$

Therefore (4) is true, and hence (2a) also, and analogously every one of the other sentences of the class (2), while (1) is false. In this way the positivistic reduction in its customary form is shown to be invalid. The example dealt with is a sentence about a directly perceptible thing. If we took as examples sentences about atoms, electrons, electric field and the like, it would be even clearer that the positivistic translation into perception terms is not possible.

Let us look at the consequences which these considerations have for the construction of a scientific language on a positivistic basis, i.e. with perception terms as the only primitive terms. The most important consequence concerns the method of introduction of further terms. In introducing simple terms of perceptible things (e.g. 'table') and *a fortiori* the abstract terms of scientific physics, we must not restrict the introductive method to definitions but must also use reduction. If we do this the positivistic thesis concerning reducibility above mentioned can be shown to be true.

Let us give the name '*thing-language*' to that language which we use in every-day life in speaking about the perceptible things surrounding us. A sentence of the thing-language describes things by stating their observable properties or observable relations subsisting between them. What we have called observable predicates are predicates of the thing-language. (They have to be clearly distinguished from what we have called perception terms; if a person sees a round red spot on the table the perception term 'having a visual perception of something round and red' is attributed to the person while the observable predicate 'round and red' is attributed to the space-time point on the table.) Those predicates of the thing-language which are not observable, e.g. disposition terms, are reducible to observable predicates and hence confirmable. We have seen this in the example of the predicate 'soluble' (§ 7).

Let us give the name '*physical language*' to that language which is used in physics. It contains the thing-language and, in addition, those terms of a scientific terminology which we need for a scientific description of the processes in inorganic nature. While the terms of the thing-language for the most part serve only for a qualitative description of things, the other terms of the physical language are designed increasingly for a quantitative description. For every term of the physical language physicists know how to use it on the basis of their observations. Thus every such term is reducible to observable predicates and hence confirmable. Moreover, nearly every such term is testable, because for every term – perhaps with the exception of few terms considered as preliminary ones – physicists possess a method of testing; for the quantitative terms this is a method of measurement.

The so-called thesis of *Physicalism*[9] asserts that every term of the language of science – including beside the physical language those sub-

[9] Comp. Neurath [1], [2], [3]; Carnap [2], [8].

$(Q_2 \supset Q_3)$' or '$Q_4 \supset (Q_5 \supset \sim Q_3)$', the first predicate – 'Q_1' or 'Q_4', respectively – is realizable, is called a *test chain.* A reduction sentence (or a reduction pair, or a bilateral reduction sentence) belonging to a test chain is called a *test sentence* (or a *test pair*, or a *bilateral test sentence*, respectively).

A test pair for 'Q', and likewise a bilateral test sentence for 'Q', describes a method of testing for both 'Q' and '$\sim$ Q'. A bilateral test sentence, e.g. '$Q_1 \supset (Q_3 \equiv Q_2)$' may be interpreted in words in the following way. "If at a space-time point x the test-condition Q_1 (consisting perhaps in a certain experimental situation, including suitable measuring instruments) is realized then we will attribute the predicate 'Q_3' to the point x if and only if we find at x the state Q_2 (which may be a certain result of the experiment, e.g. a certain position of the pointer on the scale)". To give an example, let '$Q_3(b)$' mean: "The fluid at the space-time-point b has a temperature of 100°"; '$Q_1(b)$': "A mercury thermometer is put at b; we wait, while stirring the liquid, until the mercury comes to a standstill"; '$Q_2(b)$': "The head of the mercury column of the thermometer at b stands at the mark 100 of the scale." If here 'Q_3' is introduced by '$Q_1 \supset (Q_3 \equiv Q_2)$' obviously its testability is assured. . . .

11. A Remark about Positivism and Physicalism

One of the fundamental theses of *positivism* may perhaps be formulated in this way: every term of the whole language L of science is reducible to what we may call sense-data terms or perception terms. By a perception term we understand a predicate 'P' such that 'P(b)' means: "the person at the space-time-place b has a perception of the kind P". (Let us neglect here the fact that the older positivism would have referred in a perception sentence not to a space-time-place, but to an element of "consciousness"; let us here take the physicalistic formulation given above.) I think that this thesis is true if we understand the term 'reducible' in the sense in which we have defined it here. But previously reducibility was not distinguished from definability. Positivists therefore believed that every descriptive term of science could be defined by perception terms, and hence, that every sentence of the language of science could be translated into a sentence about perceptions. This opinion is also expressed in the former publications of the Vienna Circle, including mine of 1928 (Carnap [1]), but I now think that it is not entirely adequate. Reducibility can be asserted, but not unrestricted possibility of elimination and re-translation; the reason being that the method of introduction by reduction pairs is indispensable.

Because we are here concerned with an important correction of a widespread opinion let us examine in greater detail the reduction and retranslation of sentences as positivists previously regarded them. Let us take as an example a simple sentence about a physical thing:

(1) "On May 6, 1935, at 4 P.M., there is a round black table in my room."

languages which are used in biology, in psychology, and in social science — is reducible to terms of the physical language. Here a remark analogous to that about positivism has to be made. We may assert reducibility of the terms, but not — as was done in our former publications — definability of the terms and hence translatability of the sentences.

In former explanations of physicalism we used to refer to the physical language as a basis of the whole language of science. It now seems to me that what we really had in mind as such a basis was rather the thing-language, or, even more narrowly, the observable predicates of the thing-language. In looking for a new and more correct formulation of the thesis of physicalism we have to consider the fact mentioned that the method of definition is not sufficient for the introduction of new terms. Then the question remains: can every term of the language of science be introduced on the basis of observable terms of the thing-language by using only definitions and test-sentences, or are reduction sentences necessary which are not test sentences? In other words, which of the following formulations of the thesis of physicalism is true?

1. Thesis of Physicalistic Testability: "Every descriptive predicate of the language of science is testable on the basis of observable thing-predicates."

2. Thesis of Physicalistic Confirmability: "Every descriptive predicate of the language of science is confirmable on the basis of observable thing-predicates."

If we had been asked the question at the time when we first stated physicalism, I am afraid we should perhaps have chosen the first formulation. Today I hesitate to do this, and I should prefer the weaker formulation (2). The reason is that I think scientists are justified to use and actually do use terms which are confirmable without being testable, as the example in § 14 shows.

We have sometimes formulated the thesis of physicalism in this way: "The language of the whole of science is a physicalistic language." We used to say: a language L is called a physicalistic language if it is constructed out of the physical language by introducing new terms. (The introduction was supposed to be made by definition; we know today that we must employ reduction as well.) In this definition we could replace the reference to the physical language by a reference to the thing-language or even to the observable predicates of the thing-language. And here again we have to decide whether to admit for the reduction only test-chains or other reduction chains as well; in other words, whether to define 'physicalistic language' as 'a language whose descriptive terms are testable on the basis of observable thing-predicates' or '. . . are confirmable . . .'.

12. Sufficient Bases

A class C of descriptive predicates of a language L such that every descriptive predicate of L is reducible to C is called a *sufficient reduction* *basis* of L; if in the reduction only definitions are used, C is called a *sufficient definition basis*. If C is a sufficient reduction basis of L and the predicates of C – and hence all predicates of L – are confirmable, C is called a *sufficient confirmation basis* of L; and if moreover the predicates of C are completely testable, for instance observable, and every predicate of L is reducible to C by a test chain – and hence is testable – C is called a *sufficient test basis* of L.

As we have seen, positivism asserts that the class of perception-terms is a sufficient basis for the language of science; physicalism asserts the same for the class of physical terms, or, in our stronger formulation, for the class of observable thing-predicates. Whether positivism and physicalism are right or not, at any rate it is clear that there can be several and even mutually exclusive bases. The classes of terms which positivism and physicalism assert to be sufficient bases, are rather comprehensive. Nevertheless even these bases are not sufficient definition bases but only sufficient reduction bases. Hence it is obvious that, if we wish to look for narrower sufficient bases, they must be reduction bases. We shall find that there are sufficient reduction bases of the language of science which have a far narrower extension than the positivistic and the physicalistic bases.

Let L be the physical language. We will look for sufficient reduction bases of L. If physicalism is right, every such basis of L is also a basis of the total scientific language; but here we will not discuss the question of physicalism. We have seen that the class of the observable predicates is a sufficient reduction basis of L. In what follows we will consider only bases consisting of observable predicates; hence they are *confirmation bases of the physical language* L. Whether they are also test bases depends upon whether all confirmable predicates of L are also testable; this question may be left aside for the moment. The visual sense is the most important sense; and we can easily see that it is sufficient for the confirmation of any physical property. A deaf man for instance is able to determine pitch, intensity and timbre of a physical sound with the help of suitable instruments; a man without the sense of smell can determine the olfactory properties of a gas by chemical analysis; etc. That all physical functions (temperature, electric field etc.) can be determined by the visual sense alone is obvious. Thus we see that the predicates of the visual sense, i.e. the colour-predicates as functions of space-time-places, are a sufficient confirmation basis of the physical language L.

But the basis can be restricted still more. Consider a man who cannot perceive colours, but only differences of brightness. Then he is able to determine all physical properties of things or events which we can determine from photographs; and that means, all properties. Thus he determines e.g. the colour of a light with the help of a spectroscope or a spectrograph. Hence the class of predicates which state the degree of brightness at a space-time-place – or the class consisting of the one functor [10] whose

[10] Compare Carnap [4] §3.

value is the degree of brightness – is a sufficient basis of L.

Now imagine a man whose visual sense is still more restricted. He may be able to distinguish neither the different colours nor the different degree of brightness, but only the two qualities bright and dark (= not bright) with their distribution in the visual field. What he perceives corresponds to a bad phototype which shows no greys but only black and white. Even this man is able to accomplish all kinds of determinations necessary in physics. He will determine the degree of brightness of a light by an instrument whose scale and pointer form a black-white-picture. Hence the one predicate 'bright' is a sufficient basis of L.

But even a man who is completely blind and deaf, but is able to determine by touching the spatial arrangements of bodies, can determine all physical properties. He has to use instruments with palpable scale-marks and a palpable pointer (such e.g. as watches for the blind). With such a spectroscope he can determine the colour of a light; etc. Let 'Solid' be a predicate such that 'Solid(b)' means: "There is solid matter at the space-time-point b". Then this single predicate 'Solid' is a sufficient basis of L.

Thus we have found several very narrow bases which are sufficient confirmation bases for the physical language and simultaneously sufficient test bases for the testable predicates of the physical language. And, if physicalism is right, they are also sufficient for the total language of science. Some of these bases consist of one predicate only. And obviously there are many more sufficient bases of such a small extent. This result will be relevant for our further considerations. It may be noticed that this result cannot at all be anticipated *a priori*; neither the fact of the existence of so small sufficient bases nor the fact that just the predicates mentioned are sufficient, is a logical necessity. Reducibility depends upon the validity of certain universal sentences, and hence upon the system of physical laws; thus the facts mentioned are special features of the structure of that system, or – expressed in the material idiom – special features of the causal structure of the real world. Only after constructing a system of physics can we determine what bases are sufficient with respect to that system.

IV. The Construction of a Language-System

13. The Problem of a Criterion of Meaning

It is not the aim of the present essay to defend the principle of empiricism against apriorism or anti-empiricist metaphysics. Taking empiricism [11] for granted, we wish to discuss the question, what is meaningful. The word 'meaning' will here be taken in its empiricist sense; an expression of language has meaning in this sense if we know how to use it in speaking about

[11] The words 'empiricism' and 'empiricist' are here understood in their widest sense, and not in the narrower sense of traditional positivism or sensationalism or any other doctrine restricting empirical knowledge to a certain kind of experience.

empirical facts, either actual or possible ones. Now our problem is what expressions are meaningful in this sense. We may restrict this question to sentences because expressions other than sentences are meaningful if and only if they can occur in a meaningful sentence.

Empiricists generally agree, at least in general terms, in the view that the question whether a given sentence is meaningful is closely connected with the questions of the possibility of verification, confirmation or testing of that sentence. Sometimes the two questions have been regarded as identical. I believe that this identification can be accepted only as a rough first approximation. Our real problem now is to determine the precise relation between the two questions, or generally, to state the criterion of meaning in terms of verification, confirmation or testing.

I need not emphasize that here we are concerned only with the problem of meaning as it occurs in methodology, epistemology or applied logic,[12] and not with the psychological question of meaning. We shall not consider here the questions whether any images and, if so, what images are connected with a given sentence. That these questions belong to psychology and do not touch the methodological question of meaning has often been emphasized.[13]

It seems to me that the question about the criterion of meaning has to be construed and formulated in a way different from that in which it is usually done. In the first place we have to notice that this problem concerns the structure of language. (In my opinion this is true for all philosophical questions, but that is beyond our present discussion.) Hence a clear formulation of the question involves reference to a certain language; the usual formulations do not contain such a reference and hence are incomplete and cannot be answered. Such a reference once made, we must above all distinguish between two main kinds of questions about meaningfulness; to the first kind belong the questions referring to a historically given language-system, to the second kind those referring to a language-system which is yet to be constructed. These two kinds of questions have an entirely different character. A question of the first kind is a theoretical one; it asks, what is the actual state of affairs; and the answer is either true or false. The second question is a practical one; it asks, how shall we proceed; and the answer is not an assertion but a proposal or decision. We shall consider the two kinds one after the other.

A *question of the first kind* refers to a given language-system L and concerns an expression E of L (i.e. a finite series of symbols of L). The question is, whether E is meaningful or not. This question can be divided into two parts: a) "Is E a sentence of L"?, and b) "If so, does E fulfill the empiricist criterion of meaning"? Question (a) is a formal question of

[12] Our problem of meaning belongs to the field which *Tarski* [1] calls *Semantic*; this is the theory of the relations between the expressions of a language and things, properties, facts etc. described in the language.

[13] Comp. e.g. Schlick [4] p. 355.

logical syntax (comp. Chapter II); question (b) belongs to the field of methodology (comp. Chapter III). It would be advisable to avoid the terms 'meaningful' and 'meaningless' in this and in similar discussions – because these expressions involve so many rather vague philosophical associations – and to replace them by an expression of the form "a . . . sentence of L"; expressions of this form will then refer to a specified language and will contain at the place '. . .' an adjective which indicates the methodological character of the sentence, e.g. whether or not the sentence (and its negation) is verifiable or completely or incompletely confirmable or completely or incompletely testable and the like, according to what is intended by 'meaningful'.

14. The Construction of a Language-System L

A *question of the second kind* concerns a language-system L which is being proposed for construction. In this case the rules of L are not given, and the problem is how to choose them. We may construct L in whatever way we wish. There is no question of right or wrong, but only a practical question of convenience or inconvenience of a system form, i.e. of its suitability for certain purposes. In this case a theoretical discussion is possible only concerning the consequences which such and such a choice of rules would have; and obviously this discussion belongs to the first kind. The special question whether or not a given choice of rules will produce an empiricist language, will then be contained in this set of questions.

In order to make the problem more specific and thereby more simple, let us suppose that we wish to construct L as a physical language, though not as a language for all science. The problems connected with specifically biological or psychological terms, though interesting in themselves, would complicate our present discussion unnecessarily. But the main points of the philosophical discussions of meaning and testability already occur in this specialized case.

In order to formulate the rules of an intended language L, it is necessary to use a language L′ which is already available. L′ must be given at least practically and need not be stated explicitly as a language-system, i.e. by formulated rules. We may take as L′ the English language. In constructing L, L′ serves for two different purposes. First, L′ is the syntax-language [14] in which the rules of the object-language L are to be formulated. Secondly, L′ may be used as a basis for comparison for L, i.e. as a first object-language with which we compare the second object-language L, as to richness of expressions, structure and the like. Thus we may consider the question, to which sentences of the English language (L′) do we wish to construct corresponding sentences in L, and to which not. For example, in constructing the language of *Principia Mathematica*, Whitehead and Russell wished to have available translations for the English sentences of the form "There is something which has the property ψ"; they therefore constructed their

[14] Comp. Carnap [4] §1; [5], p. 39.

language-system so as to contain the sentence-form "$(\exists x) \cdot \psi x$". A difficulty occurs because the English language is not a language-system in the strict sense (i.e. a system of fixed rules) so that the concept of translation cannot be used here in its exact syntactical sense. Nevertheless this concept is sufficiently clear for our present practical purpose. The comparison of L with L′ belongs to the rather vague, preliminary considerations which lead to decisions about the system L. Subsequently the result of these decisions can be exactly formulated as rules of the system L.

It is obvious that we are not compelled to construct L so as to contain sentences corresponding to all sentences of L′. If e.g. we wish to construct a language of economics, then its sentences correspond only to a small part of the sentences of the English language L′. But even if L were to be a language adequate for all science there would be many – and I among them – who would not wish to have in L a sentence corresponding to every sentence which usually is considered as a correct English sentence and is used by learned people. We should not wish e.g. to have corresponding sentences to many or perhaps most of the sentences occurring in the books of metaphysicians. Or, to give a nonmetaphysical example, the members of our Circle did not wish in former times to include into our scientific language a sentence corresponding to the English sentence

S_1: "This stone is now thinking about Vienna."

But at present I should prefer to construct the scientific language in such a way that it contains a sentence S_2 corresponding to S_1. (Of course I should then take S_2 as false, and hence $\sim S_2$ as true.) I do not say that our former view was wrong. Our mistake was simply that we did not recognize the question as one of decision concerning the form of the language; we therefore expressed our view in the form of an assertion – as is customary among philosophers – rather than in the form of a proposal. We used to say: "S_1 is not false but meaningless"; but the careless use of the word 'meaningless' has its dangers and is the second point in which we would like at present to modify the previous formulation.

We return to the question how we are to proceed in constructing a physical language L, using as L′ the English physical language.

The following list shows the items which have to be decided in constructing a language L.

I. Formative rules (= definition of 'sentence in L').
- A. Atomic sentences.
  - 1. The form of atomic sentences.
  - 2. The atomic predicates.
    - a. Primitive predicates.
    - b. Indirectly introduced atomic predicates.
- B. Formative operations of the first kind: Connections; Molecular sentences.
- C. Formative operations of the second kind: Operators.

1. Generalized sentences. (This is the *critical point.*)
2. Generalized predicates.

II. Transformative rules (= definition of 'consequence in L').

A. L-rules. (The rules of logical deduction.)

B. P-rules. (The physical laws stated as valid.)

In the following sections we shall consider in succession items of the kind I, i.e. the formative rules. We will choose these rules for the language L from the point of view of empiricism; and we shall try, in constructing this empiricist language L, to become clear about what is required for a sentence to have meaning.

15. Atomic Sentences: Primitive Predicates

The suitable method for stating formative rules does not consist in describing every single form of sentence which we wish to admit in L. That is impossible because the number of these forms is infinite. The best method consists in fixing

1. The forms of some sentences of a simple structure; we may call them (elementary or) *atomic sentences* (I A);

2. Certain *operations* for the formation of compound sentences (I B, C).

I A 1. Atomic sentences. As already mentioned, we will consider only predicates of that type which is most important for physical language, namely those predicates whose arguments are individual constants, i.e. designations of space-time-points. (It may be remarked that it would be possible and even convenient to admit also full sentences of physical functors as atomic sentences of L, e.g. 'te(a) = r', corresponding to the sentence of L′: "The temperature at the space-time-point *a* is *r*". For the sake of simplicity we will restrict the following considerations to predicate-sentences. The results can easily be applied to functor-sentences also.) An atomic sentence is a full sentence of an atomic predicate (Definition 15a, § 6). An atomic predicate is either primitive or introduced by an atomic chain (Definition 14b, § 6). Therefore we have to answer the following questions in order to determine the form of the atomic sentences of L:

I A 2. a) Which predicates shall we admit as primitive predicates of L?

b) Which forms of atomic introductive chains shall we admit?

I A 2a: *Primitive predicates.* Our decision concerning question (a) is obviously very important for the construction of L. It might be thought that the richness of language L depends chiefly upon how rich is the selection we make of primitive predicates. If this were the case the philosophical discussion of what sentences were to be included in L – which is usually formulated as: what sentences are meaningful? – would reduce to this question of the selection of primitive predicates. But in fact this is not the case. As we shall see, the main controversy among philosophers concerns the formation of sentences by operators (I C 1). About the selection of primitive predicates agreement can easily be attained, even among representatives of the most divergent views regarding what is meaningful and what is meaningless. This is easily understood if we remember our previous considerations about sufficient bases. If a suitable predicate is selected as the primitive predicate of L, all other physical predicates can be introduced by reduction chains.

To illustrate how the selection of primitive predicates could be carried out, let us suppose that the person N_1 who is constructing the language L trusts his sense of sight more than his other senses. That may lead him to take the colour-predicates (attributed to things or space-time-points, not to acts of perception, compare the example given on p. 69) as primitive predicates of L. Since all other physical predicates are reducible to them, N_1 will not take any other primitive predicates. It is just at this point in selecting primitive predicates, that N_1 has to face the question of observability. If N_1 possesses a normal colour sense each of the selected predicates, e.g. 'red', is observable by him in the sense explained before (§ 8). Further, if N_1 wishes to share the language L with other people – as is the case in practice – N_1 must inquire whether the predicates selected by him are also observable by them; he must investigate whether they are able to use these predicates in sufficient agreement with him, – whether it be subsequent to training by him or not. We may suppose that N_1 will come to a positive result on the basis of his experience with English-speaking people. Exact agreement, it is true, is not obtainable; but that is not demanded. Suppose however that N_1 meets a completely colour-blind man N_2. N_1 will find that he cannot get N_2 to use the colour predicates in sufficient agreement with him, in other words, that these predicates are not observable by N_2. If nevertheless N_1 wishes to have N_2 in his language-community, N_1 must change his selection of primitive predicates. Perhaps he will take the brightness-predicates which are also observable by him. But there might be a completely blind man N_3, for whom not one of the primitive predicates selected by N_1 is observable. Is N_3 now unable to take part in the total physical language of N_1? No, he is not. N_1 and N_3 might both take e.g. the predicate 'solid' as primitive predicate for their common language L. This predicate is observable both for N_3 and N_1, and it is a sufficient confirmation basis for the physical language L, as we have seen above. Or, if N_1 prefers to keep visual predicates as primitive predicates for L, he may suggest to N_3 that he take 'solid' as primitive predicate of N_3's language L_3 and then introduce the other predicates by reduction in such a way that they agree with the predicates of N_1's language L. Then L and L_3 will be completely congruent even as to the stock of predicates, though the selections of primitive predicates are different. How far N_1 will go in accepting people with restricted sensual faculties into his language-community, is a matter of practical decision. For our further considerations we shall suppose that only observable predicates are selected as primitive predicates of L. Obviously this restriction is not a necessary one. But, as empiricists, we want every predicate of our scientific language to be confirmable, and we must therefore select observable predicates as primitive ones. For the following considerations we suppose that the primitive predicates of L are observable without fixing a particular selection.

Decision 1. Every primitive descriptive predicate of L is observable.

16. The Choice of a Psychological or a Physical Basis

In selecting the primitive predicates for the physical language L we must pay attention to the question whether they are observable, i.e. whether they can be directly tested by perceptions. Nevertheless we need not demand the existence of sentences in L – either atomic or other kinds – corresponding to perception-sentences of L′ (e.g. "I am now seeing a round, red patch"). L may be a physical language constructed according to the demands of empiricism, and may nevertheless contain no perception-sentences at all.

If we choose a basis for the whole scientific language and if we decide as empiricists, to choose observable predicates, two (or three) different possibilities still remain open for specifying more completely the basis, apart from the question of taking a narrower or wider selection. For, if we take the concept 'observable' in the wide sense explained before (§ 11) we find two quite different kinds of observable predicates, namely physical and psychological ones.

1. Observable *physical predicates of the thing-language*, attributed to perceived things of any kind or to space-time-points. All examples of primitive predicates of L mentioned before belong to this kind. Examples of full sentences of such predicates: "This thing is brown," "This spot is quadrangular," "This space-time-point is warm," "At this space-time-point is a solid substance."

2. Observable *psychological predicates*. Examples: "having a feeling of anger," "having an imagination of a red triangle," "being in the state of thinking about Vienna," "remembering the city hall of Vienna." The perception predicates also belong to this kind, e.g. "having a perception (sensation) of red," ". . . of sour"; these perception predicates have to be distinguished from the corresponding thing-predicates belonging to the first kind (see p. 69). These predicates are observable in our sense in so far as a person N who is in such a state can, under normal conditions, be aware of this state and can therefore directly confirm a sentence attributing such a predicate to himself. Such an attribution is based upon that kind of observation which psychologists call introspection or self-observation, and which philosophers sometimes have called perception by the inner sense. These designations are connected with and derived from certain doctrines to which I do not subscribe and which will not be assumed in the following; but the fact referred to by these designations seems to me to be beyond discussion. Concerning these observable psychological predi-

cates we have to distinguish two interpretations or modes of use, according to which they are used either in a phenomenological or in a physicalistic language.

2a. Observable psychological predicates *in a phenomenological language*. Such a predicate is attributed to a so-called state of consciousness with a temporal reference (but without spatial determination, in contradistinction to 2b). Examples of full sentences of such predicates (the formulation varies according to the philosophy of the author): "My consciousness is now in a state of anger" (or: "I am now . . .", or simply: "Now anger"); and analogously with "such and such an imagination", ". . . remembrance", ". . . thinking", ". . . perception", etc. These predicates are here interpreted as belonging to a phenomenological language, i.e. a language about conscious phenomena as nonspatial events. However, such a language is a purely subjective one, suitable for soliloquy only, while the intersubjective thing-language is suitable for use among different subjects. For the construction of a subjective language predicates of this kind may be taken as primitive predicates. Several such subjective languages constructed by several subjects may then be combined for the construction of an intersubjective language. But the predicates of this kind cannot be taken directly as observable primitive predicates of an intersubjective language.

2b. Observable psychological predicates *in a physicalistic language*. Such a predicate is attributed to a person as a thing with spatio-temporal determination. (I believe that this is the use of psychological predicates in our language of everyday life, and that they are used or interpreted in the phenomenological way only by philosophers.) Examples of full sentences: "Charles was angry yesterday at noon," "I (i.e. this person, known as John Brown) have now a perception of red," etc. Here the psychological predicates belong to an intersubjective language. And they are intersubjectively confirmable. N_2 may succeed in confirming such a sentence as "N_1 is now thinking of Vienna" (S), as is constantly done in everyday life as well as in psychological investigations in the laboratory. However, the sentence S is confirmable by N_2 only incompletely, although it is completely confirmable by N_1. [It seems to me that there is general agreement about the fact that N_1 can confirm more directly than N_2 a sentence concerning N_1's feelings, thoughts, etc. There is disagreement only concerning the question whether this difference is a fundamental one or only a difference in degree. The majority of philosophers, including some members of our Circle in former times, hold that the difference is fundamental inasmuch as there is a certain field of events, called the consciousness of a person, which is absolutely inaccessible to any other person. But we now believe, on the basis of physicalism, that the difference, although very great and very important for practical life, is only a matter of degree and that there are predicates for which the directness of confirmation by other persons has intermediate degrees (e.g. 'sour' and 'quadrangular' or 'cold' when attributed to a piece of sugar in my mouth). But this difference in opinion need not be discussed for our present purposes.] We may formulate the fact mentioned by saying that the psychological predicates in a physicalistic language are intersubjectively confirmable but only *subjectively observable.* [As to testing, the difference is still greater. The sentence S is certainly not completely testable by N_2; and it seems doubtful whether it is at all testable by N_2, although it is certainly confirmable by N_2.] This feature of the predicates of kind 2b is a serious disadvantage and constitutes a reason against their choice as primitive predicates of an intersubjective language. Nevertheless we would have to take them as primitive predicates in a language of the whole of science if they were not reducible to predicates of the kind 1, because in such a language we require them in any case. But, if physicalism is correct they are in fact reducible and hence dispensable as primitive predicates of the whole language of science. And certainly for the physical language L under construction we need not take them as primitive.

According to these considerations, it seems to be preferable to choose the primitive predicates from the predicates of kind 1, i.e. of the observable thing-predicates. These are the only intersubjectively observable predicates. In this case, therefore, the same choice can be accepted by the different members of the language community. We formulate our decision concerning L, as a supplement to Decision 1:

Decision 2. Every primitive predicate of L is a thing predicate.

The choice of primitive predicates is meant here as the choice of a basis for possible confirmation. Thus, in order to find out whether the choice of primitive predicates of the kind 1 or 2a or 2b corresponds to the view of a certain philosopher, we have to examine what he takes as the basis for empirical knowledge, for confirmation or testing. *Mach*, by taking the sensation elements ('Empfindungselemente') as basis, can be interpreted as a representative of the standpoint 2a; and similarly other positivists, sensationalists and idealists. The views held in the first period of the Vienna Circle were very much influenced by positivists and above all by Mach, and hence also show an inclination to the view 2a. I myself took elementary experiences ('Elementarerlebnisse') as basis, (in [1]). Later on, when our Circle made the step to physicalism, we abandoned the phenomenological language recognizing its subjective limitation.[15] *Neurath* [16] requires for the basic sentences ('Protokollsätze'), i.e. those to which all confirmation and testing finally goes back, the occurrence of certain psychological terms of the kind 2b – or: of biological terms, as we may say with Neurath in order to stress the physicalistic interpretation – namely designations of actions of perception (as physicalistic terms). He does not admit in these basic sentences such a simple expression as e.g. "a black round table" which is observable in our sense but requires instead "a black round table perceived (or: seen) by Otto." This view can perhaps be interpreted as the choice of predicates of the kind 2b as primitive ones. We have seen above the disadvantages of such a choice of the basis. *Popper* [17] rejects for his basic sentences reference to mental events, whether it

[15] Comp. Carnap [2], §6.
[16] Neurath [5] and [6] p. 361.
[17] Popper [1] pp. 57ff.

be in the introspective, phenomenological form, or in physicalistic form. He characterizes his basic sentences with respect to their form as singular existential sentences and with respect to their content as describing observable events; he demands that a basic sentence must be intersubjectively testable by observation. Thus his view is in accordance with our choice of predicates of the kind 1 as primitive ones. He was, it seems to me, the first to hold this view. (The only inconvenient point in his choice of basic sentences seems to me to be the fact that the negations of his basic sentences are not basic sentences in his sense.)

I wish to emphasize the fact that I am in agreement with Neurath not only in the general outline of empiricism and physicalism but also in regard to the question what is to be required for empirical confirmation. Thus I do not deny —as neither Popper nor any other empiricist does, I believe—that a certain connection between the basic sentences and our perceptions is required. But, it seems to me, it is sufficient that the biological designations of perceptive activity occur in the formulation of the methodological requirement concerning the basic sentences – as e.g. in our formulation "The primitive descriptive predicates have to be observable," where the term "observable" is a biological term referring to perceptions – and that they need not occur in the basic sentences themselves. Also a language restricted to physics as e.g. our language L without containing any biological or perception terms may be an empiricist language provided its primitive descriptive predicates are observable; it may even fulfill the requirement of empiricism in its strictest form inasmuch as all predicates are completely testable. And this language is in its nature quite different from such a language as e.g. that of theoretical physics. The latter language – although as a part of the whole language of science, it is an empiricist language because containing only confirmable terms – does not contain observable predicates of the thing-language and hence does not include a confirmation basis. On the other hand, a physical language like L contains within itself its basis for confirmation and testing. . . .

17. *Incompletely Confirmable Hypotheses in Physics*

Now let us consider under what circumstances a physicist might find it necessary or desirable to state an hypothesis in a generalized form. Let us begin with one operator. The full sentences of a molecular predicate 'M_1' (i.e. '$M_1(a)$', etc.) are bilaterally completely confirmable. Suppose some of them are confirmed by observations, but not the negation of any of them so far. This fact may suggest to the physicist the sentence '$(x)M_1(x)$' of U_1 as a physical law to be adopted, i.e. a hypothesis whose negation is completely confirmable and which leads to completely confirmable predictions as consequences of it (e.g. '$M_1(b)$' etc.). If more and more such predictions are confirmed by subsequent observations, but not the negation of any of them, we may say that the hypothesis, though never confirmed completely, is confirmed in a higher and higher degree.

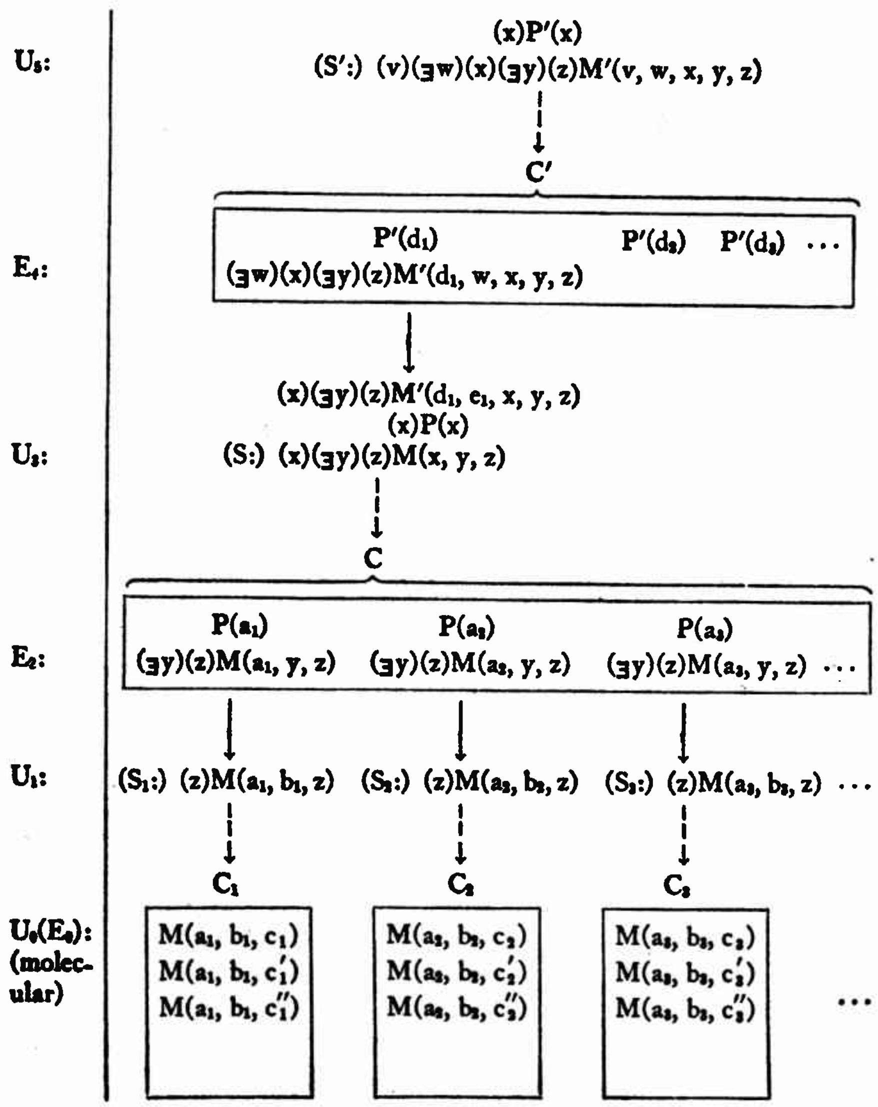
Considerations of this kind are very common; they are often used in order to explain that the admission of not completely confirmable ("unverifiable") universal hypotheses does not infringe the principle of empiricism. Such considerations are, I think, agreed to by all philosophers except those who demand complete confirmability ("verifiability") and thereby the limitation to a molecular language.

existential sentence and a consequence of S_2. At the left side are indicated the classes to which the sentences belong.

Let us start at the bottom of the diagram. The sentences of C_1 are molecular, and hence bilaterally completely testable. Let us suppose that a physicist confirms by his observations a good many of the sentences of C_1 without finding a confirmation for the negation of any sentence of C_1. According to the customary procedure described above, these experiences will suggest to him the adoption of S_1 as a well-confirmed hypothesis, which, by further confirmation of more and more sentences of C_1, may acquire an even higher degree of confirmation. Let us suppose that likewise the sentences of C_2 are confirmed by observations, further those of C_3, etc. Then the physicist will state S_2, S_3 etc. as well-confirmed hypotheses. If now sentences of the form E_2 are admitted in L, then the first sentence of C is a sentence of L, is also a consequence of S_1 and is therefore confirmed at least to the same degree as S_1. In order to make feasible the formulation of this well-confirmed hypothesis the physicist will be inclined to admit the sentences of E_2 in L. If he does so he can go one step further. He will adopt the second sentence of C as a consequence of the stated hypothesis S_2, the third one as a consequence of S_3, etc. If now the sentences of a sufficient number of classes of the series C_1, C_2, etc. are confirmed by observations, the corresponding number of sentences of the series S_1, S_2, etc. and likewise of sentences of C will be stated as well-confirmed hypotheses. If we define 'P' by '$P(x) \equiv (\exists y)(z)M(x, y, z)$', we may abbreviate the sentences of C by '$P(a_1)$', '$P(a_2)$', etc. The fact that these sentences are well-confirmed hypotheses will suggest to the physicist the sentence '$(x)P(x)$', that is S, as a hypothesis to be adopted provided he admits at all sentences of the form U_3 in L. The statement of S as confirmed by C is quite analogous to that of S_1 as confirmed by C_1. If somebody asserted that S – belonging to U_3 – is meaningless while the sentences of C – belonging to E_2 – are meaningful, he would thereby assert that it is meaningless to assume hypothetically that a certain condition which we have already assumed to subsist at several points a_1, a_2, a_3, etc. subsists at every point. Thus no reason is to be seen for prohibiting sentences of U_3, if sentences of E_2 are admitted.

This same procedure can be continued to higher and higher levels. Suppose that in the definition of 'M' two individual constants occur, say 'd_1' and 'e_1'; then we may write S in the form '$(x)(\exists y)(z)M'(d_1, e_1, x, y, z)$'. According to our previous supposition this is a hypothesis which is incompletely confirmed to a certain degree by our observations, namely by the sentences of C_1, C_2, etc. Then the first sentence of C', being a consequence of S, is confirmed to at least the same degree. If we define 'P'' by '$P'(v) \equiv (\exists w)(x)(\exists y)(z)M'(v, w, x, y, z)$' we may abbreviate the first sentence of C' by '$P'(d_1)$'. Now let us suppose that analogous sentences for d_2, d_3, etc. are likewise found to be confirmed by our observations.

Now it seems to me that a completely analogous consideration applies to sentences with any number of operator sets, i.e. to sentences of U_n or E_n for any n. The following diagram may serve as an example. A *broken* arrow running from a sentence S to a class C of sentences indicates that the confirmation of S is *incompletely* reducible to that of C. S is in this case a universal sentence and C the class of its instances; each sentence of C is therefore a consequence of S, but S is not a consequence of any finite sub-class of C. A *solid* arrow running from S_1 to S_2 indicates that the confirmation of S_1 is *completely* reducible to that of S_2. In this case, S_1 is an



Then by these sentences of C′ (belonging to E_4) S′ (belonging to U_5) is incompletely confirmed.

On the basis of these considerations it seems natural and convenient to make the following decisions.

Decision 5. Let S be a universal sentence (e.g. '$(x)Q(x)$') – which is being considered either for admission to or exclusion from L – and C be the class of the corresponding full sentences ('$Q(a_1)$', '$Q(a_2)$', etc.). Then obviously the sentences of C are consequences of S, and the confirmation of S is incompletely reducible to that of C. If the sentences of C are admitted in L we will admit the sentences of the form S, i.e. a class U_n for a certain n ($n > 0$).

Decision 6. Let S be an existential sentence (e.g. '$(\exists x)Q(x)$') – which is being considered either for admission to or exclusion from L – and C be the class of the corresponding full sentences ('$Q(a_1)$', '$Q(a_2)$', etc.). Then obviously S is a consequence of every sentence of C, and hence the confirmation of S is completely reducible to that of C. If the sentences of C are admitted in L we will admit the sentences of the form S, i.e. a class E_n for a certain n ($n > 0$).

The acceptance of Decisions 5 and 6 leads in the first place, as shown by the example explained before, to the admission of U_1, E_2, U_3, E_4, U_5, etc. in L; and it also leads to the admission of E_1, U_2, E_3, U_4, etc. Hence the result is the choice of a language L_∞.

As an objection to our proposal of language L_∞ the remark will perhaps be made that the statement of hypotheses of a high complexity, say U_{10} or E_{10}, will never be necessary or desirable in science, and that therefore we need not choose L_∞. Our reply is, that the proposal of L_∞ by no means requires the statement of hypotheses of such a kind; it simply proposes not to prohibit their statement *a priori* by the formative rules of the language. It seems convenient to give the scientist an open field for possible formulations of hypotheses. Which of these admitted possibilities will actually be applied, must be learned from the further evolution of science, – it cannot be foreseen from general methodological considerations.

18. The Principle of Empiricism

It seems to me that it is preferable to formulate the principle of empiricism not in the form of an assertion – "all knowledge is empirical" or "all synthetic sentences that we can know are based on (or connected with) experiences" or the like – but rather in the form of a proposal or requirement. As empiricists, we require the language of science to be restricted in a certain way; we require that descriptive predicates and hence synthetic sentences are not to be admitted unless they have some connection with possible observations, a connection which has to be characterized in a suitable way. By such a formulation, it seems to me, greater clarity will be gained both for carrying on discussion between empiricists and anti-empiricists as well as for the reflections of empiricists.

We have seen that there are many different possibilities in framing an empiricist language. According to our previous considerations there are in the main four different requirements each of which may be taken as a possible formulation of empiricism; we will omit here the many intermediate positions which have been seen to consist in drawing a rather arbitrary boundary line.

RCT. Requirement of Complete Testability: "Every synthetic sentence must be completely testable". I.e. if any synthetic sentence S is given, we must know a method of testing for every descriptive predicate occurring in S so that we may determine for suitable points whether or not the predicate can be attributed to them; moreover, S must have such a form that at least certain sentences of this form can possibly be confirmed in the same degree as particular sentences about observable properties of things. This is the strongest of the four requirements. If we adopt it, we shall get a *testable molecular language* like L_0^t, i.e. a language restricted to molecular sentences and to test chains as the only introductive chains, in other words, to those reduction sentences whose first predicate is realizable.

RCC. Requirement of Complete Confirmability: "Every synthetic sentence must be completely confirmable." I.e. if any synthetic sentence S is given, there must be for every descriptive predicate occurring in S the possibility of our finding out for suitable points whether or not they have the property designated by the predicate in question; moreover, S must have a form such as is required in RCT, and hence be molecular. Thus the only difference between RCC and RCT concerns predicates. By RCC predicates are admitted which are introduced by the help of reduction sentences which are not test sentences. By the admission of the predicates of this kind the language is enlarged to a *confirmable molecular language* like L_0. It seems however that there are not very many predicates of this kind in the language of science and hence that the practical difference between RCT and RCC is not very great. But the difference in the methodological character of L_0^t and L_0 may seem important to those who wish to state RCT.

RT. Requirement of Testability: "Every synthetic sentence must be testable." RT is more liberal than RCT, but in another direction than RCC. RCC and RT are incomparable inasmuch as each of them contains predicates not admitted in the other one. RT admits incompletely testable sentences – these are chiefly universal sentences to be confirmed incompletely by their instances – and thus leads to a *testable generalized language*, like L_∞^t. Here the new sentences in comparison with L_0^t are very many; among them are the laws of science in the form of unrestricted universal sentences. Therefore the difference of RCT and RT, i.e. of L_0^t and L_∞^t, is of great practical importance. The advantages of this comprehensive enlargement have been explained in § 17.

RC. Requirement of Confirmability: "Every synthetic sentence must be confirmable". Here both restrictions are dispensed with. Predicates which are confirmable but not testable are admitted; and generalized sentences are admitted. This simultaneous enlargement in both directions leads to a *confirmable generalized language* like L_∞. L_∞ contains not only L_0^t but also L_0 and L_∞^t as proper sub-languages. RC is the most liberal of the four requirements. But it suffices to exclude all sentences of a non-empirical nature, e.g. those of transcendental metaphysics inasmuch as they are not confirmable, not even incompletely. Therefore it seems to me that RC suffices as a formulation of the principle of empiricism; in other words, if a scientist chooses any language fulfilling this requirement no objection can be raised against this choice from the point of view of empiricism. On the other hand, that does not mean that a scientist is not allowed to choose a more restricted language and to state one of the more restricting requirements for himself – though not for all scientists. There are no theoretical objections against these requirements, that is to say, objections condemning them as false or incorrect or meaningless or the like; but it seems to me that there are practical objections against them as being inconvenient for the purpose of science.

The following table shows the four requirements and their chief consequences.

Requirement	restriction to *molecular* sentences	restriction to *test* chains	language
RCT: complete testability	+	+	L_0^t
RCC: complete confirmability	+	–	L_0
RT: testability	–	+	L_∞^t
RC: confirmability	–	–	L_∞

19. Confirmability of Predictions

Let us consider the nature of a *prediction*, a sentence about a future event, from the point of view of empiricism, i.e. with respect to confirmation and testing. Modifying our previous symbolism, we will take 'c' as the name of a certain physical system, 'x' as a corresponding variable, 't' as the time-variable, 't_0' as a value of 't' designating a moment at which we have made observations about c, and 'd' as a constant designating a certain time interval, e.g. one day or one million years. Now let us consider the following sentences

$$\text{(S)} \qquad (t)[P_1(c,t) \supset P_2(c,t+d)]$$

in words: "For every instant t, if the system c has the state P_1 at the time t, then it has the state P_2 at the time t + d";

(S_1) $$P_1(c, t_0)$$

"The system c has the state P_1 at the time t_0 (of our observation)";

(S_2) $$P_2(c, t_0 + d)$$

"The system c will have the state P_2 at the time $t_0 + d$". Now let us make the following suppositions. There is a set C of laws about physical systems of that kind to which c belongs such that S can be derived from C; the predicates occurring in the laws of C, and among them 'P_1' and 'P_2', are completely testable; the laws of C have been tested very frequently and each tested instance had a positive result; S_1 is confirmed to a high degree by observations. From these suppositions it follows, that S_1 and S_2, having molecular form and containing only predicates which are completely testable, are themselves completely testable; that the laws of C are incompletely testable, but (incompletely) confirmed to a rather high degree; that S, being a consequence of C, is also confirmed to a rather high degree; that S_2, being a consequence of S and S_1, is also confirmed to a rather high degree. If we wait until the time $t_0 + d$ it may happen that we shall confirm S_2 by direct observations to a very high degree. But, as we have seen, a prediction like S_2 may have even at the present time a rather high degree of confirmation dependent upon the degree of confirmation of the laws used for the derivation of the prediction. The nature of a prediction like S_2 is, with respect to confirmation and testing, the same as that of a sentence S_3 about a past event not observed by ourselves, and the same as that of a sentence S^4 about a present event not directly observed by us, e.g. a process now going on in the interior of a machine, or a political event in China. S_3 and S_4 are, like S_2, derived from sentences based on our direct observations with the help of laws which are incompletely confirmed to some degree or other by previous observations.[18]

To give an example, let c be the planetary system, C the set of the differential equations of celestial mechanics from which S may be derived by integration, S_1 describing the present constellation of c – the positions and the velocities of the bodies – and d the interval of one million years. Let '$P_3(t)$' mean: "There are no living beings in the world at the time t," and consider the following sentence.

(S_5) $$P_3(t_0 + d) \supset P_2(c, t_0 + d)$$

meaning that, if in a million years there will be no living beings in the world then at that time the constellation of the planetary system will be P_2 (i.e. that which is to be calculated from the present constellation with the help of the laws confirmed by past observations). S_5 may be taken as

[18] *Reichenbach* ([3], p. 153) asks what position the Vienna Circle has taken concerning the methodological nature of predictions and other sentences about events not observed, after it gave up its earlier view influenced by Wittgenstein. The view explained above is that which my friends – especially Neurath and Frank – and I have held since about 1931 (compare Frank [1], Neurath [3], Carnap [2a], p. 443, 464 f.; [2b], p. 55 f., 99 f.).

a convenient formulation of the following sentence discussed by *Lewis* [19] and *Schlick*.[20] "If all minds (or: living beings) should disappear from the universe, the stars would still go on in their courses". Both Lewis and Schlick assert that this sentence is not verifiable. This is true if 'verifiable' is interpreted as 'completely confirmable'. But the sentence is confirmable and even testable, though incompletely. We have no well-confirmed predictions about the existence or non-existence of organisms at the time $t_0 + d$; but the laws C of celestial mechanics are quite independent of this question. Therefore, irrespective of its first part, S_5 is confirmed to the same degree as its second part, i.e. as S_2, and hence, as C. Thus we see that an indirect and incomplete testing and confirmation of S_2 – and thereby of S_5 – is neither logically nor physically nor even practically impossible, but has been actually carried out by astronomers. Therefore I agree with the following conclusion of Schlick concerning the sentence mentioned above (though not with his reasoning): "We are as sure of it as of the best founded physical laws that science has discovered." The sentence in question is meaningful from the point of view of empiricism, i.e. it has to be admitted in an empiricist language, provided generalized sentences are admitted at all and complete confirmability is not required. The same is true for any sentence about past, present or future events, which refers to events other than those we have actually observed, provided it is sufficiently connected with such events by confirmable laws.

The object of this essay is not to offer definitive solutions of problems treated. It aims rather to stimulate further investigation by supplying more exact definitions and formulations, and thereby to make it possible for others to state their different views more clearly for the purposes of fruitful discussion. Only in this way may we hope to develop convergent views and so approach the objective of *scientific empiricism* as a movement comprehending all related groups, – the development of an increasingly scientific philosophy.

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