

PREFACE

This collection originated at a conference organized by the Institute Vienna Circle and the University of Vienna on the Vienna Circle and Logical Empiricism and was held in Vienna in July 2001. (cf. *The Vienna Circle and Logical Empiricism. Re-evaluation and Future Perspectives*. Edited by Friedrich Stadler. Dordrecht–Boston–London: Kluwer, 2003, Vienna Circle Institute Yearbook 10). All the essays in this volume with one exception are based on talks presented on that occasion and appear here for the first time. The contributions address a broad range of issues in the philosophy of Rudolf Carnap, but two themes stand out. Many authors respond directly or indirectly to objections against various aspects of Carnap's work: the program of *Der Logische Aufbau der Welt*, his views on ontology and realism, and his explication of disposition predicates. W.V. Quine's shadow looms large. Rising to the challenge, these authors constructively modify Carnapian ideas or explore alternatives without abandoning key tenets of his empiricism. As our understanding of Carnap's work in its historical context has become more nuanced and detailed over the past decade, the room for disagreement over its interpretation has grown. Several of the papers aim to put the record straight with respect to such works as *Logische Syntax der Sprache*, *Der Logische Aufbau der Welt*, and *Der Raum*. This collection then attests to the continuing and growing attraction of Carnap's philosophy.

The first two essays in this collection track Carnap's ideas about the nature of philosophy and the notion of truth over the course of his life. *Ilkka Niiniluoto* corrects the widespread view that it is only through Tarski's definition of truth in 1935 that Carnap came to semantics. In fact, Carnap's pioneering contributions to semantics were independently conceived. Niiniluoto argues that by 1942 Carnap had moved closer to scientific realism by adopting a non-epistemic notion of truth for theoretical statements in the sciences. The move was subsequently obscured by the "partial interpretation" approach to the significance of theoretical terms. *Jan Woleński* examines how Carnap's views on the scope and proper method of philosophy evolved in opposition to Wittgenstein: from identification of philosophical method with the "logic of science" to the study of syntax of languages and then on to the semantics of languages.

The *Logische Aufbau der Welt*, in its monumental ambition to provide a single conceptual system based on a few primitive predicates that would allow to express all of objective knowledge, continues to fascinate. *Thomas Mormann* stresses the significance of the geometric origin of the *Aufbau's* method. By reconsidering Carnap's quasi-analysis as an instance of "synthetic" geometry he takes issue with Nelson Goodman's sweeping objections against the methods employed in the *Aufbau*. *C. Wade Savage* rejects an

influential contemporary interpretation of the *Aufbau* and argues that it should be read straight-forwardly as a foundationalist project that was abandoned by Carnap mainly for technical reasons. The difficulties can be overcome, he suggests, by applying lessons from Artificial Intelligence regarding the translatability of “knowledge representations.” Carnap’s decision to employ the *Gestalt* theoretic approach to perception in the *Aufbau* has been variously interpreted. *Ulrich Majer* contends that *Gestalt* theory is after all crucial for the aims and methods of Carnap’s project. However, since the pioneering works of Max Wertheimer and Wolfgang Köhler new theories of vision have emerged. Majer examines shortcomings and strengths of the *Aufbau* in the light of one of the most influential of those theories. *Chris Pincock* compares Carnap’s conception of the unity of the sciences with Hans Reichenbach’s and Moritz Schlick’s, who championed a “local” axiomatic approach anchored in coordinative definitions for theoretical concepts. In the period of the *Aufbau* Carnap, on the other hand, thought to ground the unity of science in a universal language and basic “structural” relations.

Carnap’s analysis of the ontological import of formal and empirical theories, advanced in the seminal “Empiricism, Semantics, and Ontology,” has raised much controversy. Quine, famously, argued that Carnap’s answer is flawed both in its reliance on the analytic-synthetic distinction and with respect to the significance of the internal-external distinction. In part 1 of “Carnap and Quine: Internal and External Questions,” *Graham H. Bird* takes on these objections. He points out that Carnap’s distinction of external and internal questions with respect to a linguistic framework is actually embedded in a subtle fourfold distinction and shows how Quine misrepresented Carnap’s position. The focus of part 2 of the essay is on Susan Haack’s interpretation and criticism of “Empiricism, Semantics, and Ontology.” Several commentators have found *prima facie* powerful arguments against Cartesian scepticism in the latter essay and in Carnap’s book *Scheinprobleme in der Philosophie*. Barry Stroud, Michael Williams, and others think these arguments are mistaken. *Thomas Bonk* examines and rejects Stroud’s influential analysis of Carnap’s views on verification and the significance of linguistic frameworks.

The first of the final three essays investigates technical and conceptual difficulties which stand in the way of realizing Carnap’s idea of a universal language that is sufficiently expressive for science and mathematics and includes its meta-language. *Jaakko Hintikka* argues that much of Carnap’s logicism can be salvaged and certain objections by Quine can be removed if “Frege-Russell” logic is replaced by the first-order logic that Hintikka and co-workers have developed. The next essay deals with difficulties which beset the explication of physical disposition predicates by way of reduction sentences proposed by Carnap. Based on the notion of a “defeasible” *a priori* *Wolfgang Spohn* shows how the original account of reduction sentences can be revised in a way that appears to be consistent with the main tenets of Carnap’s empiricism. Last but not least, *Sahotra Sarkar* questions the

conventional wisdom that neo-Kantian thought was the dominant influence on Carnap's dissertation *Der Raum*. He traces and emphasizes the influence of Edmund Husserl as a major source for the epistemological basis of *Der Raum*.

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