From 'Syntax' to 'Semantik' — Carnap's Inferentialism and Its Prospects

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Subject(s): Philosophy, History of Philosophy, Philosophical Traditions, Special Branches of Philosophy
Published by: Instytut Filozofii Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego
Keywords: syntax; semantik; Carnap
Summary/Abstract: The aim of this paper is to provide context for and historical exegesis of Carnap’s alleged move from syntax to semantics. The Orthodox Received View states that there was a radical break, while the Unorthodox Received View holds that Carnap’s syntactical period already had many significant semantical elements. I will argue that both of them are partly right, both of them contain a kernel of truth: it is true that Carnap’s semantical period started after his Logical Syntax of Language — in one sense of semantics. But it is also true that Carnap had already included semantical ideas in LSL: though not (just) in the sense that URV maintains. This latter sense of semantics is related to what is usually called inferentialism, and by getting a clearer picture of Carnap’s original aims, context, and concept-usage, we might be in a better position to approach his alleged inferentialism.
In Carnap's autobiography, he tells the story how one night in January 1931, "the whole theory of language structure" in all its ramifications "came to [him] like a vision". The shorthand manuscript he produced immediately thereafter, he says, "was the first version" of Logical Syntax of Language. This document, which has never been examined since Carnap's death, turns out not to resemble Logical Syntax at all, at least on the surface. Wherein, then, did the momentous insight of 21 January 1931 consist? We seek to answer this question by placing Carnap's shorthand manuscript in the context of Once converted to the semantic paradigm, Carnap attempted to give a criterion of significance that would rule out metaphysics as meaningless while preserving scientific discourse as semantically interpreted. Neurath was convinced from the start that the scientific worldview would be corrupted by a semantic theory of truth. In this dissertation I explore the nature and extent of syntacticism, the view of language as syntax without semantics, and its potential to support a thoroughly empiricist approach to the scientific worldview. I also argue that scientific naturalism about semantics entails Carnap's empiricist criterion of significance; thus, attempts to naturalize semantics are covert extensions of the logical empiricist program. Department. Philosophy. Inferential role semantics (also conceptual role semantics, functional role semantics, procedural semantics, semantic inferentialism) is an approach to the theory of meaning that identifies the meaning of an expression with its relationship to other expressions (typically its inferential relations with other expressions), in contradistinction to denotationalism, according to which denotations are the primary sort of meaning. Carnap-based applications are written in Haskell, but can be compiled to JavaScript to run in standard web browsers. This combination of features makes Carnap ideally suited for educational applications, where ease-of-use is crucial for students and adaptability to different teaching strategies and classroom needs is crucial for instructors. The paper describes Carnap's implementation, along with its current and projected pedagogical applications. 1 Introduction. In what follows we describe the Carnap framework, a free1 and open framework for the development of formal reasoning applications.