

Steve Awodey & Carsten Klein (eds.), *Carnap Brought Home: The View from Jena*. Full Circle: Publications of the Archive of Scientific Philosophy. Volume 2. Chicago: Open Court, 2004. viii + 387pp. 34.95 US\$. ISBN 0-8126-9551-8 (pbk.).

Reviewed by

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This volume offers 16 essays, most of which originated in papers presented in late September of 2001 at a conference in Jena, Carnap's intellectual birthplace. It was in Jena, where Carnap attended university and received his Ph.D. in 1921, that he took his first steps towards philosophical maturity. While the title of the collection suggests a single interpretative theme of the importance of Carnap's Jena origins, most of the essays have little to say about this period of Carnap's intellectual development. Instead, the aim of the editors is to 'bring home' or emphasize how important Carnap's philosophy was and how important it still should be. Thus, in the first essay that acts as an introduction, Gottfried Gabriel insists "that Carnap is a much subtler and more sophisticated philosopher, on many more fronts, than was generally suspected even a few years ago" (3). The danger of such an approach is that it could blind an interpreter to the weaknesses of her subject. I am glad to say that none of these essays errs in this direction, although there is a decidedly pro-Carnap feel to many essays. In the end, we find 16 high-quality essays that convincingly make the case both that Carnap is a philosopher of first-rate importance and that Carnap scholarship has reached a new stage of rigor and thoroughness.

Although the essays are not divided up into parts by topic or theme, I will impose such a division in this review. I begin with a group of five essays that consider Carnap's place in his broader philosophical and intellectual context. Gabriel's "Introduction: Carnap Brought Home" argues for the importance of Dilthey's *Lebensphilosophie* in shaping Carnap's attitudes towards traditional, theoretical metaphysics. Dilthey argued that different metaphysical systems had their roots in the opposing attitudes towards life of the metaphysicians. Gabriel claims that Dilthey's conception of metaphysics influenced Carnap directly and via Carnap's friendship with Herman Nohl, an exponent of Dilthey's views at Jena. The evidence offered here includes Carnap's own autobiographical reflections as well as Carnap's use, in the 1932 essay "Overcoming Metaphysics", of Nohl's linkage between musical composers and metaphysical theories.

Gereon Wolters extends this picture of Carnap's deep engagement with his broader intellectual context by isolating Carnap's philosophical style from his contemporaries in "Styles in Philosophy: The Case of Carnap". Wolters presents Carnap's style as above all collective and objective, and opposes this to the individual and subjective approaches often attributed to German Romantic philosophers such as Novalis and Schleiermacher. Opposing this, Carnap presents philosophical activity as an activity that can and should be cooperative and whose conclusions can be debated objectively, and not resolved simply as expressions of feeling or emotion. While Wolters praises these aspects of Carnap's style, he completely rejects Carnap's noncognitivism about value statements,

which removes practical questions from the realm of collective and objective theoretical resolution.

Moving beyond the world of academic philosophy, Hans-Joachim Dahms examines the intellectual sympathies between the Vienna Circle and modernism in art and architecture. His “*Neue Sachlichkeit* in the Architecture and Philosophy of the 1920s” builds on Galison’s earlier work by offering important new information about the personal connections between Franz Roh, Carnap and Neurath. Dahms relates how Roh, the author of the “decisive manifesto” (361) of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement, not only knew Carnap from his early days at Jena, but even helped Neurath in the turbulent post-World War I period and later introduced Carnap to Neurath.

The philosophical connections between Carnap and Husserl are the focus, in somewhat different ways, of the essays by Jean-Michel Roy and Michael Beaney. Roy argues against Carnap’s own suggestion in the *Aufbau* (section 3) that his constitution system is linked to Husserl’s “mathesis of lived experiences”. The basis for this skepticism is the claim that the main goal of the particular constitution system outlined in the *Aufbau* is the reduction of scientific concepts to the given, where this is interpreted in terms of easily accessible immediate experiences. Husserl must reject both this starting point and the wholly formal logical tools that Carnap uses to constitute his objects. According to Roy, Husserl sought to provide a foundation for formal logic itself based on his ultimate given, and so cannot take formal logic for granted as Carnap does in his constitution system.

Michael Beaney’s essay “Carnap’s Conception of Explication: From Frege to Husserl?” explores a different link between Carnap and Husserl: Carnap’s notion of explication and its connections to Husserl’s use of the same term. In his *Logical Foundations of Probability* Carnap had indeed acknowledged Husserl when he used the term “explication”, but after a careful analysis of Carnap’s practice Beaney concludes that “no genuine influence” (141) of Husserl on Carnap can be found. Instead, Beaney traces back the philosophical roots of the need for explication to the lectures by Frege that Carnap attended at Jena and the need to solve the paradox of analysis.

A second group of five essays in the volume focuses more narrowly on Carnap’s philosophy and its origins in the interactions between Carnap and the other philosophers that he worked with directly. Erich Reck’s “From Frege and Russell to Carnap: Logic and Logicism in the 1920s” presents the case that Carnap’s work in logic and the philosophy of mathematics in the 1920s, while based squarely on the work of Frege and Russell, superseded both Frege’s and Russell’s versions of logicism in several important respects. What made Carnap different was his appreciation of the importance of the formalist approach to mathematics, and his attempt to take the strengths of the formalist program and combine them with logicism. Reck also helpfully points out how this work complicates any rigid division between what is sometimes called the “universalist” philosophy of logic of Frege and Russell and the more contemporary model-theoretic conception of logic of Hilbert and Tarski.

We move into the Vienna Circle and its warring factions in Thomas Uebel's "Carnap, the Left Vienna Circle, and Neopositivist Antimetaphysics". Uebel presents Carnap's opposition to metaphysics as strongly linked, throughout his philosophical development, to the rejection of any theory of truth, especially correspondence theories. It is this opposition to theories of truth, and not any verificationist dogmas, that tie Carnap's work to the members of the left Vienna Circle: Frank, Hahn and above all Neurath. In the course of the protocol sentence debate, Carnap then understandably sides with the left Vienna Circle, and against Schlick, when Schlick moves closer to a correspondence theory. Later, in his semantic phase, Uebel describes Carnap's views on truth as "disquotational" (271), and so as still remaining within this generally antimetaphysical camp.

Perhaps the most technical essay in the collection is Thomas Mormann's "A Quasi-analytical Constitution of Physical Space". Mormann is eager to defend Carnap's procedure of quasi-analysis in the *Aufbau* against Quine's criticism. Quine objected that when Carnap constitutes physical space he uncritically adopts a primitive "is at" relation between perceptual qualities and points of physical space. Mormann responds by outlining how to constitute physical space and this relation using more restricted means than Carnap actually employed. Technical issues aside, it is less than perfectly clear whether or not Mormann's constitution is Carnapian in spirit, as he claims it is. For Mormann argues that Carnap's strategy of first constituting physical space and then embedding qualities in it is bound to fail without investigating why Carnap took this route.

A brief moment in the philosophical relationship between Carnap and Gödel is the focus on Bernd Buldt's "On RC 102-43-14", which refers to the archive number of Carnap's notes of a conversation with Gödel in July of 1931. Carnap records his own and Gödel's remarks about Hilbert's recently proposed ω -rule in the context of Carnap's own work on the foundations of logic that eventually became the *Logical Syntax of Language*. After a detailed examination of the technical and philosophical background to their conversation, Buldt proposes an interpretation of Carnap's remarks that are considerably more charitable than what Carnap initially appears to be saying. An important innovation here is Buldt's reconstruction of what Carnap would like an ω -rule to do in his Language I, and of how this goal differs from Hilbert's likely conception of an ω -rule.

Carnap and Gödel remain the focus in "How Carnap Could Have Replied to Gödel", jointly authored by Steve Awodey and A.W. Carus. Awodey and Carus are concerned with Gödel's later unpublished criticisms of the "syntactic" philosophy of mathematics that Gödel saw in Carnap's *Logical Syntax of Language*. They maintain that Gödel's criticisms are unfair, and rest on a misunderstanding of Carnap's position. The essential difference between Gödel and Carnap is that what Gödel saw as absolute, theoretical claims about, for example, mathematics, Carnap presented as proposals for languages, for example, proposals for how to relate mathematical terms to the rest of the language of science. Thus, Awodey and Carus contrast Gödel's platonistic attitude towards the continuum hypothesis, as a claim with a pre-established truth-value, with the more tolerant, open-ended Carnapian attitude.

In any volume on Carnap we would expect to find some discussion of his most famous philosophical partner and opponent, Quine, and here we find two contributions by experts on this complex relationship. Thomas Ricketts, in “Frege, Carnap and Quine: Continuities and Discontinuities”, builds on his previous work on the Carnap-Quine controversy by linking Carnap’s and Frege’s approach to truth and contrasting this shared tradition with Quine’s alternative approach. Ricketts sees Carnap’s *Logical Syntax of Language*, with its emphasis on correct operations with formal languages as the “analogue and successor” (195) to Frege’s conception of the laws of logic as the laws of truth. Against this, Ricketts presents Quine as accepting the ordinary conception of truth as unproblematic, and argues that this leads to Quine’s distinctive focus on ordinary language.

In “Carnap’s Program and Quine’s Question” Richard Creath articulates Carnap’s conception of philosophy in the *Logical Syntax of Language* and outlines a defense of this approach as “more durable” (292) than Quine and many others anticipated. For Creath, Carnap’s philosophy involves making proposals for how to do mathematics and science and an associated pragmatic principle of tolerance allowing for various competing proposals to be worked out. Creath then presents Quine’s objections to Carnap as a demand that we be able to tell, using very restricted empirical means, whether or not ordinary practice fits one of these proposals. Rejecting this demand, Creath concedes that Carnap must still offer some way that we can empirically determine which proposal is being implemented, if not in ordinary language, then at least in rigorous scientific disciplines.

Rounding out the volume are four essays that present Carnap’s philosophical projects as currently viable or at least worthy of serious consideration today. “Tolerating Semantics: Carnap’s Philosophical Point of View”, by Alan Richardson, emphasizes the importance of the principle of tolerance for correctly interpreting the role of semantics in Carnap’s overall philosophical program. Linking his interpretation with earlier work by Creath, Richardson dubs Carnap a “conceptual engineer” (74) who articulates a proposal for how to think about logic, mathematics and science that does justice to the success of these disciplines, but who is not motivated by any overarching philosophical commitment such as empiricism. Richardson argues that there are no constraining matters of fact for Carnap prior to the adoption of a linguistic framework, and so there are no limitations on the linguistic frameworks that Carnap can adopt.

Michael Friedman seeks to extend another aspect of Carnap’s philosophy into a viable contemporary position in his “Carnap and the Evolution of the A Priori”. Friedman argues that Carnap’s distinctive conception of the a priori as relativized to a choice of language had its roots both in Carnap’s work on physics and geometry in the 1920s, and later, after the *Aufbau*, in logic and mathematics proper. Carnap’s original problem was to see how to relate the abstract, mathematical structures needed for general relativity theory to the concrete experiences that we actually have. Unlike Schlick, who solved this problem by coordinating the abstract with the concrete, Carnap’s constitutional system “is already attached to the empirical world from the very beginning” (110). Even though

Carnap went on to abandon these epistemological concerns, and replace them with problems from the “logic of science”, Friedman suggests that Carnap’s epistemological program has benefits over Quine’s alternative influential conception of epistemology.

Clashing somewhat with many other contributors to this volume, Carsten Klein’s “Carnap on Categorical Concepts” places Carnap in a tradition of philosophers who sought to describe the fundamental metaphysical categories of the world. Klein first summarizes the proposals offered by Frege, Russell and Wittgenstein for how to articulate categorical concepts and see how they apply. Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* had argued that claims about categories are illegitimate, and Klein relates how Carnap appears to respond to Wittgenstein in *Logical Syntax*. He goes on to complain that Carnap’s solution is unacceptable, though, as it involves a rejection of an “absolutistic” (312) conception of language presupposed by the search for fundamental categories.

Finally, A.W. Carus, making his second appearance in the volume, deploys Carnap’s philosophy to undermine the work of Sellars, and by extension the work of those such as Brandom and McDowell who trace some of their ideas to Sellars. Carus focuses on Sellars’ conception of the “manifest image”, i.e. our everyday reasoning about the world, and its relation to the image of the world presented by science. Unlike Carnap who offered maximal flexibility in his pragmatic attitude towards the selection of linguistic frameworks, Sellars is presented as overly intellectually conservative and out of step with the analytic tradition. Thus, unlike many analytic philosophers, and incorrectly according to Carus, Sellars thought there must be something that a correct philosophy will preserve from traditional philosophy.

These short summaries fail to do justice to the arguments, both historical and non-historical, found in these contributions, but they hopefully convey the wide-ranging nature of this volume and its importance for Carnap scholars and for those working on logical empiricism more generally. I would add that I expect the remaining volumes in the *Full Circle* series to further bolster the range and depth of scholarly work on Carnap’s philosophy. I end with a brief point of concern. If there is anything like a single theme running through many of the essays, it is Carnap’s wish to move beyond traditional philosophy, and his eventual appeal to the principle of tolerance in order to obtain these anti-philosophical goals. While many contributors note that the principle of tolerance has deep philosophical implications, often bordering on transcendental idealism, very little space is devoted to explaining exactly how such a philosophically loaded principle can be used to transcend traditional philosophy. Hopefully this is an issue that supporters of Carnap’s philosophy will turn to with greater focus in the future.