REVISTA Peri

V.16 N.01 2024

FLORIANÓPOLIS/SC - BRASIL
ISSN 2175-1811

SENSE (SINN) AS A PSEUDO-PROBLEM AND SENSE AS A RADICAL PROBLEM: A READING OF THE MOTIVATIONS OF QUINE AGAINST CARNAP

Lucas Ribeiro Vollet[1]

Abstract: *The conflict between Quine and Carnap over the notion of Sense represents a fundamental debate in the 20th century. The question represents the state to which skepticism about a clear theoretical awareness of the limits of understanding of sentences can reach. It is about whether, as with moral, aesthetic, and metaphysical notions, the characterization of Sense would represent an unnecessary super-notion unable to figure in decidable sentences, as true or false sentences. Going deeper, the problem addresses the ability to characterize the discernment of truth conditions for modal propositions and propositional attitudes, promising an identity criterion stronger than the extensional one for logically compatible propositions. Our article will argue that Quine's naturalism applies skepticism (about intensions) not to enact the absence of a problem or the pseudo-problematic nature of the question of Sense; on the contrary, he believes that the question of Sense is incorrectly framed. It is a semantically dogmatic expression of a broader scientific challenge, present in the practice of providing coherence to empirical investigation and our social production of consensus and paradigms of meaning. We will call this the radical problem generated by the idea of Sense. This shifts to the problem of the dispute between rational parameters and paradigms of linguistic consensus, bringing the question to its true enigmatic face.*

Keywords: Sense, Semantic skepticism, extensionalism, Quine, Carnap

[1] Doutor em filosofia pela Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina. Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6300-491X. E-Mail: luvollet@gmail.com.

REVISTA Peri
V.16 N.01 2024
FLORIANÓPOLIS/SC - BRASIL
ISSN 2175-1811

There is a challenge involving Sense, but is it a challenge that needs to be framed as the problem of Sense of sentences? Frege and the obscurities around the notion of Sense

When we talk about the problem of Sense, *Sinn*, understood as the second element postulated in Frege's work (1892), which inaugurated a chain of continued reflection on the extra-referential dimension of meaning, the first characteristic of the challenge is to decide whether controversies and polemics about Sense are decidable with the same degree of rational rigor as controversies over reference. But when it appeared in its more modern face, the concept of Sense seemed to serve another purpose. The enigma introduced at the beginning of Frege's work was the problem of identity. The question was thus framed within an ongoing discussion about the nature of mathematical conceptualization and its usefulness for organizing the structure of correlations between propositions and their possible instances, locating recurrences, and generalizing the use of sentences. The S*ense* was introduced as an objective element of meaning, which would explain possible exceptions to Leibniz's law of intersubstitution of coreferential expressions *Salva Veritate.*

In the now classic "*Uber Sinn and Bedeutung*", Frege introduces the concept of Sense (*Sinn*) to explain exceptions to Leibniz's law, reconciling his theory - mostly extensional - with the disconcerting idea, however, confirmed by linguistic facts, that some sentences may not conserve the truth value when synonyms and therefore co-referential terms are replaced by one another. The explanation suggests that different modes of reference contain an entirely independent structural complexity that cannot be generalized by the same rule as the extension; so sentences with "the morning star" is not evaluated by the same rule as sentences containing "the evening star", which may map the evaluation of "The morning star is the evening star" sometimes to truth and sometimes to a falsehood. This is very obviously observed when these expressions are substituted for one another in a subordinate sentence, in the attribution of a propositional attitude: "a man of antiquity thought that the morning star is the evening star". The use of quotation marks would be one of the resources of language to highlight this structural heterogeneity, but this character of *exception*, given by extra-systematic resources, leaves the problem woefully underdeveloped.

The author does not develop his theory in order to determine the structural complexity of the dimension of Sense. Questions about what degree of force or complexity - the higher-order rules - is added to the determination of a sentence's reference when determining its Sense, are left out. This

question is thus left out: What is it that one fails to know when one fails to encode the identity of the morning star and the evening star? Is it an inability to codify into a rule the belief that the morning star *is* the evening star? Could it be the inability to encode the equality of rational strategies involved in the use of morning star or evening star in a sentence? He who does not know the *Sense* or the identity of *Reference* of those two stars loses the ability to cancel the difference between the morning star and the evening star in an inferential or proof context, but what kind of damage is that? Is it an inability to codify the metaphysical, mathematical, or scientific limits of those identity codifications? If the damage is merely logical, in the sense that this person does not know that a conclusion about the morning star concludes neither less nor more about the evening star, all he needs is to know the sufficient conditions for something to be labeled as the morning and evening star. It is not clear how the problem of determining this knowledge (of sufficient conditions) is different from the problem of determining the encoding of referential identity in a context of inference or supposition. For example, one takes as the premise of an argument that the morning star *is* the evening star. The metaphysical, mathematical, or scientific determination of this inferential usage as a kind of overinterpretation of the belief, or the assertive strategy involved in the use of the expressions, an intension or *possible extension*, etc., is unnecessary since all we need is to make our assumptions about possible extensions explicit in the premises of an argument. The problem will lie in the theoretical burden of this assumption, that is, in the way in which we determine the cost of this assumption for the theoretical system, or, in a more modern and externalist determination of the problem: how, in our strategic activity of asserting, we can design the fixed point of the determination of the assumption of the truth of a sentence in which it cannot be reversed into falsehood.

We apologize if in the above paragraph we have included many riddles that make the question of Sense, from the outset, look like a pseudo-problem. The purpose was to start the article by reminding how incomplete Frege's characterization was and how it could lead to a set of problems that has nothing to do with the problem of *Sense* or of determining *tolerable ambiguity*. In general, the Fregean notion of Sense appears as a synonymic identity, which explains what someone knows when he knows that two sentences mean the same regardless of knowing their reference. The author himself, however, did not have a simplistic or merely synonymous view of the problem of identity; on the contrary, through his extensive reflection on the nature of quantification, he is among those responsible for bringing to the modern discussion the resources of sophisticated mathematical theories (such as Set theory) to determine the correlations organized by semantic

composition. Synonym does not seem a knowledge as sophisticated as mathematical knowledge. This apparent conflict between the sophistication of his conception of identity, and the simplified way he sometimes frames the problem of Sense, as one about synonymy, is perhaps the main trigger for a skeptical reaction. For there are unexamined issues that deserve attention. The further question, that is, how to distinguish conditions in which something coincides in intension from conditions in which it coincides in extension, is not discussed by the author.

As we've seen, Frege leaves too much unattended. For him, it is enough that there is an aspect in which knowing that two sentences have the same meaning guarantees the inferential connection between them, that is, it guarantees that the conclusion about one can conclude neither less nor more about the other. If it is possible to conclude about one more or less than about the other, the pattern projected by both is different – they have a different Sense. This knowledge can be generated as a tautology by synonym substitution or as a kind of knowledge of the impossibility of one sentence being true and the other false, for example, the impossibility of someone who knows that the morning star and the evening star are synonymous to claim that (i) “the morning star is in our galaxy” and deny that (ii) “the evening star is in our galaxy”. It is not clear, however, what kind of knowledge this is, and long before semantic externalism questioned the exclusively *a priori* nature of co-referentiality knowledge, W.O. Quine, the author that we will follow in this article, had already spread suspicious about the nature of that identity, the coherence of rules in a system and our ability to quantify over it or to inductively map an extensional reference to this broad coherent systematicity.

It is clear that there is a challenge. But is it clear that it is a Sense challenge? Let us suppose that there is a Sense problem. We can call this whole problem, which involves our intuition about knowledge of the inferential role, or the role that a sentence occupies as the conclusion of an argument, the problem of the tolerable ambiguity of the sentential message. So-called, we support the suggestion that there is such a thing as the *Sense* problem, as the problem of unifying messages that are ambiguous in their reference and therefore are not subjects of Leibniz's law. Furthermore, there is the problem of determining the tolerable ambiguity of a sentence, determining its role in inferences, or what it is tolerable to conclude from its assertion, as well as what it cannot fail to conclude if asserted. But this suggestion is not inevitable. It is not inevitable to say that there is a "Sense", beyond the reference of the sentences. Finding the problem doesn't mean that there aren't other, possibly better, diagnoses for the problematic object. For W.O. Quine, solving the problem of the inferential potential of the sentence and the coherence of a system of truths, or its role in

reasoning, would amount to determining the place of holistic revision of the assignment of truth to that sentence, or the point at which its assumption of truth cannot be reversed (into falsehood) without an unsustainable theoretical cost. None of this, it seems, claims the notion of analyticity, Sense, or *a priori* knowledge of referential identity.

One of the ways of questioning the problem of Sense is spreading doubt about the mentalistic nature of the supposed "identity" between co-referential expressions. If what characterizes the impossibility of (i) being true and (ii) false is the fact that the solution to the problem of one establishes the conditions of proof of the second, this can be determined by determining the point at which the revision of one implies the revision of the other. None of this appeals to a mentalistic theory. The problem is one about the place in which the assumption of the truth of those sentences involves the same burden for the theoretical system. This is still far from the identification of a stronger or more theoretical knowledge than the knowledge of extensional co-referentiality plus the challenge of identifying different points of revision for co-referential sentences. Some would say, and Quine is among them, that the idea of an "impossibility of being false" is an idea that gains technical substance within a theory of logical truth, and appears as unnecessary obscurity within a theory of analyticity (or of Sense, or mentalist correlation).

We will now look at how Carnap (1891-1970) challenged Quinean skepticism. The basis of the argument is the premise that a theory of intension, as a technical form of specifying referential identity in modal contexts or propositional attitudes, such a theory is possible as a decidable theory. It is not, as far as its normal usage goes, inside the Carnapian list of external questions or the Wittgensteinian list of pseudo-questions. If it is possible, through investigations into linguistic behavior and the regularities of use of sentences, to determine how these sentences have the potential to be understood coherently – even by a machine without contact with the external world of the "reference" – Carnap thinks it is not rational to dismiss it as a theory about obscurities. What counts as obscurities, for Carnap, are extra-theoretical questions. Questions about Sense may be resolved inside a theory of Sense for a language, and therefore, even if pragmatically revisable, are not obscurities.

Carnap and the theoretical determination of the notion of Sense

Frege was not the only or the most systematic author to explore the concept of Sense. Rudolph Carnap had the courage of preserving a theory about synonymy and analyticity, even

within a tradition of thought highly committed to extensional reductionism, plus physicalist and mechanistic anti-metaphysical positions. This presence of mind to move within a hostile theoretical environment, smuggling theories that hardly can be reconciled with the mentioned intellectual market, needs to be studied in order to learn something from it. Against Quine, Carnap defended that "instead of using the behavioristic method, the investigator (of intensions) may use the method of structural analysis" (Carnap, 1955, 44). In *Meaning and Synonymy in Natural Languages* (1955), Carnap famously suggested his thesis on the construction of intensional theories about language that would be complementary to extensional theories. The general idea is that a language can give reasonable predictability to equivalences of meaning if intensional predicates, such as synonymy and analyticity, can be expressed in that language, and if general intensional conditions for describing the application of a property to a case can be subjected to empirical tests that determine their correctness: "the analysis of intension for a natural language is a scientific procedure, methodologically as sound as the analysis of extension" (Carnap, 1955, 36). The empirical test for Carnap can be done behaviorally or structurally, that is, in the latter case, through the "method of studying the internal structure" (Carnap, 1955, 44) of the responses of an interlocutor. By studying how the answers adapt to fit different questions, this method takes responsibility for mapping the marginal contours of a property, allowing one to identify whether, for example, the blue property is between two other colors. The boundary of the intension of blue will be between those two colors. So we would have the tolerable ambiguity of the expression. This does not decide extensionally what is “blue” *necessarily*, but it does give a mappable scope of application to this property – it distinguishes it successfully from the other colors.

Carnap's reduction of the intensional theoretical universe to the model of non-contradictory possibilities in a language places the burden of the problem of “understanding” (or the comprehensive domain of sentences) on the systematic coherency of the language that maps the equivalences and incompatibilities of that sentence. It does not need mentalistic presuppositions about some internal fact of knowledge. One may program the understanding of the margin of tolerable ambiguity, so a machine can learn it. The language where those predicates and properties "make sense" has to be theorizable by a second-order mapping correlation, where the systematic compatibility or non-contradictory nature of the intension can be generated mechanically – by a robot: "the intension of a predicate can be determined for a robot, just as well as for a human speaker" (Carnap, 1980, 45-6).

Strictly speaking, we will argue that Carnap could move smoothly inside that challenging theme because his intensional theory was not only empirically testable but also applicable to machines. He then could avoid the dramas of mentalism and platonism. This means that intensional theories were tested according to the semantic simplicity criteria so valued in the technical universe of positivism. Quine was not reassured by this answer, however. Quine's critique had to add a new aspect—albeit organically connected to his first response model—to adapt to the new problem. The paths used by the author in this new answer are not in his texts traditionally engaged with the problem of analyticity (*Two Dogmas, Carnap and Logical Truth, Truth by Convention*). It is in *Ontological Relativity and Natural Kinds* where we will look for these lines of response paths developed by Quine.

But before looking at this new strategy, we should note that Carnap loaded the burden of validation for cognitive synonyms on the coherent capacity of the language in which that *equivalence of sense* occurs. If featherless bipeds and human beings coincide extensionally but not intensionally, there must be, according to a criterion of comprehension which is superior (higher-order) to the extensional one, a dimension of categorial-ontological understanding that codifies the incompatibility between them. The systematic coherence of the rules of the system must be reached in higher-order fields of study. We call it a categorial dimension because it involves a mapping of the second-order aspect of the challenge of codifying identity. That codification is a burden on the language to *reduce* one entity to the other. When we call it a burden is because this dimension has to be predicted in the semantic universe as much as the referential value is predicted, otherwise, to understand the mentioned difference of *Sense*, we would have to go beyond semantics, and we would be left with the mysterious result of not being able to express the difference between men and featherless birds in semantic and truth-functional compositions. If the language cannot predict that difference in its categorial classifications, the difference will not be mapped to an intension, and one could say that the difference between human beings and featherless birds *does not make sense*, or even worst, using Wittgenstein's jargon, it is unspeakable in that language.

Carnap's intensionalism is a way of proving that it is possible to generate the categorial incompatibility of these two classes of things. In this dimension, called categorial to express its incompatibility in contexts of second-order classification – the codification of the "kind" that is a biped, featherless, and not a bird – we would have the best of both worlds: fine-grained distinctions between numerically indistinguishable things and intensional super-identifications of these characteristics. We would be founding categories of things that are similar to each other in a specific

point of resemblance. Those specific points of resemblance, which we can call categorial resemblance, is the point where human beings can figure in semantic compositions and featherless bipeds cannot be substituted to it preserving truth. By determining techniques for the ideal specification, Carnap can have the best of two words: fine-grained distinction and semantic generalization. All of that without the costs of platonism. This point is the controversial point where scientific nuanced classifications are semantically absorbed, i.e., when the language achieves the maturity to express some scientific necessity as a semantic necessity: “Scientific neologism is itself just linguistic evolution gone self-conscious, as science is self-conscious common sense” (Quine, 2013, p. 4).

Quine’s answer: a single face for the question of necessary truth

As we've seen, determining Sense allows one to give semantic precision to a margin of tolerable ambiguity. We can, for example, determine the ambiguity present in the numerical or extensional indiscernibility between men and featherless bipeds. Kinds, resemblances of classes, coherence between different rules, all of that is present in the determination of that margin of Sense. To know the Sense allows one to give nuance and precision to his sentences. It is this “best of both worlds” – desired by Carnap – that Quine contested. In the last chapter, we sketched the hypothesis that Quine saw an intensional theory as a mere problem about the role of the sentence in a place of revision inside the whole language. By enriching the systematic coherence of a set of rules, for example, to identify a natural type or a species, we are not working in the semantic dimension, but in the dimension of natural science. Quine has always found it difficult to separate these two problems as if there were an *a priori* (analytical) and a *posteriori (synthetic)* problem regarding the determination of this superstructural coherence of our systems of meaning. This hypothesis allows us to develop the subsequent hypothesis that, for Quine, what one calls categorial resemblances are nothing but superstructural reified scientific classifications within language. Those classifications change the inferential role of sentences, as it changes their place of possible revision. There is nothing emeritus about it. The evolution of science may bring semantic results, as it institutionalizes some connections and sells them as *a priori*, but to call it "categorial-meaningful" connections is just undesired canonization. We may push this conclusion further, saying that something cannot be scientifically necessary and semantic necessary, without being the same thing – a revisable logical necessity. For Quine, there is a single face for the question of necessary truth. When we can specify the identity content of modal propositions, we are not just quantifying over it or reducing it, nor

even translating it. We are enriching our meaning comprehension, reviewing the universe of meaning and analyticity. This is the same activity of intelligence, and cannot be divided into an empirical and a semantical phase.

The scientific practice involves the whole of the task at hand. Semantics does not exist independently of scientific classification. The argument that traces the path in this *naturalistic* direction can be seen in the way Quine defines the idea of type or category. In *Natural Kinds*, Quine explores the idea that our knowledge of kinds represents unredeemed notes, in the sense that these specifications are included in a theory of meaning only when a scientific theory emerges in the future and fixes its exact contribution to the truth conditions of a subjunctive conditional utterance. For him, turning a notion of "kind" respectable – we may add: semantic respectable – equals turning it superfluous:

> Disposition terms and subjunctive conditionals in these areas, where suitable senses of similarity and kind are forthcoming, suddenly turn respectable; respectable and, in principle, superfluous. In other domains, they remain disreputable and practically indispensable. They may be seen perhaps as unredeemed notes; the theory that would clear up the unanalyzed underlying similarity notion in such cases is still to come. An example is a disposition called intelligence-the ability, vaguely speaking, to learn quickly and to solve problems. Sometimes, whether in terms of proteins or colloids or nerve nets or overt behavior, the relevant branch of science may reach the stage where a notion of 'similarity' can be constructed capable of making even the notion of intelligence respectable. And superfluous. (Quine, 1969, 138).

The project of semanticizing specifier terms, reaching "intensions", like the similarities of kinds, is thus the very project of maturing scientific understanding. It is a problem capable of being approached, improved, converted into simpler problems, and even solved, within a scientific theory; but not through an exclusive semantic study:

> As a non-semantical matter concerning what exists, ontology is a legitimate enterprise; as a semantical one concerning the global relation between words and the world, it is not. The only objective and scientifically discoverable word–world relation is the relation between observation sentences and stimulation, which is a straightforward causal relation, and not a semantical relation (Kemp, 2012, 49).

In fact, the correct way to put the question is to characterize the semantic and scientific questions within the same dimension of challenge. In this dimension, the semantic pattern used to standardize the empirically discovered correlations serves to determine the general conditions in which, if the sentence is true, it does not include falsehood among the possibilities of its model. Without a semantic determination of correlation patterns, empirical findings would not assume a *stable status* and could not be generalized into a compositional theory of meaning. These standards are, however, revisable. Against Carnap and the whole project of semantic empiricism, one can therefore say that the language of science is not subject to an *a priori* semantic condition, but it is

the very meaning of general notions of similarity that is matured while it enriches - and sometimes explodes - our prior semantic notions to recreate the parameters of reasoning within science:

> In this career of the similarity notion, starting in its innate phase, developing over the years in the light of accumulated experience, passing then from the intuitive phase into theoretical similarity, and finally disappearing altogether, we have a paradigm of the evolution of unreason into science. (Quine, 1969, 138)

After these quotes, we can say that the criticism of Carnap boils down to Quine's accusation that the former confused the nature of the challenge present in specifying granular differences. The point of controversy, for Quine, does not reside in how we determine categorial concepts or intensional contents for specifying objects (in opposition to merely quantifying over them), but in how we elaborate strategies to reduce entities from one ontology to another (*Ontological Relativity*). The challenge, therefore, is the same, but different. It is the same, as it involves the difficulty of creating super-mapping referential instruments or semantics for intensional objects like "possibles"; but it is different in that it faces this challenge in a sphere of ontological relativity and scientific progress and not as a theory of intensions for machine learning. Scientific classifications evolve towards better specifications as they enrich our semantic knowledge and amplify our rational parameters in order to advance scientific inquiry, not as it fits or adapts to a prior semantic *a priori* frame.

The problem of Sense as the moment of problematization of the immeasurable part of Meaning

We can now say that Quine had a complex view of the problems for meaning determining generated where the notion of synonymy or Sense appears. For him, these problems are generated wherever certain superstructural layers add something more than the mere question about the reference to the sentence evaluation problem. We can face this problem of complexification or enrichment at different moments of practical life, as in the attempt to triangulate a common understanding of sentences uttered by speakers of different languages. Perhaps, the most decisive moment where this problem is faced is in the attempt to provide common parameters for the evaluation of sentences in different scientific theoretical paradigms. However, Quine belongs to a phase of analytic philosophy that raised suspicion against “transcendental”, “mentalist”, “a priori” attempts to determine models of rationality as parameters for consolidating the coherence of our systems. These questions can be answered, like truth or falsehood questions, but only if we have an algorithm powerful enough to program these answers. The problem is: that mathematical ingenuity has costs. It is possible to build any semantic theory through set theory, but this will not

automatically solve problems of translation and scientific commensurability. The determination of powerful algorithms enriches our extensional notion in a way that generates the re-coding of the target sentences. It generates the hermetic, particular, relative determination of their correlation pattern. This re-coding solves the problem of "Sense" at the cost of invoking new problems, such as the incommensurability between theoretical paradigms and the indeterminacy of translation. Every time something like "Sense" appears in our discourse, the language that makes sense is plunged into a particular complexity, inaccessible from the *outside*. The sentence can be retrieved by the new codes, but not in any ontological context. And there will be no super-ontological context, like physicalism, that will provide the universal translation rule for all languages.

Quine thinks something is amplifying or overflowing in the passage from an extensional to an intensional knowledge, and it is science's job to make that transition in a non-dogmatic manner. Carnap's theory fails precisely to preserve the non-dogmatic and objective character of meaning formation when it passes from a theory of extension to one of intension.

It was exactly the burden on language second-order (or categorial) capability, implied by Carnap's thesis, that made Quine build his new strategy of criticism in *Ontological Relativity*. In this paper, Quine observes how any strategy of intensional translation involves familiar strategies of numerical correlation that are, at best, "artificially devising models to satisfy laws that expressions in a non-explicated sense had been meant to satisfy" (Quine, 1969, p. 43). Given that development, we can go on to discuss the limits of Carnap's presuppositions. First off, Carnap's thesis presupposes that it is possible to give identity criteria to languages. Second, he fails to see that specifications of fine-grained classes of compatible things are no less problematic than the job of classical reductionism, for example, of reducing abstract entities to physical entities. Third, Carnap needs to presuppose the polemic assumption that scientific classification and semantic categorization can coincide. This presupposes that there is a singular and universal tendency of language to express meaning for any different scientific paradigms. It would be as if the categories of language could not fail to express the truth (or falsehood) of sentences in theoretical physics, biology, or psychology, unless, of course, they are used outside their normal usage, as an expression of metaphysical adventures.

Quine, against the first assumption, argues that there are no such extra-linguistic criteria of identity, even for extensions (*Ontological Relativity*): "Within the parochial limits of our own language, we can continue as always to find extensional talk clearer than intensional. (…). At the

level of radical translation, on the other hand, extension itself goes inscrutable." (Quine, 1969, p. 35). The approach to the second problem, i.e., Carnap's failure to see that intensional classification is no less problematic than reductionism, can be made along the following lines. For Quine, there is "no clear difference between specifying a universe of discourse - the range of the variables of quantification - and reducing that universe to some other." (Quine, 1969, p. 43). Both tasks are equally problematic. Hence intensional specification would need a theoretical reductionism similar to that used for reaching an unrestricted domain of quantification, blurring the lines between extension and intension over again. Clarification of an expression would be akin to "supplanting it by that of number" (Quine, 1969, p. 43). That type of clarification, as we've seen, artificializes the notion of meaning through set theory. It 'overcodes' meaning, adding a cost of obscurity to the clarification sought, like a translator who has to reconstruct or over-code the categorical basis of comparison between two languages in order to translate one's sentences into the others. We may argue, following Quine's naturalistic spirit, that the hard problem of reductionism is not a semantic task, but a scientific one.

Against the third supposition, Quine argues that the language's ability to generate a theoretical understanding or comprehension of its patterns of (fine-grained) codification does not allow for mechanical reproduction, valid universally for any scientific classification: "it makes no sense to say what the objects of a theory are, beyond saying how to interpret or reinterpret that theory in another" (Quine, 1969, p. 50). One can program a machine to recognize the pattern, but that machine will fail to map an *objective* value outside that language. Carnap's mistake was to think of this theoretical relativity as a mere external question, like an arbitrary choice. Quine states, hence:

> Ontological relativity is not to be clarified by any distinction between kinds of universal predication - unfactual and factual, external and internal. It is not a question of universal predication. When questions regarding the ontology of a theory are meaningless absolutely and become meaningful relative to a background theory, this is not in general because the background theory has a wider universe. One is tempted, as I said a little while back, to suppose that it is; but one is then wrong. (Quine, 1969, 53)

If, as Quine argues, the translation of one expression into another is a no less complex challenge than the theoretical reduction of one entity to the other, what Carnap was unknowingly seeking to solve is a much older problem: that of the possibility of speaking of the extensional universe from outside this extensional universe, that is, from a super-ontology of intensions. Quine's criticism thus becomes much more severe: he accuses Carnap of overflowing the universe of reference, only to theoretically determine it (through a theory of intensions). The next objection was

not raised by Quine, but it is possible to suspect that, since Carnap cannot avoid that inflationary consequence, he disrespects his positivist conception (the distinction between internal and external questions), by trying to speak of the extensional theory from the outside, from an extra-extensional point of view. Here, Carnap fails to avoid semantics from degenerating into some kind of transcendental post-metaphysical position about the *possible meaning* or the *a priori categories* of scientific statements.

Quine's critique of Carnap can be thus summarized. The author thinks that finding rules of universal translation (the aims of mentalism), as well as rules of reduction from one ontology (the aims of physicalism) to another, is an artificial way of avoiding the inevitable enrichment or inflation that must take place when our empirical theories need to specify nuanced or granular differences, which are found in the progress of systematizing the coherence of the extensional language study. This assumes that Quine is not a mere vulgar extensionalist. First, he thinks even the extension is inscrutable if it is outside a background theory. Second, his theory is a sophisticated kind of anti-intensionalism. Quine would have little trouble rejecting a stronger intensionalism, like J. Katz's[2], because for him it is the intensional problem itself that distorts the real challenge at hand: when we seek to select translation hypotheses and distinguish the correct from the incorrect one, we are not looking for a theory of synonym, but for a theory about the (scientific) enrichment of the categorial universe available to semantics, through the empirical contribution of natural science (and other social-cultural enterprises). Where language cannot semantically codify its fine-grained distinctions, intensional predicates lose their utility, and then we need to go beyond semantics, to the fields of scientific empirical Inquiry, in order to *make sense* of fine-grained categorial distinctions and identities (specific resemblances).

In short, Quine's critique of Carnap has a recognizable pattern. The American author dwells on nuanced technical details of the problem of analyticity, types, and categories, but what he fears, more than anything, is a very general aspect of the Carnapian approach: its tendency to an *a priori* determination of the parameters of signification, and its tendency to determine mathematically – like a computer program – the codification of the shared assumptions of empirical science. Quine's skepticism does not distrust the power of mathematics to codify the conceptual superstructure of

[2] According to Katz: "In both the Frege/Carnap case and the Quine case, indeterminacy arises from the exclusion of intensional evidence in the choice of translations" (Katz, 2003, p. 29) and "an autonomous theory of sense (…) enables us to strengthen the constraints on sense- determination by allowing non-referential considerations—specifically, evidence about the sense properties and relations of expressions—to play a role in choosing among competing translations" (Katz 2003, 29-30)

science, or to manage correlations between different languages. But he doubts that this is a Platonic activity, taking place independently of the progress of science and the social crises of communication that ask for the revision of our logical and rational parameters.

Conclusion: Quine's view of the philosophical dimension of the problem of determining the difference between meaning and pseudo-meaning

Quine's criticisms imply that the transition from a theory of extension to a theory of intension, searched by Carnap, is not free of cost. The cost is the inflation of entities, and that asks for better mathematical techniques of correlation. This shift involves a shift from a theory of the structure of extensional mapping to a theory of the *superstructure* of categorial correlations in language. Of course, it is possible to describe superstructures mathematically by structuralist methods, categorial grammar, second-order rules, etc., but this is just an artificial way of describing the subsumption of one theory by another background theory. The merits of mathematics are undeniable, but just as an artifice. The mathematical method does not touch on the real debate between those theories and does not mention what is *learned* by the subsumption of one by the other. What remains is, for Quine, a more complex challenge. When we move from a theory of reference to one of intension, we enter the unstable and extra-theoretical region where science and philosophy are at the same level, where many parameters of rationality are in dispute, and only with great care do we avoid falling into a kind of transcendentalism – or *a priori* semantics: "Quine seeks to convert philosophy into something continuous with, and indeed included in, natural science" (Kemp, 2006, 2). So the difference between meaning and pseudo-meaning is stable but not unmovable and depends not on *a priori* theories about categories or syntactic structures but on an open dialogue between different scientific hypotheses and shifts of axes in rational parameters.

There is, in the discussion selected by Quine, his involvement with a non-favorite theme of analytic philosophy: the question of the formation of meaning: "Language is a social art. In acquiring it we have to depend entirely on intersubjectively available cues as to what to say and when. Hence there is no justification for collating linguistic meanings" (Quine, 2013, p. xxix). When we speak of the formation of meaning, we enter the theme of social construction and history. Quine's case is unique because his thesis does not discuss directly with the continental discussion factions. But we can glean from him a specific answer, derived from within his tradition, to typically continental questions about the nature of the anthropological and social formation of meaning (analytical necessity) and of science (non-analytical necessity). For the American author,

the enrichment of the universe of mappable reference is an event in which several theoretical contributions, including philosophical ones, take part. It is an event which, in the end, is expressed not as a mere translation manual, mentalist correlation (intentionality), nor as a mere reduction to physics or a set-theoretical approach. It is broad inflation or inclusion of new meaning regularities and new analytic truths, along with the revision of old ones, as we choose one or another of our blocks of sentences as more or less vulnerable to empirical testing. That enrichment is a big event, less like a mechanical rule (taking place within a language or a scientific paradigm), and more like an organic translation solution – able to maximize the approximation between languages – or revolutionary subsumption of scientific concepts through an organic fusion of their parameters of rationality.

Referências bibliográficas

CARNAP, R. Meaning and synonymy in natural languages. **Philosophical Studies**, n. 6, p. 33-47, 1955.

KATZ, J. J. **Sense, Reference, and Philosophy**. Oxford University Press, 2003.

FREGE, G. Sense and Reference. **The Philosophical Review**, v. 57, n. 3, p. 209-230, 1948.

KEMP, G. **Quine**: A Guide for the Perplexed. New York, London: Continuum, 2006.

_____. **Quine versus Davidson**: Truth, reference, and meaning. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

QUINE, W. V. O. Mr. Strawson on Logical Theory. **Mind**, v. 62, n. 248, p. 433-451, 1953.

_____. **Word and Object**. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2013.

_____. Two Dogmas of Empiricism. In: _____. **From a Logical Point of View.** Harper Torchbooks. 1963.

_____. **Theories and Things**, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981

_____. **Ontological Relativity and Other Essays**. New York: Columbia University Press, 1969.

_____. Carnap and Logical Truth. In: _____. **The Ways of Paradox**. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994.

_____. Necessary Truth. In: _____. **The Ways of Paradox**. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994.

_____. **The Roots of Reference**. Ilinois: Open Court La salle, 1974.

_____. Use and its Place in Meaning. **Studies in Linguistics and Philosophy**, n. 3, p. 1–8, 1979.

_____. Indeterminacy of Translation, Again. **Journal of Philosophy**, v. 84, n. 1, p. 5–10, 1987.