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## Front Matter

James Blevins

Anne Vainikka

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ISSUES IN SEMANTICS

Edited by  
JAMES BLEVINS

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Graduate Linguistic Student Association (GLSA)  
Department of Linguistics  
South College  
University of Massachusetts/Amherst  
Amherst, MA 01003

STUDIES IN SEMANTICS

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Edited by                    James Blevins  
                                 Anne Vainikka

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## Preface

The papers collected in this volume deal with a wide range of topics in the semantics of natural language. These include foundational questions concerning the status of possible worlds and situations within modeltheoretic approaches to linguistic semantics, along with issues related to the semantic characterization of a variety of constructions in typologically diverse languages.

Partee's paper begins with a review of the philosophical origins of possible-worlds semantics which places the various extensions and alternatives that she considers in a broader historical context. Partee then discusses the contribution of the possible-worlds framework to the development of epistemic logic and to the analysis of counterfactuals before summarizing some of its more recent linguistic applications. A point that comes out clearly in this discussion is that the usefulness of possible worlds for the study of natural language semantics can and should be evaluated independently of the metaphysical issues that they raise.

Berman's paper takes up one of the alternatives considered by Partee. Developing the situation-based semantics of Kratzer, Berman proposes an analysis of adverbs of quantification that overcomes problems that have arisen in previous treatments. In particular, he deals with the complications that iterated adverbs introduce, by quantifying over situations.

Verkuyl presents a thorough review of the literature on aspectual classes, concentrating on the influential Vendler-classes (States, Activities, Achievements and Accomplishments). He extracts the implicit and explicit assumptions on aspectual classes found in Vendler and related work, and proceeds to point out problems with these assumptions; a distinction is drawn between linguistic and philosophical motivations for aspectual classes. Using English and Dutch data, Vendler goes on to develop a theory of aspectual classes based on features (stated in terms of generalized quantification), resulting in a formal theory of States, Processes and Events.

Choe discusses a remarkable class of quantificational elements in Korean, German and Russian which appear to be constrained to take narrow scope in sentences in which they occur. He characterizes the distribution and interpretation of these elements, which he terms 'anti-quantifiers'.

Vainikka's paper deals with the interaction of 'or' and (other) quantificational/scopal elements in a sentence. Using data from English and Finnish, she develops a theory of disjunction based on Heim's context change theory; a unified semantics for 'or' is retained. Vainikka shows how pragmatic, semantico-logical and even syntactic factors affect the interpretation of sentences with disjunction.

J.B.

A.V.