

**The Vienna Circle and Logical Empiricism. Research and
Historiography**

Book of Abstracts

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Keynotes

9th Arthur Pap Lecture – *Juliet Floyd* (Boston)

Susanne K. Langer, Necessity, and Arthur Pap: Research and Historiography

The most influential American woman in philosophy of her time, Susanne K. Langer (1895-1985) must not be forgotten in our assessment of the many inheritances and “Americanizations” of the Vienna Circle. Langer studied psychology in Vienna in 1921, working with Victor Kraft and Karl Bühler. Her distinctive notion of “symbolic form” emerged from her studies of logic with Sheffer and Whitehead and her readings of Cassirer, Wittgenstein, the *Gestalt* theorists and Freud. Her remarkable 1926 Radcliffe PhD, “A Logical Analysis of Meaning” reflects a synthesis of American and Viennese sources in logic and philosophy, including 1. the earliest non-empiricist interpretation of the *Tractatus* written in the United States, 2. an application of Sheffer’s algebraical program in logic and philosophy (praised by Russell in *Principia*’s 2nd edition), 3. the first extensive American discussion of Frege, Russell, and Husserl in America and 4. Applications of *Gestalt* psychology to support Whitehead’s, C.I. Lewis’s and Sheffer’s pragmatic, relational, and process-conception of experience.

As Verhaegh (2022) has shown, Feigl joined Langer’s Cambridge, Massachusetts analogue of the Vienna Circle in 1930; her *The Practice of Philosophy* (1930) and *An Introduction to Symbolic Logic* (1937) were read in the Vienna Circle, the former praised by Schlick for its style and anti-metaphysical content. Langer co-founded the Association of Symbolic Logic, helped organize the 1939 Unity of Science program at Harvard, and published from 1922 onward on political difficulties of emigration and world government, even proposing a novel Neurathian isotype for the United Nations: a spiral (1949). T. Gadol was her assistant at Columbia University. Working with Cassirer after his emigration to the United States in 1941-1945, Langer supported his work on the *Essay on Man* (1944), translated his *Language and Myth* (1946), and increased the circulation of his thought in America. Her *Philosophy in a New Key* (1942) remains one of the best-selling English language philosophy books of the 20th century.

While at Columbia Langer overlapped with Arthur Pap (PhD 1945), who emigrated to New York in 1941. Pap published important papers treating necessity from a “pragmatic” point of view, insisting on the importance of the notion of “intuition” and offering a pragmatic treatment of the *a priori* that anticipated some of Quine’s criticisms of Carnap’s view of the

analytic/synthetic distinction. Langer's 1930 had resisted the notion of "intuition" in logic, but, following Whitehead, she admitted its importance in Gestalt criticism of sense data. A.

Campbell Garnet, who had emigrated to the United States in 1928, authored a 1950 criticism of Pap's 1949 "Are All Necessary Propositions Analytic?" that applies the Shefferian and Langerian algebraical view of logic to Pap's work. The suggestion is that Pap's notion of "intuition" should be construed in terms of higher-order "form". We will discuss the Shefferian and Langerian background to Pap's work on the notion of *necessity*.

1st Michael Friedman Memorial Lecture – *Alan Richardson* (Vancouver)

The Logical, the Methodological, and the Epistemological: Structural Objectivity and its After-Images in Reichenbach and Carnap

One of the many virtues of Michael Friedman's work was the way it allowed us to disentangle two issues: first, the various ways the epistemological or methodological function of the synthetic a priori can be articulated and, second, the various philosophical vocabularies you might feel you can or must use to articulate them. Friedman himself, somewhat surprisingly given his early work on space-time, came to be most interested in Carnap's attempt to articulate constitutive principles for semantic systems in metalogical vocabulary. In this talk I will both further elaborate that story and contrast it with the different development in Reichenbach's scientific philosophy. Our starting point will be the somewhat different accounts of structural objectivity in Reichenbach's (1920) *Relativitätstheorie und Erkenntnis A Priori* and Carnap's (1928) *Der logische Aufbau der Welt* and then we shall trace how those differences reflect different philosophical visions that get elaborated differently across the decades of their careers.

34th Vienna Circle Lecture – *Jan von Plato* (Helsinki)

The Transfiguration of Logic: Wittgenstein to Gödel

Modern logic began with Frege, Peano, and Russell. Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* made it a cornerstone of a particular philosophy of logical atomism that greatly influenced the founders of logical empiricism. Viennese mathematicians and philosophers around 1925 were keenly interested in the new logic, including Kurt Gödel's teachers Hans Hahn and Moritz Schlick, whose seminars the fresh physics student of 1924 attended. In 1928, the newly appointed Privatdozent Rudolf Carnap held a course "Axiomatik-Übungen" (Exercises in axiomatics), with Gödel among the participants. Provoked by Carnap's exercises, Gödel singularly transformed the world of logic with his completeness and incompleteness theorems. The details of these years of transfiguration of modern logic in Vienna have been unveiled only recently, through the transcription of Gödel's preserved shorthand notes of the time. These developments are described with illustrations from the original notes and other contemporary sources.

Lectures

Francesca Biagioli (Turin)

Different Kinds of Implicit Definitions: Schlick, Carnap, and the History of Modern Axiomatics

Implicit or axiomatic definitions have been much discussed with reference to the mathematical works of Peano and Hilbert and in the more general epistemological context of logical empiricism. However, as shown by Gabriel (1978) and in more recent discussions (Wagner 2023), there are different kinds of definitions at work in these debates. On the one hand, the axioms of Hilbert's system of 1899 are sometimes supposed to provide definitions of basic geometrical concepts, insofar as their meaning is determined by all and only the relations established by the axioms. On the other hand, what the axioms actually define are higher-order concepts or structures that allow for multiple interpretations. Both notions have been shown to have interesting connections with ongoing debates on analyticity and mathematical structuralism (Giovannini and Schiemer 2021).

This paper traces the differentiation of these notions in the history of modern axiomatics. In particular, it will draw attention to the fact that implicit definitions of basic concept, in the sense proposed by Enriques in his *Encyclopedia* entry on the "Principle of Geometry" (German original 1907), offered themselves as provisional starting points for the modern way to define abstract entities by means of postulates. It followed that implicit definitions in mathematical contexts determine an abstract form or what we would call today a class of structures. While Enriques did not have a formal notion of "isomorphism" between structures in the current sense, he did employ some (informal) notion of it in examples such as the metrical geometries that are derivable from projective geometry.

It will further consider how these different kinds of definitions are related in Schlick's and Carnap's contributions from the 1920s. The first problem arising from the point of view of structural axiomatics was to provide a concrete interpretation of structures in order to make them applicable. Schlick's *General Theory of Knowledge* offered a possible solution to this problem by means of the coordination of abstract mathematical terms with physical realities. The notion of implicit definition thus allowed him to articulate a structuralist account of knowledge in the face of modern physics. While Carnap favored explicit definitions for the purposes of his own system of constitution, he also offered an account of axiomatic definitions as pertaining to improper concepts. From the vantage point of Carnap's classification of

concepts, the issue of whether the basic concepts of an axiomatic system can be defined receives a negative answer. But the argument leaves room for various proposals as to how a specific meaning can be attributed to the terms standing for improper concepts. It will be shown how Carnap's perspective, not only includes physical meanings as the primary domain of application of mathematical structures in Schlick's sense, but it also embraces the logical and psychological dimensions of meaning at stake in the early 20th century debate.

Anna Brożek (Warsaw)

Women of the Lvov-Warsaw School and Their Relations with the Vienna Circle

Among the distinctive features of the Lvov–Warsaw School (LWS) as a branch of scientific philosophy, alongside methodological, native language used, and geographical factors, scholars increasingly point to the strong representation of women among its members. Women, who only gradually gained the right to study at universities at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, entered the circle of Kazimierz Twardowski's students already in the first years of the Lwów branch of the School. Over time, they came to constitute an ever larger proportion, eventually making up one third of all members of this philosophical formation.

Among the talented women representatives of the Lvov–Warsaw School was a group particularly focused on logic and the philosophy of science. In 1930s, they became interested in the philosophical program of the Vienna Circle, established numerous personal contacts with its members, and often published their own insightful studies on the Circle's program and its individual elements. Janina Hosiasson-Lindenbaum and Janina Kotarbińska met Carnap in 1930 during his stay in Warsaw. After conversations with Hosiasson, Carnap adopted her conception of probability, while Kotarbińska subjected Carnap's idea of logical reconstructionism to penetrating criticism. Izydora Dąmbska met Schlick during her stay in Vienna in 1931, and later discussed his views in several articles. Maria Kokoszyńska, in turn, after completing research stays in Vienna and Paris (1934), published both in *Erkenntnis* on the achievements of Polish logic and philosophy and in Polish journal *Kwartalnik Filozoficzny* on the Vienna Circle; she may rightly be regarded as an ambassador of both groups.

The aim of my lecture is to trace the intellectual connections of Dąmbska, Kokoszyńska, Kotarbińska and Hosiasson with representatives of the Vienna Circle, as well as their role in the fruitful dialogue between proponents of Viennese philosophy and the LWS.

Hans-Joachim Dahms (Berlin)

The Difficulties of Functionalism in the Vienna Circle

I will not add a single word on the negative side of the Viennese Gospel, namely: the fight against metaphysics. My theme in this paper is the positive side: functionalism, which brought the circle in accordance with major cultural movements like *Neue Sachlichkeit* in middle Europe.

I start with obvious examples, namely in world economic planning (1931) and urban planning (1933), both propagated and/or defended by Otto Neurath. This involves a strict separation of different functions in both areas: a division of labour in agricultural and industrial production between 6 different world areas in the first case, and a strict division of different urban areas (for housing, production, recreation, connected by car traffic) in the second.

Neurath's efforts do perhaps not belong to philosophy proper and might not be representative for the Vienna Circle as a whole. Therefore, I look in the second half of the paper into two different fields of "genuine" philosophy, namely

- philosophy of language, and
- philosophy of science.

It is quite remarkable, that many Circle members adopted a functional conception of ordinary language, where descriptive, emotive and appellative uses of language are strictly separated as well. These ideas were originally developed by Karl Bühler (in his organon-theory of language), but later on used by Carnap and others in the fight against metaphysics.

The second philosophical use of functionalism concerns an instrumental conception of science: Not only Neurath, but also Philipp Frank proclaimed a functionalistic theory of science, where it is seen as a tool for forecasts (and then for the preparation of action on the basis of those forecasts). Of course this idea was already envisaged by Bacon, further developed by Comte and the American pragmatists. But the left wing of the Circle defended it too, whereas Schlick remained critical of it. Not to mention Karl Popper's more vigorous criticism.

I close with some critical remarks on functionalism in the two mentioned philosophical fields.

Christian Damböck (Vienna)

Lenin Debunked: What a Socialism Grounded in Logical Empiricism Might Look Like

In his notorious *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*, W. I. Lenin set out the central tenets of his political philosophy. This philosophy rested on a crude form of metaphysics; it was both anti-scientific and anti-democratic and ultimately contributed to a form of political totalitarianism of a particularly violent kind. Austromarxism, by contrast, rejected not only Lenin's political conclusions but also their philosophical foundations. In particular, in the version developed within the left wing of the Vienna Circle, it sought to articulate a form of socialism grounded in what was seen as the exact opposite of Leninism, namely radical empiricism. Although this project—traces of which can be found in several writings by Carnap and Neurath from around 1929–1930—was largely overtaken by historical developments, it remains an intriguing question how such a non-metaphysical, scientifically oriented, and democratic form of socialism might be conceived and why it ultimately failed to take shape. This talk explores several ideas in this direction.

David Edmonds (London)

Miss Simpson's Children

Esther (Tess) Simpson, called them 'her children'. They were the mid-career German, Austrian and Czech academics, desperate to flee the Nazis. She was the dynamic force behind the Academic Assistance Council (AAC), an organization initially set up by William Beveridge – then at the London School of Economics - to help find places for (predominantly) Jewish professors and researchers, in British universities.

In May 1940, at the end of the 'phoney war', many foreign 'aliens' in the UK were interned – the largest camp being on the Isle of Man. Once again, it was Tess Simpson who drove the bureaucratic process of form-filling and lobbying to have these entirely innocent foreigners released.

Among those whom Simpson worked tirelessly to help in the 1930s and 40s were Karl Popper, Otto Neurath, Rose Rand and Friedrich Waismann. She also corresponded extensively with Wittgenstein, who, through the AAC, secretly provided funds for the impecunious Rand.

As I will explain, Simpson's dealings with the Vienna philosophers reveal much about their struggles integrating into British society. Waismann and Rand, in particular, were miserable. The ever - ebullient Neurath, by contrast, found much to appreciate in British culture and was getting stuck into various projects when he had an unexpected stroke and died in 1945.

As for Simpson herself, she never had any biological children of her own. But among her academic children, 16 went on to win a Nobel Prize.

Eva-Maria Engelen (Berlin)

Kurt Gödel as Philosopher. The Edition of His *Philosophical Notebooks*

Gödel's *Philosophical Notebooks* reveal that it was his declared aim for life to establish a rational metaphysics that would be a solid basis for thinking and the sciences. His metaphysics was supposed to be a non-reductive, anti-materialistic philosophy in the tradition of Western philosophy. He tried to establish a system, that would allow the sciences to mutually refer to each other and to systematize and explain central aspects of the foundations of thought and ontology. To this end, Gödel drew inspiration from numerous philosophers throughout the history of European philosophy – from antiquity to the Vienna Circle. He recorded his philosophical remarks in his so called “Maxims Philosophy” over a period of 21 years.

Gödel's naming of his *Philosophical Notebooks* as “Maxims Philosophy” also denotes that they are not merely a record of philosophical reflections, but also the realization of an ethical attitude, namely that of self-reflection and self-improvement in thinking. Today, this philosophical attitude is known as “philosophy as a way of life”.

Beyond that, however, Gödel was particularly concerned with defending and consolidating the rational foundations of thinking and the sciences through the systematization of our knowledge. He saw these foundations threatened inter alia by the reductionism and empiricism of the Vienna Circle. He feared that, in the long run, theoretical thinking would be called off as a result of this.

His *Philosophical Notebooks* were intended to form the basis for a larger, systematic philosophical work to be written, so he composed the compilation of them quite carefully.

We will give insight into the edition of Gödel's *Philosophical Notebooks* as well as into his philosophy.

Massimo Ferrari (Turin)

The Internationalization of the Vienna Circle: Schlick and Russell

“I am an admirer of your philosophy – by no means the only one in Vienna. There are, in fact [,] a good many people at Vienna University, mathematicians and philosophers, who have derived much benefit and delight from your writings. It is in the name of all these, that I address myself to you. We feel a strong desire to get into closer connection with your work and, if possible, with yourself, and we ask you if you would be willing to help us in this endeavor”. These words can be found in the first letter that Moritz Schlick wrote to Bertrand Russell from Vienna on 10 February 1923. Some months later, in a further letter dated August 1923, Schlick praised Russell’s philosophy in the following eloquent terms: “At very end of your book the Knowledge of the External World you express a thought – or a hope – that must appeal to everybody who loves philosophy and is trained in exact science. You recommend a working union of those who have a gift for philosophical and scientific thinking as a sure means of promoting a rapid progress in philosophical research”.

Indeed, Schlick had been acquainted with Russell’s philosophy prior to his time in Vienna and the story of his philosophical relationship with the highly regarded author of *Principles of Mathematics* goes back to the early years of Schlick’s intellectual and academic career in Rostock. Later, in the *General Theory of Knowledge* (1918), Schlick discussed Russell’s *Problems of Philosophy*, appreciating the distinction between knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description which seemed in agreement with the grounding difference established by Schlick between *Kennen* and *Erkennen*. However, it was only in the 1920s that the intellectual exchange with Russell came to play a leading role in guiding Schlick’s philosophical activity, thanks also to the encounter with both Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* and Carnap’s project of the ‘logical construction of the world’. Not surprisingly, therefore, in his 1927 review of the German translation of Russell’s *Problems of Philosophy* Schlick noted that, in his opinion, the method of philosophical analysis endorsed by Russell represented “the method of the future, the only one through which Leibniz’s ideal can be realized” (MSGA I, vol. 6: 81–82). And indeed, Schlick’s numerous seminars on Russell between 1928 and 1932 further demonstrate his confidence in a new philosophy inspired by Russellian way of thinking.

My talk aims to highlight Schlick’s relationship with Russell in more detail, bearing in mind the history of the Vienna Circle during its unofficial phase, as well as its growing

internationalization within the landscape of European philosophy after the First World War. Schlick's cosmopolitan approach to philosophy has exerted a profound influence on the Vienna Circle, and this important feature undoubtedly represents still today a significant part of his intellectual legacy.

Johannes Friedl (Graz)

Scepticism and Anti-Scepticism in Neurath

Although Neurath's writings contain hardly any explicit discussions of the problem of scepticism, a number of "quasi-sceptical" theses represent the backbone of his views. Such theses, formulated already before World War I, include the claim that no purely rational decision is possible between competing hypotheses, that certainty cannot be achieved at any point, that scientific development does not represent linear progress through consistent adherence to a single scientific method, and so on. Criticism of the opposite view, which Neurath refers to as "pseudo-rationalism", is an essential part of his work. All the mentioned theses are restrictive in nature, i.e., they express certain restrictions of our cognitive faculty. In this respect, they are at least very similar to traditional sceptical views. Neurath himself did not fail to notice this similarity; in one of the few passages where he speaks of scepticism, he even describes his own position as sceptical. On the other hand, there are important differences to at least some forms of traditional scepticism in regard to the aims: Surely it is absurd to attribute to Neurath the aim of reaching a state of resigned inaction.

This talk attempts to shed light on Neurath's position on scepticism. It is clear from the outset that Neurath does not follow the usual path in this regard, insofar as his stance does not consist in developing a traditional epistemological position, neither a positive version (which tries to defend what the sceptic denies), nor a negative one, at least not in the way as it is traditionally conceived. The key element in clarifying the question of Neurath's scepticism or anti-scepticism seems to me to consist in Neurath's reconstruction of problems of knowledge as problems of action. The aim is to connect Neurath's approach with more recent research on scepticism and to use this research to outline Neurath's stance more clearly. Therefore, I will discuss approaches such as "positism" (James van Cleve, among others), and the attack on "epistemic realism" (Michael Williams).

Janette Friedrich (Geneva/Vienna)

Die Karl Bühler Schule im Wien der 1920er/1930er Jahre: die Bedeutung des Lokalen

Anfang der 1980er Jahre kamen die Manuskripte Karl Böhlers (einige noch aus der Wiener Zeit, der Rest im Exil geschrieben) an die Forschungsstelle und das Dokumentationszentrum für Österreichische Philosophie an die Universität Graz. Nach dem Erwerb des Karl und Charlotte Bühler Exilnachlasses 2014 durch die Universität Wien befinden sich die beiden großen Karl Bühler Nachlässe in Österreich. Damit wurde es erstmals möglich, einen Gesamtüberblick über die Nachlassmaterialien zu erarbeiten (s. Friedrich, im Druck). Die dabei gesichteten Dokumente ermöglichten es, neue Erkenntnisse zu den vielfältigen Aktivitäten, die am Wiener Psychologischen Institut in der Zwischenkriegszeit durchgeführt wurden; zu dem was hic et nunc als Wissenschaft Psychologie in Wien praktiziert wurde, zu erlangen (Friedrich 2022, Friedrich & Benetka, 2026). Zu diesen Erkenntnissen gehören: 1. Eine Multiplikation der Akteure. Man erfährt in den Dokumenten von Forschenden und ihren Forschungsvorhaben über die bisher nichts oder nur wenig bekannt war. Und zu diesen, am Psychologischen Institut Forschenden, gehörten damals gerade und mehrheitlich Frauen zu deren Arbeiten eine Reihe neuer Erkenntnisse produziert wurden. 2. Die Bedeutung des öffentlichen Raumes für die Wissensproduktion. Die Dokumente geben Einblick in die öffentlichen Räume, in denen wissenschaftliche Erkenntnisse durch die Mitarbeiter:innen nicht nur vorgestellt, sondern auch produziert wurden. Hier kann man als Beispiel die Forschungen zum Ausdruck und zum Film nennen. 3. Eine unerwartet breite interdisziplinäre Ausrichtung der Forschungen am Institut. Diese fand in den zahlreichen institutionellen bzw. außerinstitutionellen Vernetzungen des Wiener Psychologischen Instituts ihren Niederschlag (Wiener Kreis, Verein für angewandte Psychopathologie und Psychologie, Gesellschaft der Filmfreunde Österreichs, u.a.). Um all dies, was sich bei unseren Recherchen gezeigt hat, zu charakterisieren, haben wir den Begriff des Lokalen gewählt. Das Lokale meint dabei ein zweifaches: die Räume in denen diese wissenschaftlichen Tätigkeiten stattfanden und das theoretische bzw. empirische Koordinatensystem, im Rahmen dessen die produzierten Ergebnisse Platz nahmen; die damals am Psychologischen Institut präsente Wissensordnung. Im Beitrag werden die Ergebnisse dieser Forschungen vorgestellt und diskutiert, wobei ein besonderes Augenmerk auf die neuen Erkenntnisse zur Zusammenarbeit zwischen der Bühler Schule und dem Wiener Kreis gelegt wird.

Maria Carla Galavotti (Bologna)

Ramsey, Probability and the Vienna Circle

The manifesto of the Vienna Circle mentions Frank Ramsey among “those sympathetic with the Vienna Circle”. To what extent Ramsey's philosophical ideas had any affinity with and/or influence on the authors belonging to the Vienna Circle has been analysed by other authors, mostly in connection with his conceptions of truth, laws, and theories. By contrast, my paper will focus on Ramsey's subjective notion of probability as ‘degree of belief’, a concept of which he and Bruno de Finetti are considered the fathers. Members of the Vienna Circle and the “Berlin Gesellschaft für empirische Philosophie” favoured different interpretations of probability: taking up ideas proposed by Ludwig Wittgenstein, the Viennese Friedrich Waismann and Rudolf Carnap embraced the logical view, whereas the Berliner Richard von Mises and Hans Reichenbach opted for the frequentist approach. Although the frequency interpretation is of an empirical nature whereas logicism has an epistemic character, both are ‘objectivistic’ in the sense that they agree that, based on a given body of evidence, there are ‘true’ or ‘correct’ probability values, even if these are unknown - a conviction that marks a sharp divergence from subjectivism. Several passages in Ramsey's work are evidence of a critical attitude towards frequentism. For the most part, frequentists are opposed to the subjectivist approach, and Ramsey's work does not appear to be discussed in the works of Reichenbach or von Mises. A notable exception is Ernest Nagel (a supporter of a particular version of frequentism) who mentions the ‘degree of belief’ interpretation in *Principles of the theory of probability* (1939) referring to the work of both Ramsey and de Finetti. Subjectivism is closer to logicism, both being epistemic interpretations. This paper will compare Ramsey's notion of probability with the theories advocated by Waismann and Carnap, and will also examine Wittgenstein's ideas on the matter, which influenced Waismann and, through the latter's work, Carnap. From the 1960s onward, Carnap's view of probability underwent a significant shift, which led to the opinion that, in his later writings, he became a subjectivist, an issue that will also be discussed in this paper.

***Michael Heidelberger* (Tübingen)**

tba

Veronika Hofer (Vienna)

The Impact of Schlick, Carnap, and Frank on Bertalanffy's Theoretical Biology

This paper highlights some critical epistemic and philosophical decisions in the development of Ludwig von Bertalanffy's conception of Theoretical Biology. I argue that in contrast to the later stereotype of an opposition between Bertalanffy and the Vienna Circle, his interaction with Moritz Schlick, Rudolf Carnap, and Philipp Frank in the decade between 1926 and 1936 had a significant impact on the concept formation of Bertalanffy's Systems Theory. My paper is organized into two main sections: the first addresses the history of Frank's perspectives on the contemporary debates about the foundations of biology and the different scientific approaches. I will give a description of those epistemic approaches commonly labelled by scientist-philosophers and biologists under the rubric "general biology", "bio-philosophy" and "Theoretical Biology", giving emphasis to those which were characteristic of Vienna's academic milieu. In delving into the history of this milieu I argue that Alois Höfler's Philosophical Society was a venue where basic, edgy, new and attractive problems of different disciplines were presented and widely debated. For Frank and Neurath these also provided a most relevant background for their "special education" in matters of biology. I will demonstrate the lasting influence of this 'education' by describing their invitation strategy followed in the 1920s and 1930s for Conferences and journals of the Logical Positivists in terms of Biology.

The second part of my talk starts with an overview of specific historical phases of scientific and philosophical debates that provided the starting point of Bertalanffy's relating empirical biology to biological theories and concepts. Within this set of bio-philosophical problems I will give attention to a selection of topics which were of concern not only to Bertalanffy, but also Schlick, Carnap and Frank. Among them are the clarification of the constitution of biological objects (Ganzheit/Wholeness), the debate on irreversibility and the direction of time, the analysis of Bertalanffy's claim of neutralizing the problem of teleology, the structural approach in philosophy of science. These were precisely the debates which made the local environment for Bertalanffy, who was on his way to formulate his Theoretical Biology and Systems Theory, not only significant influences but even seminal concept formations.

Ulf Höfer (Graz)

Rudolf Haller über Logischen Empirismus

Rudolf Haller war federführend sowohl in der inhaltlichen als auch der historischen Aufarbeitung der Philosophie des Neopositivismus. Im österreichischen Umfeld ist er als wesentlicher Anreger und Motor für die Auseinandersetzung mit dieser Strömung anzusehen. Hallers Interesse für den logischen Empirismus setzt recht früh in seiner philosophischen Entwicklung ein, angeregt durch Krafts Der Wiener Kreis, das er bereits während der Arbeit an seiner Dissertation rezipiert. Zugleich kommt er mit dem Werk Wittgensteins in Berührung, das er anfänglich ziemlich undifferenziert mit der Philosophie des Neopositivismus identifiziert.

Mit der Zeit verfeinert Haller seine Untersuchungen zu Wittgenstein und dem Wiener Kreis: Er betont zwar die Kontinuität im Denken Wittgensteins, zieht aber die tiefgreifenden Veränderungen in Rechnung und zeichnet ein modifiziertes Bild von dessen Verhältnis zum logischen Empirismus. Beim Wiener Kreis legt er größeres Augenmerk auf seine Vor- und Frühgeschichte und etabliert sich mit der Bezeichnung „Erster Wiener Kreis“ unter den Anregern einer detaillierteren historischen Aufarbeitung des Neopositivismus. Im Rahmen dieser Untersuchungen streicht er – zum Unterschied von jenen, die z.B. die Neokantianischen Bezüge herausarbeiten – lokale Traditionen heraus, die er speziell mit der Philosophie von Ernst Mach und via Franz Brentano einerseits mit Mill und andererseits mit dem klassischen Positivismus verbindet. Zugleich weist er auch auf die Uneinheitlichkeit zwischen den Ansichten einzelner Mitglieder des Wiener Kreises hin, enthält sich allerdings der verbreiteten Aufteilung des Kreises in eine rechte und eine linke Fraktion

Das für Haller zentrale inhaltliche Element der gesamten positivistischen Unternehmung bildet die Sprachkritik. Sie ist die Klammer, die Wittgenstein, den Neopositivismus und die analytische Philosophie, unter anderem repräsentiert durch Gilbert Ryles Aufruf zur Begriffsklärung, zusammenhält. Und diese Klammer ist wiederum ein wesentlich „österreichisches“ Moment im logischen Empirismus.

Rudolf Hallers Account on Logical Empirism

Rudolf Haller played a leading role in both the substantive and historical analysis of the philosophy of neopositivism. Within the Austrian context, he is considered a key instigator and

driving force behind the engagement with this school of thought. Haller's interest in logical empiricism began quite early in his philosophical development, sparked by Kraft's *The Vienna Circle*, which he encountered while working on his dissertation. At the same time, he came into contact with the work of Wittgenstein, which he initially identified rather indiscriminately with the philosophy of neo-positivism.

Over time, Haller refined his investigations into Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle: While emphasizing the continuity in Wittgenstein's thought, he nevertheless took into account the profound changes in his philosophy and presented a modified picture of Wittgenstein's relationship to logical empiricism. Regarding the Vienna Circle, he focused more on its prehistory and early history, establishing himself, with the designation "First Vienna Circle," among those who advocated a more detailed historical analysis of neo-positivism. Within the framework of these investigations, he highlighted – unlike those who, for example, explored neo-Kantian influences – local traditions, which he connected to the philosophy of Ernst Mach, especially, and, via Franz Brentano, to Mill on the one hand and to classical positivism on the other. At the same time, he also pointed out the inconsistencies among the views of individual members of the Vienna Circle, but refrained from the common division of the Circle into right-wing and left-wing factions.

For Haller, linguistic criticism is the central element of the entire positivist enterprise. It is the bracket that holds together Wittgenstein, neo-positivism and analytical philosophy, represented, among others, by Gilbert Ryle's call for conceptual clarification. And this bracket is, in turn, an essentially 'Austrian' moment in logical empiricism.

Hannes Leitgeb (Munich)

Reviving Logical Empiricism

Logical Empiricism is widely regarded as a philosophical failure. In my lecture, I will argue that there is an only slightly updated version of Carnapian Logical Empiricism which neither excludes metaphysics nor ethics and which may well serve as a successful meta-philosophy of scientific philosophy in the future. In other words: there is hope of reviving a form of Logical Empiricism.

Martin Lemke (Rostock)

Moritz Schlick und die Brücke des Verstehens

Moritz Schlick begann sich ab etwa 1933 intensiv mit Philosophiegeschichte zu befassen. Aus Nachlassdokumenten lässt sich nachweisen, dass er beabsichtigte diese Arbeiten zu publizieren. Seine Ermordung vereitelte dies. In dem Vortrag möchte ich die ziemlich weit ausgearbeiteten Fragmente philosophisch auswerten: Schlicks Art, Philosophiegeschichte zu untersuchen, gehört zu einem Phänomen, das in der Forschung "Philosophie der Philosophiegeschichte" genannt wird. Sie dient der Abgrenzung gegenüber anderen konkurrierenden philosophischen Strömungen und Schulen, weil sie die Richtigkeit der eigenen Philosophie aus der Geschichte begründet. Dieses Instrument der Abgrenzung verhindert aber auch einen inkommensurablen Abriss zwischen den Strömungen des 20. Jahrhunderts, der heute gelegentlich behauptet wird.

Moritz Schlick and the Bridge of Understanding

Moritz Schlick began to engage intensively with the history of philosophy from around 1933 onwards. Documents from his estate show that he intended to publish these works. His murder prevented this. In this lecture, I would like to offer a philosophical analysis of these fairly well-developed fragments: Schlick's approach to examining the history of philosophy is part of a phenomenon known in scholarship as the 'philosophy of the history of philosophy'. It serves to distinguish one's own philosophy from other rival philosophical movements and schools by deriving its validity from history. However, this instrument of distinction also prevents an incommensurable gap between the movements of the 20th century, which is occasionally claimed today.

Christoph Limbeck-Lilienau (Vienna)

“The Left/Right-Divide in the Vienna Circle. A Historiographic Reconsideration”

In his “Intellectual Autobiography” Carnap made a distinction between two wings within the Vienna Circle, “the left wing of the Circle” formed by Neurath, Hahn and Carnap himself, and “the more conservative right wing, chiefly represented by Schlick and Waismann”, so Carnap. While the left wing aimed “to look for a more liberal criterion of significance than verifiability”, Schlick and Waismann “were inclined to maintain [Wittgenstein’s] views and formulations.” (Carnap 1963: 57-58). Carnap’s retrospective remark about this internal division in the Circle is reflected in his publications of the 1930s, especially in the *Logical Syntax of Language* (1934: §73) and in *Testability and Meaning* (1936/37), where Carnap first referred to a “more conservative wing” linked to Waismann, Schlick and Wittgenstein (1936: 422). The emphasis on such a left vs. conservative division was then taken up in the reception of the Vienna Circle in the 1930s (Nagel 1936: 29) and often also in the historiography of the Vienna Circle up to the present. The present talk will retrace historically this split in which philosophical, political and personal divisions overlapped. Our aim is to evaluate the usefulness of this left/right-distinction as a tool to analyze the philosophical positions within the Vienna Circle in the 1930s. One reason for re-evaluating the usefulness of Carnap’s left/conservative-distinction is that Carnap under-estimated the profound changes and evolution within the Wittgensteinian camp of the Circle (mainly Schlick and Waismann), away from the Tractarian positions and towards some of the positions of the middle Wittgenstein. Recent scholarly interest in the middle Wittgenstein (e. g. in Engelmann 2013, Stern 2018) and Waismann (Shapiro/Makovec 2020) show indeed the profound shift away from the Tractarian positions of the 1920s. Furthermore, Schlick’s and Waismann’s positions in the 1930s were not only shaped by the influence of Wittgenstein but also by some of the newest developments in the sciences, especially in mathematics and physics. Schlick’s close attention to quantum mechanics and Waismann’s close attention to finitism and intuitionism forced both of them to abandon the much too narrow framework of the *Tractatus*. We will therefore argue that it is quite questionable that Schlick’s and Waismann’s so-called “conservatism” consisted mainly in preserving and maintaining the original views of the *Tractatus*. While Carnap’s left/conservative-distinction has indeed the merit of emphasizing Carnap’s (and Neurath’s) evolution in the 1930s, it rather tends to obscure the evolution and often radical shifts in the Vienna Circle outside of the group represented by Carnap and Neurath.

Hans Hahn as a Pioneer of Logical Tolerance

Outlines of the history or philosophy of logical empiricism mention Hans Hahn in passing, if at all. He is usually characterized as a typical proponent of the Vienna Circle, embracing both empiricism and modern logic, defending logicism, and rejecting synthetic judgements a priori. However, by taking archival material and the specific audience of his few philosophical writings into consideration, this paper argues that a second look reveals hitherto underappreciated peculiarities in Hahn's positions.

Goldfarb (1992a, 1996, 2005), Ricketts (1992a, 1992b), and Uebel (2007, 2009) have meticulously reconstructed how early logical empiricists appropriated Russell's logicism and Wittgenstein's notion of tautology in different ways. Particularly, in contrast to Schlick, the early Carnap used truth-tables in order to characterize tautologies. This notation facilitated his development towards the principle of tolerance and logical pluralism. In comparison, Hahn's role as a pioneer of logical tolerance has not been sufficiently acknowledged yet, partly due to the informal style of his few philosophical writings, which were directed towards a broad public. It is only transcripts of Hahn's courses at the University of Vienna which indicate that he actually used truth-tables to characterize tautologies – contrary to Goldfarb's and Uebel's assessments. Along with hitherto barely discussed remarks in the meetings of the Vienna Circle, Hahn's more technical lectures to students and experts corroborate the claim that he indeed systematically adopted logical tolerance prior to Carnap and Menger.

As a consequence of the more nuanced reading proposed in this paper, Hahn's logicist and nominalist philosophy of mathematics is not subject to the otherwise fatal critique brought forward by Gödel (1953). Furthermore, and perhaps contrary to first impressions, Hahn's logical pluralism is compatible with his endorsement of Occam's Razor.

Instrumentalism in the Theory of Science: Dewey, Reichenbach, and Carnap

It was John Dewey who, in *The Quest for Certainty* (1929), coined the term ‘instrumentalism’ to describe a position in the philosophy of science that is consistent with the basic assumptions of pragmatism as a general philosophical program. In his view, the instrumentalist regards scientific theories as tools for controlling and intervening in the environment. Understood in this way, theories serve primarily the requirements of scientific experimentation. For according to Dewey, scientific inquiry is predominantly an experimental endeavor. In his contribution to the Schilpp volume on Dewey titled “Dewey’s Theory of Science” (1939), Hans Reichenbach commented, among other things, on Dewey’s instrumentalism. Reichenbach’s initial assessment is that he and Dewey agree in their “main tendencies” (Reichenbach 1939: 160). According to Reichenbach, both “American pragmatism” (ibid.) and “European positivism” (ibid.) understand themselves as “this-world philosophies” (159) and thus as a counter-movement to “other-world philosophies” (ibid.), which lead to speculative metaphysics. They thus “stand on the same basis” (160). However, there is a fundamental difference that relates to their respective understanding of scientific concepts. In Reichenbach’s own words: “[W]e do not think that Dewey’s nonrealistic interpretation of scientific concepts is tenable.” (164) Consequently, the “pragmatist denial of independent reality to scientific objects” (173) as well as “Dewey’s theory of instrumentalism of scientific concepts” (174) must be replaced by a realistically motivated theory of “probability inference” (176) that amounts to an inference to the best explanation regarding theoretical entities, which Reichenbach calls “illata” (ibid.). As a result, he considers himself both a logical empiricist and a scientific realist. Not so Rudolf Carnap, for whom, at least in his late writings, the debate over realism and instrumentalism in the philosophy of science is, as he puts it in his *Philosophical Foundations of Physics*, “essentially linguistic” (1966: 256) and thus nothing more than a matter of taste. Via the application of the Ramsey sentence, he believes he can sidestep the whole debate and ultimately concludes—as he explains elsewhere—that the theoretical entities of physics are “purely logico-mathematical entities” (1963: 963).

In my talk, I will argue that: (1) although Reichenbach may be correct in his interpretation of theoretical concepts in Dewey, he underestimates the role of experimentation in the context of establishing a realism regarding theoretical entities—a realism that is certainly present in Dewey’s understanding of instrumentalism and later continued by Ian Hacking; (2) Carnap’s

approach has nothing to do with concrete physical research practice, which makes it hardly surprising that he and Dewey, as Roberto Gronda (2025) was recently able to document on the basis of correspondence, came to regard each other with outright hostility after an initial period of curiosity; (3) Reichenbach and Dewey were closer in their respective understandings of science than Reichenbach and Carnap, which provides revealing insights into the complexity of the historical development of logical empiricism in its post-Viennese phase.

Flavia Padovani (Philadelphia)

Formalism and Fallibilism: Two Paths in Early Logical Empiricist Methodology

This paper examines the divergent conceptions of scientific methodology developed by the Vienna Circle and the Berlin Group, particularly in their early years. While both groups shared a commitment to empiricism, formal logic, and the rejection of metaphysics, their methodological emphases reveal important differences. The Vienna Circle, influenced by figures such as Moritz Schlick and Rudolf Carnap, broadly pursued a program of logical reconstruction, aiming to unify science through a verification principle and a formalized language of observation. In contrast, the Berlin Group, classically associated with Hans Reichenbach and Carl Gustav Hempel, adopted a more pragmatic and probabilistic approach, emphasizing the role of inductive logic and the fallibilistic character of scientific knowledge.

This paper focuses on under-examined aspects of Hans Reichenbach's early hands-on technical work and its relation to his methodological approach, which contributes to his later views and bears interesting affinities with contemporary discussions in the philosophy of measurement. By comparing their respective treatments of confirmation, probability, and the structure of scientific theories, the paper argues that the Berlin Group advanced a more flexible and practice-oriented methodology—indeed epitomized by Reichenbach's early engagement with the experimental sciences—whereas the Vienna Circle maintained a stronger commitment to formal rigor and criteria of logical justification. These differences not only shaped internal debates within logical empiricism but also influenced later developments in the philosophy of science, particularly in discussions of confirmation theory and scientific explanation.

Günther Sandner (Vienna)

Was Otto Neurath's Vienna Method Misused? Pictorial Statistics in Austrofascism and National Socialism

The development of the “Vienna Method of Pictorial Statistics” from the mid-1920s onwards was the result of teamwork involving many people: scholars and scientists, graphic designers, educators, artists, and others. But the intellectual mastermind behind the project was undoubtedly Otto Neurath. Neurath wrote by far the most publications on the subject of visual education and repeatedly drew parallels to the program of the Vienna Circle, which was developed at the same time and published in 1929: the manifesto “Scientific Conception of the World. The Vienna Circle”. Empiricism, logic, enlightenment, and anti-metaphysics were the guiding principles for both projects. Democracy, political participation, and empowerment also shaped the visual education project.

When Neurath and a core team were forced into political exile in 1934, the “Vienna Method of Pictorial Statistics” was renamed Isotype (International System of Typographic Picture Education) following a suggestion by Marie Reidemeister and continued with numerous educational and informational projects in the Netherlands, England, and other countries.

But pictorial statistics also continued in Vienna under new political circumstances. Red Vienna was over, but Austrofascism and, from 1938, National Socialism made use of the visualization of economic, social, and political issues for propaganda purposes, in some cases with the help of former members of Neurath's team. Pictorial statistics became political propaganda and served goals that were diametrically opposed to Neurath's.

What were the most important elements of the Vienna method? To what extent was it taken up and continued in the two dictatorships from 1934 to 1938 and 1938 to 1945? To what extent did its foundations offer protection against propagandistic abuse? What were the most important differences between Neurath's visual education project and the appropriation of pictorial statistics by Austrofascism and National Socialism? To what extent were there continuities, to what extent discontinuities?

Christoph Schuringa (London)

The Unity of Science in Red Vienna

In recent decades, a substantial body of work has grown up examining the 'Left Vienna Circle'. Among the merits of this work is the way in which it connects the substantive epistemological doctrines of those on the Circle's left wing with social projects in which members were engaged. In this talk, I examine why it was that -- for Neurath and others -- the 'unity of science' could seem so closely connected with a programme of 'full socialization', by placing the development of the epistemological-social programme of which they were facets in the wider context of Red Vienna.

Anne Siegetsleitner (Innsbruck)

The Literary Vienna Circle: Literary Styles in Contributions on Morality and Ethics

Members of the Vienna Circle not only wrote in styles that were oriented towards a scientific or logical-mathematical style, but also in more humanistic and literary ones.

Even if it is not so obvious, Friedrich Nietzsche exerted a great influence here. Moritz Schlick, for example, wrote aphorisms and worked for years on the literary books *Der neue Epikur* (*The New Epicurus*) and *Die Philosophie der Jugend* (*The Philosophy of Youth*), inspired by Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*. Parts of Karl Mengers *Moral, Wille und Weltgestaltung* (published under the English title *Morality, Decision, and Social Organization*) are written as a conversation or a letter, and Otto Neurath published contributions to popular journals, for example stories on questions of life, often under a pseudonym (e.g. *The Little Discourse on the Sanctity of Vocation* and the *Little Discourse on the Virtues*).

The question I will explore is whether these styles were only superficial or more than mere ornament.

Karl Sigmund (Vienna)

Stud. phil. Kurt Gödel

This talk covers Gödel's student years.

Antonia Soulez (Paris)

The Contribution of Semantic Tradition to the Vienna Circle Critique of Language (About Jan Sebestik's Expression of "Prehistory" of the Vienna Circle)

The Czech philosophical journal *Filosofický časopis* asked me to write an article in homage to Jan Sebestik who died in February 2026 in Paris.

This was for me a sad piece to write, in the context of Jan's death.

However, there are aspects of the story that deserve joy and satisfaction: our joint work on the Vienna Circle has been an intellectual adventure. My contention here is to describe the difficulties of reception of "logical empiricism" in France in the context of controversies about the discipline of philosophy as taught in the university after the 60's. The context of conflict between analytical philosophy and phenomenology (e.g., Ryle vs. Heidegger) made language an "object" of discussion. Not only language as an object of "analysis" with the tools of logic, what Heidegger would have repudiated, but worse, it appeared as threatening the language of philosophers, in brief thought itself. In the European context, Jan's contribution to the semantic treasury through Bolzano, what he calls "prehistory" of the Vienna Circle, meant two important steps: the "anti-Kantian interlude", and the fundamental status of "Satz an sich" in the determination of the meanings of words and logically articulated propositions. Both revealed to be of great help in the critical approach to using concepts in the later debates between philosophers of science at a time between the two wars, when the question both philosophical and socio-political in Vienna arises about how to obtain a formally unitary language for empirical knowledge.

Michael Stöltzner (Columbia, South Carolina)

Logical Empiricism and Logical Positivism. Two Modes to Name a Movement

Many historians of philosophy of science use the terms ‘Logical Positivism’ (or neo-positivism) and ‘Logical Empiricism’ interchangeably. Yet, during the 1930s, most members of the movement decided to avoid the former. For, ‘positivism’ seemed to bias the reception of their thinking in the Anglo-American context. Moreover, during the 1960s, the return of their thinking to Germany was significantly hampered by the ‘Positivismusstreit’ between critical rationalism and the Frankfurt school. Based on recent scholarship on positivism, this paper argues that while there is no clear-cut philosophical distinction between both terms – as Thomas Uebel has convincingly shown – they operate in different modes. While empiricism is a philosophical description that comes in different forms and often adopts elements of its rationalist counterpart, positivism operates more like a category of the history of ideas – alongside liberalism and Enlightenment.

This distinction helps us to better understand the historical dynamic of the movement in changing contexts of science and society. The group often called the First Vienna Circle was positioning themselves within the rather heterogenous 19th century traditions of positivism and ‘wissenschaftliche Philosophie.’ Positivism had been well-received in Austria both as part of the liberal movement and in the form of Mach’s unified and historical-critical approach to science. But as a consequence of the polemic started by Planck against Mach, positivism became widely associated with the philosophical position of phenomenism, roughly at about the same time when the original positivist movement had faded at the beginning of the First World War. It is true, as Frederick Beiser recently argued, important philosophical moves of the later Logical Positivism were already accomplished by 19th century positivism, among them antimetaphysics and anti-pessimism. But Beiser misses that German positivism was counterproductive to their key problem to develop a coherent philosophical stance in response to modern physics and modern mathematics. If French conventionalism was a post-positivism, as many French scholars have argued, it had considerably more promise.

This issue became more pressing after the end of the war, not only because general relativity had become a cultural shibboleth. The theory not only required new mathematics, as statistical mechanics and special relativity, but amounted to a foundational change comparable to the

Newtonian revolution. One solution was the brand of ontic structural realism favored by Hilbert and Planck; it could even be given a neo-Kantian twist. An empiricism amended with conventionalism, instead, needed mathematics to stand on its own. Thus, foundational physics pointed towards the logical foundations of mathematics, which made Carnap's agenda so attractive in the late 1920s. This was one reason, I argue, that positivism was not simply replaced by empiricism – that was always its allied philosophical mode – but by shifting the historical focus back to the Enlightenment and the *Encyclopédie* coedited by one of the first mathematical physicists, D'Alembert. Neurath in the 1930s also adopted Frank's 1917 interpretation of Mach as an Enlightenment philosopher, downplaying the phenomenalism that many positivists and anti-positivists saw in him. Whether one wanted to keep the term positivism was subsequently largely a matter of historical narrative because the term had lost its positive philosophical force.

Bastian Stoppelkamp (Vienna)

William Agay-Beaujon (Montpellier)

“Freethought as a new worldview”: Otto Neurath and the Political Origins of the Ernst Mach Society

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the political dimension of the Vienna Circle. In this context, the "Ernst Mach Society" (*Verein Ernst Mach*) plays a pivotal role; its founding in November 1928 marked the Vienna Circle's emergence as an independent philosophical group in the public sphere. The Society originally grew out of a collaboration with the Austrian Monist League and the Viennese section of the Austrian Freethinkers, both of which were integral to the Austrian workers-movement and the social-democratic networks of "Red Vienna". The connection to these movements was also reflected programmatically: the Ernst Mach Society served not only as an organizational platform to coordinate the Circle's philosophical activities but also pursued a socio-political objective. By disseminating scientific knowledge, methods, and values, it sought to pave the way for a strictly “scientific world-conception” and outlook on life.

While the history of the Ernst Mach Society has been researched extensively, several questions remain unresolved. As Friedrich Stadler's early research established, the initiative to form the Society did not originate within the Vienna Circle, but rather with the Vienna branch of the Austrian Freethinkers. Its then-chairman, Carl Kundermann, had applied for official authorization to found a “*Allgemeinen Naturwissenschaftlichen Bildungsvereins Ernst Mach*” as early as April 1927. Even when Kundermann called for a founding assembly later in October 1928, all official positions were still designated exclusively for Freethinkers. This raises the question of when and how the Vienna Circle's involvement in the Society was established.

A second question concerns the Society's political orientation. For a long time, scholarship treated the *Verein Ernst Mach* as a largely apolitical educational institution. This view has been revised by recent works (Romizi 2013, Wasserman 2014), who highlighted the institutional and programmatic links to Austrian Social-Reform and Social Democracy, sparking a broader debate on the political character of the Vienna Circle.

This presentation seeks to shed new light on both issues by examining the previously overlooked role of Otto Neurath. On October 25, 1928 – one month prior to the Society's official founding – Neurath delivered a speech to the Vienna Freethinkers, which in retrospect

can be identified as the direct catalyst for cooperation between the two groups. In his speech, Neurath proposed establishing the "philosophy of the Vienna Circle" as the foundational "new worldview" for the Freethinkers movement. Neurath argued that the alignment would grant the Circle access to the "free-thinking working class", who, in turn, would be introduced to the philosophical achievements of modern "*Antimetaphysiker*" like "Moritz Schlick, Philipp Frank, Bertrand Russell, Rudolf Carnap and Hans Reichenbach". This joint venture was eventually realized through the Ernst Mach Society, which the Freethinkers viewed as a training ground for their cadres and provided the Vienna Circle with a platform to translate philosophical ideas into practical political action.

In this presentation, we analyze Neurath's speech in detail, situating it within the broader historical trajectory of the Austrian Freethinkers during that period. Our objective is to delineate the ideological function Neurath originally envisioned for the Ernst Mach Society and to evaluate its significance regarding current debates on the politics of the Vienna Circle.

Adam Tamas Tuboly (Pécs)

Philipp Frank, Ernest Nagel, and the Public Faces of Logical Empiricism

For a long time, scholarship on the Vienna Circle focused mainly on Rudolf Carnap, Moritz Schlick, and Otto Neurath for various reasons. Besides being the formal and informal leader – and the “big locomotives” of the movement – the Carnap-Schlick-Neurath trio produced the most widely read and well-known works of logical positivism. Their influence and significance are undeniable. But after the major wave of emigration to the United States in the second half of the 1930s, and especially in the 1940s and 50s, when logical positivism became logical empiricism and conquered the New World, but previously overlooked figures and promising new ones emerged to shape what to understand by “logical empiricism”: among them were Philipp Frank and Ernest Nagel.

In this talk, I will examine the relationship between Nagel and Frank from a biographical, and, especially, from a systematic point of view. Nagel was not only Frank’s most important contact and ally in New York and his right-hand man in the sociology of science research group, but he also seemingly shared many of Frank’s interests. Nagel was a pragmatist, developing his technical philosophy of science with a drop of historical oil and a great deal of humanistic care. Reading some of his most well-known works, however, does not immediately reveal this side of Nagel. His unpublished manuscripts, lectures, and lesser-known reviews instead show a rather different Nagel – one much closer to Frank (and to Neurath) than to Carnap (or even Reichenbach).

Another aim of this talk is therefore to analyze the difference faces of Nagel (and Frank), especially through the notions of the “professional philosopher” and the “public intellectual”. These concepts promise new perspectives for understanding the history of logical empiricism in the mid-twentieth century.

Thomas Uebel (Manchester)

How Many Carnaps Does It Take to Change an *Aufbau*? Carnap's Controversial Recollections in the Light of Revisionist Interpretations

In a stimulating recent paper Chris Pincock has defended, with reference to Carnap's *Aufbau*, the legitimacy of a "reasonable pluralism" of interpretations of historical philosophical texts — once certain conditions are met. My talk will discuss those conditions and investigate whether Carnap's autobiographical remarks about his first major work, which have long puzzled post-Quinean readers, can be made sense of in the light of these and related considerations.

Sander Verhaegh (Tilburg)

Logical Empiricism's American Legacy

Logical empiricism took shape in Europe, but it took hold in the United States. It emerged from discussions between philosophers and scientists in Vienna and Berlin; but it had its biggest impact when its best-known representatives fled fascism and sought refuge in North America. This paper analyzes logical empiricism's American legacy. First, I reconstruct its reception in American philosophy, arguing that the received view about its contribution to rise of a new, analytic conception of philosophy requires revision. Next, I turn to the movement's cultural reception, arguing that logical empiricism played a significant role in three crucial periods in contemporary American history: the culture wars of the 1940s, the Sputnik crisis of the 1950s, and the development of novel, countercultural narratives on science and society in the 1960s. I conclude that we can only understand logical empiricism's legacy if we investigate its intellectual and cultural reception in tandem.

Pierre Wagner (Paris)

History of a Distorted Representation. The View from France in the Second Half of the 20th Century

A representation of the Vienna Circle emerged in France in the 1930s, in a context that was hardly conducive to a positive reception. Over the following three decades, its transmission led to the formation of a distorted image that began to be questioned and was occasionally challenged in the 1970s, then more forcefully in the 1980s, before a rehabilitation movement helped to overcome a representation that was more a matter of collective imagination than of patient reading of the texts. In this talk, I will focus more on the lesser-known part of this story: the transmission of this representation in the post-war period, up to the rehabilitation movement in the early 1990s.

Poster Session

William Agay-Beaujon (Montpellier)

The Reception of the Enlightenment within the Vienna Circle: Reconstruction and Genealogy

The link between the Vienna Circle and 18th-century thought is often considered an evident family resemblance, yet it has rarely been the subject of systematic research. Indeed, the Enlightenment is often cited, and the vast majority of the Circle's protagonists mention 18th-century science, philosophy and sometimes its history, across both of the movement's wings and historical phases. This poster aims to summarize a research project I conducted on this topic in order to go beyond vague associations to reconstruct and analyze the effective reception of the Enlightenment's heritage by the Vienna Circle's protagonists between 1907 and 1938. Utilizing a pluralistic methodology, including a lexical analysis of the publications of the inner circle members and archival materials, this research identifies a singular and important "Enlightenment" object intertwining the epistemological program of the circle and its sociocultural significance for "modern times".

The poster is structured around two axes:

1. Reconstruction of the Enlightenment object in the Vienna Circle. This section will define what "the Enlightenment" meant for logical empiricists. It will summarize the analysis of the "spirit of Enlightenment" expression in the manifesto understood in the framework of the "scientific world-conception" in conjunction with writings by key protagonists (Schlick, Neurath, Frank, Hahn, von Mises, among others). I will show that, rather than a fixed set of doctrines or precise references to 18th-century ideas, the spirit of Enlightenment was viewed as an embodied dual "attitude". A critical one, both in its epistemological and sociocultural meanings; and a constructive one following the ideal of emancipation through knowledge within the broader framework of late Enlightenment Vienna.

2. Genealogy of Reception. While the topic of Enlightenment is often restricted to Neurath and encyclopedism, as he was the one most directly and explicitly interested in 18th-century thought, this section will start by categorizing the references to the Enlightenment in the logical empiricist corpus. Then, it will focus on two key intermediaries for Enlightenment ideas in the Vienna Circle: Ernst Mach and Josef Popper-Lynkeus.

This poster will provide a clearer understanding of the epistemological program and sociocultural scope of the Vienna Circle. Finally, the poster's layout will prioritize maximum

clarity, showing the key results of this broader research in order to raise discussion. I will try to incorporate a slight stylistic touch inspired by Isotype to echo the enlightened spirit of the Vienna Circle within the University of Vienna on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of the Institute Vienna Circle, 90 years after Schlick's assassination.

Sabato Danzilli (Heidelberg)

From Logical Empiricism to Naturalized Epistemology: Quine's De-Kantianization of the Vienna Circle

The subject of this poster is the conversion of logical empiricism to Quine's naturalized epistemology. Rather than providing an external rejection of the Vienna Circle's project, Quine's critique of analyticity provides a kind of internal completion. The poster argues for the need for an amending of the analytic/synthetic distinction, as a Kantian residue, to establish Quine's naturalized epistemology as a continuation of logical empiricism.

The Vienna Circle's appropriation of the Kantian legacy is the starting point of the discussion. Leading figures in the Circle, such as Schlick and Carnap, rejected synthetic a priori judgments in their traditional understanding but retained a structural analogue through the essence of the division between analytic, a priori truths (e.g., logic and mathematics) on the one hand and synthetic statements (i.e., those that can be verified empirically), on the other. The way by which Carnap established analyticity in both the *Logische Syntax der Sprache* and his various semantic writings was through linguistic conventions or semantic rules that are not subject to empirical testing. He introduced the idea of conditions of possibility of experience associated with the Kantian way of looking at language into a linguistically regimented positional framework, making the analytic/synthetic distinction a conventionalized, yet still functioning as a sort of transcendent, dividing line between science and metaphysics.

Quine's *Two Dogmas of Empiricism* dismantles this boundary from within the empiricist tradition. By arguing that no non-circular, non-question-begging account of analyticity is available, and by advancing a holistic picture of confirmation in which even logic and mathematics are revisable in principle, Quine dissolves the last Kantian remnant in logical empiricism. But once the analytic/synthetic distinction collapses, the epistemologist can no longer claim a privileged, extra-scientific standpoint from which to legislate the norms of scientific rationality. This conceptually paves the way to Quine's proposal of a "naturalized epistemology", in which epistemology becomes a chapter of empirical psychology: the study, within science itself, of how sensory input is transformed into theoretical output.

Far from simply abolishing epistemology, this move reconfigures the Vienna Circle's ideal of a "scientific world-conception". Where the Circle had sought a unified science underwritten by a priori logical-linguistic structure, Quine offers a unity grounded in natural science itself,

including its theories of perception, cognition, and learning. The intervention will reconstruct this conceptual genealogy. Particular attention will be given to Neurath's metaphor of the boat at sea and Quine's epistemic holism, suggesting that Neurath already anticipates a non-foundational, thoroughly immanent conception of knowledge that Quine later radicalizes. In this sense, naturalized epistemology embodies the American pragmatist transformation of European logical empiricism: the transition from a transcendental-linguistic to a fully naturalistic image of rationality.

By framing Quine's naturalized epistemology as the de-Kantianization and immanent radicalization of logical empiricism, the intervention contributes both to the historiography of the Vienna Circle and to contemporary debates on the status of epistemology in philosophy of science. It situates Quine not as a simple "post-positivist" critic, but as the thinker who brings to culmination the Circle's own drive toward a wholly scientific conception of knowledge by relinquishing its last vestiges of transcendental structure.

Samuele Fasol (Trento)

Schlick's Errors: Conventions and Constitutive Principles

This poster examines Moritz Schlick's replacement of constitutive principles with conventions and evaluates the resulting epistemology. I argue that this shift introduces internal tensions that undermine Schlick's account of scientific knowledge; however, analyzing such tensions fruitfully clarifies issues concerning definitions in science.

The analysis proceeds in three steps. First, I revisit the 1920 correspondence with Hans Reichenbach, which introduces and motivates the clash between constitutive principles and conventions. I focus on tensions within Schlick's own position rather than its influence on Reichenbach. Second, I examine the impact of Henri Poincaré and David Hilbert, as it partially explains the tensions of Schlick's account. I argue that Schlick adopts conventions to avoid both Kantianism and empiricism while restricting their structuring role due to realist commitments. Finally, I identify two inconsistencies: (i) Schlick's claim that laws of nature are immutable conflicts with his broader framework, and (ii) his reduction of principles to analytic conventions – motivated by their defining role – assumes that definitions are purely analytic. Drawing on examples from physics, chemistry, and biology, I argue that many scientific definitions are synthetic. A Kantian framework may be better equipped to account for this feature.

This analysis clarifies Schlick's position within early logical empiricism and reassesses its relevance for contemporary debates.

Noah Friedman-Biglin (San José)

Feigl Goes West: The Politics of Logical Empiricism at Midcentury

The Vienna Circle articulated a philosophical vision that made use of mathematical logic in service of an anti-metaphysical view and an appreciation for recent developments in science. Their goal was to find ways to increase international understanding to prevent tragedies like the first World War from happening again, and reform society in the wake of that tragedy to alleviate suffering. The Circle conceived of its work as related to “the life of the present”, as their 1929 manifesto put it, and it was also understood this way by audiences inside and outside the academy.¹ As fascism rose in central Europe, many Circle members joined the “Intellectual Migration” and continued their philosophical careers in the United States.

In the USA, their “scientific world-conception” transformed first into Logical Positivism, then to Logical Empiricism, and finally into analytic philosophy. There is a debate over how this transition occurred and why. McCumber (2001) and Reisch (2005, 2019) argue that members of the Circle distanced their movement from politics because of McCarthy-ite pressures; others, like Howard (2003) and Richardson (2009, 2009a), argue that other factors like (1) the particular personalities of the philosophers who emigrated or (2) to institutional factors in academic philosophy, particularly the desire to chase money from the National Science Foundation and the Department of Defense, play at least as much of an explanatory role.

In this poster, I examine the experience of Herbert Feigl. His case is particularly interesting because he was the first Circle member to emigrate to the United States in 1931 – a time when left-wing political groups were more prominent in America than they would be post-War. Thus Feigl presents a case study of a politically-active Circle member whose career spans both the pre- and post-war periods. Moreover, Feigl was quite successful in mid-Century philosophy. In addition to many publications, he was one of the founders for the Minnesota Center for the Philosophy of Science, on the governing board of the PSA, president of the Western Division of the APA, president of the AAAS, and co-founded and edited both *Philosophical Studies* and the *Minnesota Studies* series.²

¹ (Carnap et al. (1929), p 317; see also Friedman (2000), pp 17 – 23).

² Savage (1989), p vii.

I will argue that (1) Feigl was politically active, and (2) that he expressly connected his philosophical work to political concerns. In particular, I will focus on Feigl's extensive public lecturing. Beginning with a lecture through the Unitarian Universalist church in Iowa City, he developed a reputation as a fiery and entertaining exponent of the new logical positivism. I will argue that, in these lectures, Feigl made explicit connections between the philosophical ideas and their political and practical consequences.³ Finally, I will argue that this continued after WWII and throughout the McCarthy period. If I am correct, then this substantially complicates matters for the view that political pressure is primarily responsible for the change.

³ See also Neuber (2025).

Georg Gangl (Ostrava)

Schlick's Political Philosophy

Unlike many of his fellow members of the Vienna Circle, Moritz Schlick did not shy away in principle from writing about normative philosophy, for example in his book *Problems of Ethics*. In 1933, Schlick began working on a book on the philosophy of culture and social and political philosophy. Schlick was assassinated in 1936 before he could complete this last work. His student Josef Rauscher collected manuscripts and lecture postscripts that Schlick planned to include in the book, his last word as it were about political philosophy and a reaction to the rise of Nazism. Schlick proposed in the manuscript that came to be known as *Natur und Kultur* that the state is not necessarily territorial, and he proposed to replace territorial sovereignty with nonterritorial states founded on explicit social contracts. That means different states founded on different types of social contracts can co-exist on the same territory.

The philosophical idea that states are not essentially territorial and should be founded on explicit social contracts is known as *panarchy*, a term Schlick did not use and probably was not familiar with. The term panarchy was coined in 1860 by the Belgian philosopher (and more famously botanist) Paul Emil De Puydt. Panarchy founds the relations between citizens and states on formalized voluntary consent, rather than on land and blood, the territorial and ancestral accidents of birth. It allows people with very different political ideals, identities, and aspirations to live together in the same territory but in different states. Unlike other contractarian political philosophies (Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and after Schlick Rawls and Nozick), panarchy makes no hypothetical guesses or speculations about what abstract rational agents would have agreed to under hypothetical circumstances, or at the dawn of human history; nor does it offer a “one size fits all” solution to the basic problems of political philosophy. Instead, panarchy recognizes that different types of states fit different types of people and it allows them to engage in political choice and experimentation, without imposing on them any hypothetical social contract.

These ideas are highly relevant in today's world. Political divisions within liberal democracies are larger than they ever have been since the Second World War. We live today increasingly in multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-national globalizing societies and states. Political extremes are reacting against these trends. The question of how can we all live reasonably peacefully together gains urgency. The Austro-Hungarian social and political world where Schlick lived during the most productive phases of his life faced similar challenges. Vienna has

been called “the laboratory” of the twentieth century and the forerunner to the European Union. In some respects, our current globalized society is analogous to the late Habsburg Empire written large. The proposed poster will explore both the intellectual origins of Schlick’s highly unusual ideas about the state in the late Habsburg Empire and the timeliness of those ideas in our current political predicament.

Ties van Gemert (Tilburg)

On Antagonism in Metaphilosophy: Logical Empiricism in France

In this poster presentation, I will display the role of logical empiricism as an antagonist in shaping the metaphilosophy of twentieth-century French philosophy, focusing on its reception from the 1930s to the late 1960s. My objective will be to demonstrate, how from the encounter with logical empiricism in the 1930s, a caricature of positivist philosophy of science emerged that became a decisive antagonist in the formulation of the metaphilosophy of post-war French philosophers. I will argue that the French reception of logical empiricism was a struggle over the autonomy of philosophy. My analysis will focus on four commitments in French philosophy that crystallized in the (critical) responses to logical empiricism: (1) the ineliminability of metaphysics, (2) an insistence on the dynamics of (scientific) rationality, (3) a resurgent adherence to realism, and (4) the belief that philosophical knowledge cannot be reduced to scientific knowledge. Collectively, these commitments came to constitute a defense of philosophy against its demise as advocated by the logical empiricists.

In the 1930s, the elimination of philosophy and metaphysics advocated by the logical empiricists, and the promotion of this program through the Unity of Science Movement, was met with suspicious eyes by French philosophers, eventually to be deemed “totalitarian” — an effort to impose a singular, restricted view of what philosophy should be. After the Second World War, the conception of logical empiricism as anti-philosophical, anti-metaphysical, static, anti-realist, and reductionist was instrumentalized as a foil against which post-war French philosophers articulated a metaphilosophy characterized by openness, dialectics, historicity, and (metaphysical) realism.

My poster will display the four stages in the genesis of this image of logical empiricism. First, I turn to Ernst von Aster’s introduction of logical empiricism at the *La Société française de philosophie* (SFP) in 1934 with responses by Élie Cartan, Jean Cavaillès, and Albert Lautman. Second, the reviews of the French translations of works of logical empiricists in *Les Études philosophiques*, *Recherches Philosophique* and *Revue de Synthèse*, alongside the debates at the Paris International Congress for the Unity of Science of 1935. The third part displays the growing antagonism towards logical empiricism before, during, and after the Descartes Conference of 1937, focusing on the critiques of Louis Lavelle, Jacques Maritain, and Maurice

Merleau-Ponty. Last, I depict the post-war period, showing the role of logical empiricism in the formulation of the metaphilosophy of Jean Piaget, Alexandre Koyré, and Louis Althusser and his circle.

Michael Bennett McNulty (Minneapolis)

Studies in Herbert Feigl's Political Activity

In recent work on the apoliticization of 20th century philosophy of science, Herbert Feigl has played the role of a villain. According to George Reisch (2007), for example, Feigl influentially championed logical and methodological studies of science and opposed competing approaches, like that of Philipp Frank, that emphasized sociological-historical studies of science and relevance to political developments. More generally, the political commitments of 20th century philosophers of science has become contested ground for historical scholars, with arguments lobbed back and forth about whether historical figures espoused the appropriate political views and intertwined those views with their philosophy of science.

This poster presents a case study meant to complicate attempts to reduce historical philosophers of science to heroes and villains. As I show by means of archival research, Herbert Feigl's political views, engagement, and advocacy resist simple consolidation. Instead, Feigl can be shown to have a wide range of political views, some of which stand in tension with others, but all of which possess historical contexts and fit together into a complicated image, not of an idealized hero or villain, but of a person.

Among the events in Feigl's life canvassed in this poster are the following: • Feigl was menaced by fascist and "hate leader," Maynard Orlando Nelsen, in 1947. In April 1947, Nelsen pled guilty to charges of threatening great bodily harm after Feigl reported the threats. Recent historical scholarship suggests that Nelsen earlier attempted an assassination of then-Minneapolis mayor—and later United States Vice President and Democratic candidate for President—Hubert H. Humphrey (see Freedman 2023). Throughout his correspondence, Feigl was reluctant to engage on political topics, even when spurred by correspondents. For instance, Feigl declined to mention political issues to colleague and avowed communist, Alfred Blumberg, and consistently counseled that political opinions, particularly of the leftist variety, ought not be stated too stridently. • In 1951, philosophy lecturer the first Black instructor at the University of Minnesota, Forrest O. Wiggins, was dismissed from his position. This dismissal was due in part to Wiggins' support of leftist politics in the McCarthy age. Despite a well-known and public letter backing Wiggins co-signed by the entire Philosophy Department (including Feigl), in hitherto unknown comments to Rudolf Carnap, Feigl gave a less sympathetic account of the situation, stating that Wiggins was too outspoken in his political

views. • In July 1970, anti-war activists in Minnesota broke into Selective Service offices with the intention of destroying military draft files. Eight of these activists were caught and arrested, including former University of Minnesota philosophy student, Chuck Turchick. Turchick and his co-conspirators, collectively referred to as “The Minnesota Eight” were tried in a series of prominent local trials. Turchick was found guilty in November 1970, at which point Feigl (along with Grover Maxwell) wrote a recently discovered letter to the judge of Turchick’s case, Edward Devitt, asking for a reduced sentence and incarceration closer to Minneapolis.

Der Wiener Kreis und die Antisemitismusforschung

Was kann Philosophie zur Antisemitismusforschung beitragen und wo liegen fachspezifische Grenzen? Da es weder *die* Philosophie noch *den* Antisemitismus gibt, beide historisch spezifische und mannigfaltige Formen annehmen, liegt es nahe, die Frage ausgehend von konkreten philosophiehistorischen Reflexionen zu diskutieren. *Ein* Ansatzpunkt dafür ist der Wiener Kreis. Mein Poster stellt überblickshaft und exemplarisch drei Ebenen dar, auf denen in Auseinandersetzung mit dem Kreis Beiträge zur Antisemitismusforschung denkbar sind.

Der Wiener Kreis als Feindbild

Im Rahmen von *philosophiehistorischer* Antisemitismusforschung kann (1.) rekonstruiert werden, dass und warum der Kreis zum philosophischen Feindbild von Antisemiten wurde.⁴ Die teils subtilen, teils massiven antisemitischen Anfeindungen,⁵ wurden in der Forschung durch die Beteiligung von Juden:Jüdinnen, die politische Ausrichtung und das inhaltliche Programm des Kreises erklärt.⁶ *Philosophisch* ausschlaggebend dürften der im philosophischen Feld der Zeit mitunter als bedrohlich wahrgenommene Modernismus, die Philosophiekritik und die Wissenschaftsnähe des Kreises gewesen sein.

Der Wiener Kreis als Reflexionsraum

Philosophiehistorisch kann (2.) nachvollzogen werden, ob und in welchen Formen im Kreis auf den Antisemitismus in Philosophie und Gesellschaft reagiert, etwa reflektiert wurde. Anders als in der Frankfurter Schule ist das Phänomen nicht zum philosophischen Gegenstand erhoben worden. Vereinzelt finden sich aber thematische Berührungspunkte oder explizite Kommentare, teils in Briefen und Tagebüchern.⁷ Das Fehlen einer dezidiert philosophischen Thematisierung des Antisemitismus hat sicherlich nicht nur ‚systematische‘, sondern auch historische und soziologische Gründe. Es scheint aber auch mit der philosophischen Haltung des Kreises übereinzustimmen, dass jegliches Wissen über empirische Phänomene nicht die Philosophie, sondern die Erfahrungswissenschaften zu erarbeiten haben. Hier fügt sich auch ein, dass der Antisemitismus aus dem Umfeld des Kreises durchaus zu einem Forschungsgegenstand

⁴ Vgl. dazu bereits Stadler 2013; 2015; Taschwer 2022.

⁵ Vgl. etwa Dingler 1933, IV; Sauter 1936; o. A. 1929, 5; vgl. berichtend Carnap 2022, 596.

⁶ Stadler 2015, 402.

⁷ Siehe etwa Carnap 2022, 596; Neurath 1942–45; 1981, 292; Zilsel 1990; 1992, 55; 1992a, 165.

gemacht wurde; und zwar *empirisch* sowie in Kooperation mit Adorno und Horkheimer von den Sozialwissenschaftlerinnen Else Frenkel-Brunswik und Marie Jahoda.⁸

Der Wiener Kreis als Werkzeugkasten

Systematisch kann (3.) erörtert werden, inwieweit in der Antisemitismusforschung die Philosophie des Wiener Kreises zumindest der Sache nach als ein analytischer Werkzeugkasten genutzt *wurde* oder werden *könnte*. Einerseits könnte der logische Empirismus eine kritische Funktion im Hinblick auf mutmaßlich zu spekulative oder empirisch fragwürdige philosophische Antisemitismusreflexionen erfüllen. Andererseits müssten entsprechende Reflexionen auch in seinem Rahmen nicht gänzlich an die Sozialwissenschaften delegiert werden, wie etwa der Ansatz des Sprachphilosophen Bernard Harrison zeigt. Ungenannt, aber doch ganz im Geiste Carnaps vertritt er u.a. die These, Kerninhalte des Antisemitismus seien nicht nur empirisch falsch, vielmehr handele es sich teilweise nicht einmal um „candidate[s] for truth or falsity“⁹. Daher solle man die Ideologeme, die irreführend die „grammatical form of statements“¹⁰ annähmen, nicht empirisch zu widerlegen versuchen; man scheitere und verleihe ihnen dadurch noch Plausibilität.¹¹ Begreift man den Antisemitismus als eine wesentlich aus Scheinaussagen bestehende „pseudoexplanatory theory“¹² erscheint eine philosophische Kritik in der Tradition des Wiener Kreises nicht so aussichtslos, wie Max Horkheimer dies einmal suggerierte.¹³ Zugleich ist aber eine Sinnkritik des Antisemitismus keinesfalls hinreichend; der Kampf gegen ihn erfordert zwingend Analysen seiner Akzeptanzbedingungen und Funktionen.¹⁴ Ferner dürfte Sinnkritik als Semantikanalyse selbst sprachanalytisch beschränkt sein und die Pragmatik der antisemitischen Rede vernachlässigen.

⁸ Siehe Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik et al. 1950; Ackerman, Jahoda 1950; Christie, Jahoda 1954; Frenkel-Brunswik, Sanford 1993.

⁹ Harrison 2006, 11.

¹⁰ Harrison 2006, 16.

¹¹ Harrison 2006, 16–18.

¹² Harrison 2020, 464; vgl. a. 2006, 15f, 21.

¹³ Horkheimer 1988, 149.

¹⁴ Vgl. ähnlich über den NS Adorno 1972, 466.

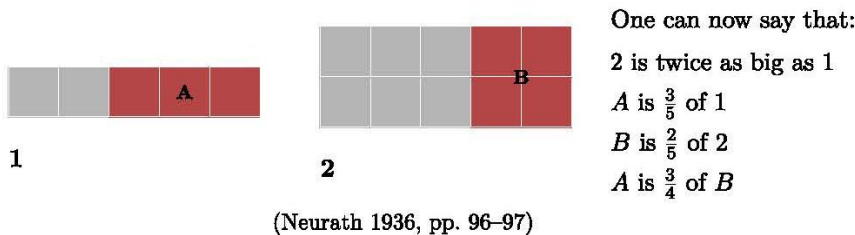
Diagrammatic Inference in ISOTYPE

The Vienna Circle is commonly associated with logical analysis, language-based formalization, and the rejection of intuition in mathematics (cf. Hahn 1933). By contrast, Otto Neurath developed ISOTYPE as a method of visual knowledge representation that has received comparatively little philosophical attention.

Recent scholarship situates ISOTYPE within logical empiricism and the broader context of the Vienna Circle (Burke & Sandner 2024; Nemeth 2019). Design and information-design research analyzes the transformation process and emphasizes the transformer's epistemic role (Macdonald-Ross & Waller 1998; Walker 2017). Philosophical and semiotic discussions characterize ISOTYPE as a rule-governed visual language for clear thinking and examine its role within visual communication (cf. Faludi 1989; Pietarinen 2011; Cat 2024). Cognitive research further examines the effects of iconicity and countability on diagram comprehension (Schreder et al. 2018).

However, none of these approaches reconstruct the specific inferential role of ISOTYPE in quantitative reasoning. In particular, no distinction is drawn between displaying relations and enabling inference. The capacity of ISOTYPE diagrams to encode quantitative relations in discrete visual units, thereby enabling direct inferential access to proportions and ratios, has not been systematically analyzed.

This omission is significant because Neurath explicitly addresses diagrammatic inference “in harmony with the rules of logic and mathematics” (Neurath 1936, p. 103) and illustrates this with a diagram and accompanying commentary:



By decomposing quantities into equal discrete units, ISOTYPE makes cardinal and proportional relations directly perceptible and thereby supports diagrammatic inference. This encoding enables elementary inferential operations to be performed visually: cardinality by counting units, comparison by matching uniform elements, differences by subtracting units, addition by aggregating units, and ratios by proportional grouping without symbolic calculation.

Therefore, the transformer assumes a central epistemic role: not only selecting, simplifying, and structuring data for visual representation, but also organizing quantitative relations in ways that enable visual mathematical inference. This transformation from language-based data to diagrammatic representation is thus epistemically significant, historically most prominently exemplified by Marie Neurath.

The poster reconstructs the transformation process in epistemological terms, based on Neurath's methodological reflections (Neurath 1936) and an analysis of selected ISOTYPE diagrams with respect to diagrammatic-mathematical inference.

It will be shown that Neurath's conception of visual inference anticipates recent findings on diagrammatic reasoning, according to which visual structure makes relational information directly perceptible and supports inference (cf. Cheng 2004).

ISOTYPE can thus be understood as a distinctive epistemic practice of visual reasoning within the Vienna Circle's scientific program.

Raffael Velloso (Campinas)

From Dynamical to Statistical Laws: Franz Exner and the Probabilistic Turn in the Prehistory of the Vienna Circle

Physics in the early twentieth century underwent profound conceptual transformations, particularly concerning the epistemological, ontological, and methodological status of its laws and theories. This context shaped the Viennese intellectual milieu in which the Vienna Circle emerged in the 1920s, becoming known for its reflections on scientific laws, causality, and determinism.

The 1920s were a particularly fertile period for the development of new ideas and mathematical formalisms in physics. Yet, as Erwin Schrödinger notes in his article *Was ist ein Naturgesetz?* (1929), several ideas that became central to quantum mechanics and its philosophical interpretation – such as indeterminism and probabilism – had already been discussed before the emergence of matrix mechanics, wave mechanics, the uncertainty principle, and complementarity. One example mentioned by Schrödinger, and the focus of the present study, is Franz Serafin Exner (1849-1926), an Austrian physicist, Schrödinger's former teacher, and a figure largely overlooked in the historiography of physics and philosophy of science.

Another intellectual formed in this Viennese environment was Philipp Frank, later a founding member of the Vienna Circle, who explicitly referred to Exner's contributions to debates on causality. This connection suggests a possible line of intellectual transmission between Exner's reflections and later discussions within early logical empiricism. Exner is also associated with what has been described as “Vienna indeterminism,” a philosophical orientation according to which indeterminism, acausality, and probabilistic laws may constitute fundamental features of nature rather than merely epistemic tools.

Exner was regarded by his contemporaries as one of the leading figures in Austrian physics in the early twentieth century. Among his works, the book *Vorlesungen über die physikalischen Grundlagen der Naturwissenschaften* (1922) is particularly significant. Written between 1917 and 1921, the book develops systematic reflections on several topics, including: (i) a critique of aprioristic conceptions of determinism and causality; (ii) the ontological and epistemological status of natural laws; and (iii) the role of chance and statistical laws as an “objective feature of nature.” These reflections place Exner in direct dialogue with problems that would later be

addressed by members of the Vienna Circle, including the status of scientific laws, the relation between causality and regularity, and the role of probabilistic explanations in science.

Despite the relevance of these contributions, Exner remains largely absent from standard narratives of early twentieth-century philosophy of science and from historiographical accounts of the intellectual context in which the Vienna Circle emerged. This absence is particularly striking given the thematic proximity between Exner's reflections and later debates within logical empiricism. The present study advances the hypothesis that Exner's reflections on the relation between dynamical and statistical laws constitute an early attempt to reconceptualize the status of natural laws within a probabilistic framework. Rather than treating statistical laws as merely derivative or epistemic, Exner suggested that they may represent fundamental features of nature, thereby suggesting that Exner played a previously underappreciated role in the intellectual prehistory of debates on scientific laws within logical empiricism.

Yasmina Volberg (Stuttgart)

The Expulsion of the Logical Empiricist Herbert Feigl from Austria and His Emigration to the USA – Biographical and Sociocultural Aspects

The expulsion of the logical empiricist Herbert Feigl from Austria and his emigration to the USA – biographical and sociocultural aspects Following the rise to power of Adolf Hitler, a significant number of scientists elected to emigrate, thereby prompting a mass exodus of scientific scholars from German-speaking countries. However, the expulsion of Jewish scientists from their positions of employment commenced prior to 1933.¹⁵ Anti-Semitism was not a sudden development; rather, it was the result of years of development.

The case study of Austrian philosopher Herbert Feigl illuminates the reality experienced by Jewish academics, who were excluded even prior to 1933. Born in 1902 in Reichenberg (today part of the Czech Republic), he was the son of a textile factory director. The subject's country of origin and particularly his Jewish ancestry, presented obstacles throughout his life. As early as 1930, Feigl was compelled to depart Austria and immigrate to the United States due to a paucity of career prospects. With the support of a research fellowship from the Rockefeller Foundation, Feigl was able to undertake a year-long research fellowship at Harvard University in Cambridge prior to accepting a position as an assistant professor at the University of Iowa in 1931. In 1940, he assumed a faculty position at the University of Minnesota, where he established the Center for the Philosophy of Science and became a professor of philosophy. He engaged in research, taught, delivered numerous lectures, and participated in conferences worldwide before passing away in Minneapolis in 1988 after a chronic illness. As a relatively less prominent figure within the Vienna Circle and one whose work has received comparatively less attention from scholars, Feigl's contributions are particularly significant insofar as he was integral to the introduction and spread of the logical empiricism in the United States.

Moreover, his career is of particular pertinence to the field of migration research due to its representation of two significant phenomena: the emigration of academics and the prevalence of anti-Semitic discrimination prior to 1933. The thesis posits that the case under scrutiny serves as a quintessential exemplar of the burgeoning prevalence of anti-Semitism during the 1920s

¹⁵ cf. Fritz, Regina; Rossoliński-Liebe, Grzegorz; Starek, Jana: *Alma Mater Antisemitica. Akademisches Milieu, Juden und Antisemitismus an den Universitäten Europas zwischen 1918 und 1939*. Bd. 3: Beiträge zur Holocaustforschung des Wiener Wiesenthal Instituts für Holocaust-Studien, Wien: new academic press, 2016.

and 1930s, a period that witnessed the emergence of systemic discrimination against Jewish individuals within the academic milieu.¹⁶ In this study, the motivations behind the Feigl's emigration are investigated, along with the underlying anti-Semitic sentiments that were a contributing factor. Furthermore, the emigration process is described, along with the challenges encountered post-emigration. The phenomenon of anti-Semitism was not limited to Europe; it was also present in America. Personal reflections and socio-cultural circumstances illuminate his life as a scientist of Jewish descent during that period.

The present paper will examine Feigl's career, focusing on his emigration experience. The present analysis uses biographical methods and considers the sociocultural circumstances to contextualize this experience. The text delves into the intricacies of his everyday experiences, the environmental factors that permeate his life, and the process of adjustment he underwent following his emigration. The focal point of this research is the migratory process and the subsequent acculturation in the destination country.

¹⁶ cf. Frankel, Richard E.: *Antisemitism Before the Holocaust. Re-Evaluating Antisemitic Exceptionalism in Germany and the United States, 1880 – 1945*, New York: Routledge, 2023.

Lefteris Zacharioudakis (Rotterdam)

A Special Relationship: Three Encounters Between Quine and his British Contemporaries

Although works on W.V. Quine's relation to his British contemporaries do exist (Deckert 1973; Hanfling 2000; Sinclair 2018, 2019), they are far from commonplace. In addition, these works usually focus on a comparison of Quine's philosophical views with those of his British contemporaries, while to various degrees neglecting the actual historical relationship and interactions that Quine had with said figures (e.g. P.F. Strawson, J.L. Austin, and Gilbert Ryle).

To make up for this gap in the literature, we propose to investigate three published instances of Quine's interaction with his British contemporaries: (A) The symposium on Quine's 1948 paper, "On What There Is" (Geach et al 1951); (B) the proceedings of the 1958 Royaumont colloquium (Beck 1962); and (C) the 1965 "Symposium on Austin's Method" (Urmson et al 1969). In addition, we draw from biographical material (e.g. Quine 1985; Lewis 1991; Phillips Griffiths 1991; Rowe 2023) whenever appropriate.

That is, at each stage of this story regarding Quine and his British contemporaries, we first propose to utilize a broadly prosopographical approach to set the stage. That is, before examining each published instance, we aim to provide brief portraits of Quine and his respective British interlocutors; this includes fitting each such encounter into the broader career and record of publications of each philosopher, illustrating their intellectual development up to that point.

Then, we summarize each of the above encounters, focusing on the key disagreements between Quine and his British interlocutors, especially as these disagreements relate to their conceptions of philosophy and philosophy's relation to science.

Indeed, what is at stake here and what we aim to get out of re-reading these three encounters, is a picture of the aftermath, or later reverberations of logical empiricism on Anglophone philosophy in the 1950s and 1960s, and especially of Quine's role as a controversial emissary, of sorts, for the Vienna Circle and scientific philosophy (Morris 2017; Richardson 2023) long after his unofficial tutelage under Rudolf Carnap in the 1930s.

More specifically, following Alan Richardson (2017), we wish to illustrate the claim that 'analytic philosophy' had not yet quite become the 'broad-tent', umbrella term that it subsequently came to be, especially given the endogenous tension among philosophers who

espoused variants of ‘analysis’. To this end, we pay special attention to the term therapeutic positivism – a term initially associated with Gilbert Ryle (Urmson 1962) – which we come across in the latter two encounters, and which is picked up by Quine himself to dub this phase.