LOGICAL EMPIRICISM IN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Matthias Neuber, ed. *Husserl, Cassirer, Schlick: "Wissenschaftliche Philosophie" im Spannungsfeld von Phänomenologie, Neukantianismus und logischem Empirismus*. Veröffentlichungen des Instituts Wiener Kreis, Band 23. Cham: Springer, 2016. Pp. viii+313. €129.99 (cloth).

Sami Pihlström, Friedrich Stadler, and Niels Weidtmann, eds. *Logical Empiricism and Pragmatism*. Vienna Circle Institute Yearbook, vol. 19. Cham: Springer, 2017. Pp. viii+245. $99.99 (cloth).

Anna Brożek, Friedrich Stadler, and Jan Woleński, eds. *The Significance of the Lvov-Warsaw School in the European Culture*. Vienna Circle Institute Yearbook, vol. 21. Cham: Springer, 2017. Pp. xi+353. $89.99 (cloth).

The three volumes from the Vienna Circle Institute reviewed here could be treated under the heading of "internationalization."[1] Although this is not an emic category of these works—they are not discussing explicitly how logical empiricism became an international movement—by reading them from this perspective we may find exciting and profitable directions for new work in the history and philosophy of science.

The Viennese branch of logical empiricism started as a local seminar group organized by Moritz Schlick in 1924. Although it continuously grew, it never became bigger than a selection of between 15 and 20 enthusiastic scholars. After what Friedrich Stadler called the constitutive and nonpublic phases of the circle, the ambitious movement entered the stage officially with their manifesto in 1929. Taking the growing interest in the movement at face value, the usual

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story presents the internationalization of logical empiricism as a story of unquestionable success.

Nevertheless, this 'usual story' requires clarification. First, the internationalization of logical empiricism did not start in 1929: members of the movement had attended international conferences and had become researchers in various locations in Europe and the United States before that time. While Rudolf Carnap taught in Vienna (1926–31), he often visited conferences (and spent months) outside Austria; later, he settled in Prague, where Philipp Frank had taught since 1912. Otto Neurath never stayed in one place very long: during the 1920s and 1930s, he visited Mexico, the United States, Greece, The Hague, and Moscow. Herbert Feigl had moved to the United States already in 1931 (stirring up American philosophy from within); Schlick taught at Stanford (1929) and Berkeley, California (1931–32); Karl Menger also visited the United States (1930–31) after working as L. E. J. Brouwer's assistant in Amsterdam (1925–27). Members of the circle did everything they could to spread the word in the 1930s, but they had already done their best to do so in the 1920s.

Reaching out physically to the international scene, however, is just one form of "internationalization." Logical empiricists did not just move out from their ivory towers but welcomed allies to contribute to the common cause—and enemies to provide the required tools to sharpen and refine their approach in Vienna and Berlin. You may internationalize your movement simply by sitting at home and being receptive to new ideas from all over the world. Let them come to you: Vienna became a place of "pilgrimage of foreign scientists and artists," as Ilkka Niiniluoto wrote in his contribution to one of the works under review here, *Logical Empiricism and Pragmatism* (185–86).

Husserl, Cassirer, Schlick: "Wissenschaftliche Philosophie" im Spannungsfeld von Phänomenologie, Neukantianismus und logischem Empirismus, edited by Matthias Neuber, aims to represent three different forms of European scientific philosophy, but it also documents the first international contacts of logical empiricism. During this phase of its internationalization, logical empiricism had just come into existence in the works of Schlick and Hans Reichenbach. That birth was marked by critical evaluation of and discussion with phenomenology and neo-Kantianism. What ties these three philosophies together is the "rejection of any form of speculative metaphysics . . . and a commitment to 'scientific philosophy'" (1). The volume aims to analyze these approaches by revealing the possible senses of 'scientific philosophy' and—at the same time—detecting possible interconnections.

The essays in part 1 (written by Regina Schidel, Manfred Sommer, Matthias Wille, and Niels Weidtmann) are devoted to Edmund Husserl and phenomenology, specifically, to Husserl's relation to Schlick, his ideas on geometry, and

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his Crisis-studies. Usually, a reviewer should not be concerned about what is missing from a volume filled with enlightening essays, but some obviously perfect matches are conspicuously absent. One such case, for example, is Carnap's debated relation to Husserl and phenomenology. Another candidate for discussion would be the philosopher of law and social scientist Felix Kaufmann, a self-professed phenomenologist and another figure in the insider opposition of the Vienna Circle. Kaufmann was familiar with both phenomenology and logical empiricism, so he was able to internalize certain international moments even in homely Viennese settings. Gustav Bergmann noted in a letter to Neurath (published in the first *Yearbook* in 1993), however, that Schlick was hostile to Kaufmann's phenomenological orientation, so the latter's approach remained a mere historical curiosity for a long while.

Part 2 is devoted to neo-Kantianism, especially to Ernst Cassirer's scientific philosophy, with essays by Massimo Ferrari, Christian Möckel, Marco Giovanelli, and Thomas Mormann. The last five essays, written by Friedrich Stadler, Matthias Neuber, Thomas Uebel, Michael Heidelberger, and Fynn Ole Engler and Karsten Böger, discuss the ideas of logical empiricism per se. The essays by Neuber and Uebel about the reevaluation of Schlick's philosophy deserve special mention. They argue that Schlick's mature approach should be seen in new lights, especially his famous 1930 'turn' and his notorious conception of affirmations. Even though three collections of the *Schlick Studien* and many volumes of the *Gesamtausgabe* are available, simplistic views often surface about Schlick's philosophy. These chapters will do a great deal to correct that overly simplified picture.

The essays in *Husserl, Cassirer, Schlick* remind us that logical empiricism did not arise in a vacuum but rather on fertile ground. Logical empiricists, in turn, provided material for philosophical and ideological opponents as well. In that process, Schlick's personality made him a reliable source of new trends for philosophers and scientists outside the Vienna Circle; he became a respectable partner in debates and not just a makeshift provocateur or activist (a picture that is usually given, e.g., of Neurath).

Logical empiricists, however, established various connections to pragmatists as well. Their relations could be ordered into three phases: (1) 1900–1924, the reception phase; (2) 1924–39, the discussion phase; and (3) 1939–50s, the adaptation phase. Phase 1 is practically identical to the regular meetings of the First Vienna Circle: before World War I, scholars met regularly in Vienna coffeehouses to discuss the results of science, philosophy, and the humanities. One of these panels—documented in the second book under review here, *Logical Empiricism and Pragmatism*—was dedicated to pragmatism. Phase 2 is designated as "discussion" because, around the 1930s, many logical empiricists visited the United States and became acquainted with pragmatism, while at the

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same time, American defenders of pragmatism came to Europe as well (Sidney Hook, Ernest Nagel, W. V. O. Quine, Charles Morris); some of these even attended the International Congress in Prague (1934). Finally, "adaptation" is meant in a two-directional way: on the one hand, acclimatization of logical empiricism to the new American environment and the pragmatism there, and on the other hand, the adaptation of pragmatism and American philosophy of science to the logically and technically oriented philosophy of logical empiricism. Since most of the logical empiricists emigrated to the United States between 1930 and 1938, there are many opportunities to study their interactions both on the individual and on the "movement" level.

Armed with these categories and ideas, we can read *Logical Empiricism and Pragmatism* by following the narrative as Massimo Ferrari and Thomas Uebel describe and critically reconstruct the personal, institutional, and philosophical relations (and lack thereof) between Charles S. Peirce, William James, and the First Vienna Circle. The events described in Giovanni Rubeis's essay dealing with John Dewey's alleged instrumentalism and Reichenbach's forgotten paper on Dewey's theory of science, along with Maria Carla Galavotti's chapter on probability (discussing Ernest Nagel, C. I. Lewis, Carnap, and Bruno de Finetti), might be seen as belonging to phase 2.

Matthias Neuber, by interpreting the philosophical relations between Wilfrid Sellars and Herbert Feigl, takes up a peculiar and rarely discussed moment of phase 3. The essay sheds light on the formation of analytic philosophy when Sellars and Feigl worked together and influenced each other with respect to 'pure pragmatics'. The other relevant article for the adaptation period is Sami Pihlström's "Viennese Background of Harvard Neopragmatism," although the essay focuses much more on Harvard neopragmatism per se, with some 'American Carnap' to be sure, but nothing intrinsically Viennese. While we learn a great deal about Hilary Putnam and the late Wittgenstein as well, most of the references dropped along the way are made to Pihlström himself.

While there are two essays that provide general accounts of 'pragmatism' (Heikki J. Koskinen on ontology and Donata Romizi on determinism), it is once again quite interesting that some periods and events from the critical friendship of the two movements are entirely missing. None of the articles considered Ernest Nagel's mediating role, or Dewey's contributions to the *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*, or C. I. Lewis's papers on meaning and verification and how Schlick and Carnap responded to them. These episodes are substantially relevant to understanding how logical empiricists received the ideas of pragmatism and how pragmatism responded to logical empiricism. Nonetheless, the reconstructions of the early indirect encounters make the volume an important contribution to the history of analytic philosophy, as well as

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supporting the claim that internationalization could be an armchair activity or, in this case, a coffeehouse practice.

The volume ends with the regular review and general sections. The latter contains Ilkka Niiniluoto's essay on Eino Kaila and the Vienna Circle, which describes in detail why Kaila went to Vienna and how his visits changed over time. Here, we find the story of an isolated person finding his own mecca of scientific philosophy. Internationalization has two directions in this case as well: Kaila took Finland to Vienna, and he took Vienna back to Finland.

Günther Sandner's review essay and a "report/documentation" essay (by Sandner and Christian Pape) are promising from our point of view. Sandner reviews two books about the Berlin Group and, with Pape, he compares the Berlin Society of Empirical/Scientific Philosophy and Vienna's Ernst Mach Association regarding their stances toward ideology, their worldviews, and their common 'late enlightenment' context.

Some minor technicalities regarding the publishing and the formal editorial work cannot be passed over. Many chapters contain an unsettling number of typos; different bibliographical and citation conventions are used in the same articles, with further mistakes in the footnotes. Although they do not affect the content of the essays, after a while, all of those mistakes and unstructured contingencies become quite disturbing. This is even more unfortunate considering Springer's high prices and usually neat qualities.

The final volume under review, *The Significance of the Lvov-Warsaw School in the European Culture* (edited by Anna Brożek, Friedrich Stadler, and Jan Woleński), has significant lessons in store. The Lvov-Warsaw School (LWS) is a quite interesting phenomenon. It had many first-rate philosophers and logicians among its members and exceeded the Vienna Circle in numbers. It had its own forums and societies, and its participants developed their ideas in the most diverse fields possible. Besides the well-known logical inquiries and the philosophy of science and physics in particular, we find promising and often still unexplored ideas on ethics, aesthetics, psychology, and philosophy of action and mind.

After Peter Simons's and Jan Woleński's general essays on the historiography of analytic philosophy, Stepan Ivanyk considers the Ukrainian sources and influences of the LWS in part 1. The essay is exciting not just because it reconstructs a "certain circumstance, which has not been taken into consideration in studies on the Lvov-Warsaw School so far" (29), but because it also shows how philosophical ideas became international mainly through the personal efforts of protagonists.

Parts 2 (with essays by Jan Woleński, Dariusz Łukasiewicz, Jacek Jadacki, and Maria van der Schaar) and 3 (with essays by Wojciech W. Gasparski, Marta Zaręba, Marcin Tkaczyk, Anna Brożek, and Jacek Jadacki) are devoted to the

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international and internal developments of the LWS. Jadacki's essay titled "The Lvov-Warsaw School from a Bird's Eye View" is especially relevant: he claims that to constitute a school, "what is necessary and sufficient is proper self-identification, location, genealogy and ideology" (211). This consideration implies that being a school requires cohesiveness and loyalty to a particular geographic area and group. While critical remarks could be made about the validity of this conception, and we might be skeptical whether these points are sufficient to reasonable talk about philosophical schools, it provides such a framework in which we could consistently talk about the developments in Poland: as the chapters in *The Significance of the Lvov-Warsaw School* show, the LWS fulfilled all the stated conditions. Nevertheless, while logical empiricism did not meet these requirements (whether it would meet others is a further question), it sold their "brand" more efficiently. Unfortunately, the volume does not provide answers or hints about this divergence in reception.

Finally, the editors have two remarkable documents up their sleeves. There is the English translation of Leon Chwistek's 1912 paper, which is a critical inquiry of *Principia Mathematica*. The paper shows not just that the nature and alternative systems of logic were the focus of the LWS during its formative years but reveals that the reception history of *Principia* still has rare treasures to offer outside the English- and German-speaking worlds. Chwistek's paper was published in Polish, but Rose Rand translated it in the 1950s, and Nika Pona, Adam Trybus, and Bernard Linsky updated it recently.

The volume ends with Aleksander Wundheiler and Edward Poznański's "The Concept of Truth in Physics," preceded by a detailed editorial introduction written by the translators (Artur Koterski and Thomas Uebel). Koterski and Uebel do an excellent job in providing biographical and philosophical information about the newly translated article. They compare the paper to Neurath's 'philosophy' and his encyclopedism, providing an interesting and hitherto unnoticed topic for further research.

Logical empiricism had many phases, maintaining connections to lands both west and east of central Europe. As all of the volumes under discussion show, while logical empiricists were critical of many of their contemporaries, they were also receptive in interpreting and forming their ideas. The three volumes that are discussed here aptly demonstrate these considerations. But given the differences and deviations, it might be hard to talk about the internationalization of logical empiricism. In order to do that, we have to be clear about what logical empiricism is in the first place. Here is a proposal: logical empiricists are connected via family resemblances (as Jan Woleński, in one of his contributions to *The Significance of the Lvov-Warsaw School* [20], suggests of analytic philosophy) without core figure(s), essential properties, and commitments shared

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equally among the usual suspects. Rather, we encounter overlapping similarities, recurring patterns, and schemes that are instantiated in numerous forms and degrees. With this idea in mind, the chapters in these volumes might be seen as descriptions of family pictures on the wall. We still need to fill in the empty branches on our historical family tree.

Ádám Tamás Tuboly, *Hungarian Academy of Sciences*

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