

*Johan Strang*

# **History, Transfer, Politics**

**Five Studies on the Legacy of Uppsala  
Philosophy**

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## PART 2

### Five Studies on the Legacy of Uppsala Philosophy

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#### Study I

“Arvet efter Kaila och Hägerström – den analytiska filosofin i Finland och Sverige”, originally published in Stefan Nygård & Johan Strang (eds.), *Från idealism till analytisk filosofi – den moderna filosofin i Finland och Sverige 1880-1950*, Helsingfors: Svenska Litteratursällskapet i Finland / Stockholm: Atlantis, 2006: 237-266.

#### Study II

“Theoria and Logical Empiricism - on the Tensions Between the National and the International in Philosophy”, originally published in Juha Manninen & Friedrich Stadler (eds.), *The Vienna Circle in the Nordic Countries – Networks and Transformations of Logical Empiricism* [Vienna Circle Institute Yearbook 14], Dordrecht: Springer, 2010: 69-89.

#### Study III

“Two Generations of Scandinavian Legal Realists”, originally published in *Retfærd*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2009: 61-82.

#### Study IV

“The Scandinavian Value Nihilists and the Crisis of Democracy in the 1930s and 1940s”, originally published in *Nordeuropaforum*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2009: 37-63.

#### Study V

“Overcoming the Rift Between ‘Is’ and ‘Ought’ - Gunnar Myrdal and the Philosophy of Social Engineering”, originally published in *Ideas in History*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2007: 143-177.

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Johan Strang, Bergen, March 2010





# **PART 1**

## **Introduction – History, Transfer, Politics**



## **i. Preliminaries**

### **a. The aim of the studies**

The studies presented in this volume examine how a group of young intellectuals succeeded in colonising the legacy of an important Swedish philosophical movement, the so-called Uppsala philosophy of Axel Hägerström, and the challenges they faced in consolidating this legacy with philosophical and political currents in the late 1930s and 40s. On the one hand, the studies focus on how Uppsala philosophy was merged with, and gradually replaced by, novel philosophical trends imported from abroad, particularly logical empiricism. Thus, the studies tell the story of the making of Hägerström as the father of the Swedish analytic tradition. On the other hand, Hägerström's philosophy, particularly the "value nihilistic" theory, mounted a serious political challenge for these intellectuals. Accordingly, the studies examine how this younger generation struggled to combine value nihilism with a strong normative programme in favour of democracy and social engineering. Thus, they tell the story of the making of Uppsala philosophy, or rather, analytic philosophy, as the democratic and progressive philosophy of the Swedish welfare state.

Axel Hägerström (1868-1939) is a key figure in the intellectual history of 20<sup>th</sup> century Sweden. Serving as Professor of Practical Philosophy<sup>1</sup> at Uppsala University from 1911 to 1933, he is often said to have marked a decisive turning point in Swedish philosophy. With Hägerström's Uppsala philosophy the idealistic tradition after Christopher Jacob Boström (1797-1866) was finally and completely overthrown in favour of the modern philosophical approach of

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<sup>1</sup> At Swedish and Finnish, as well as some German universities it is common to distinguish between two different departments in philosophy, following the Aristotelian division between theoretical philosophy, which concerns logic, epistemology and metaphysics on the one hand, and practical philosophy, which concerns ethics, aesthetics and political philosophy on the other.

conceptual and logical analysis (Källström 1986: 11-14; Sigurdson 2000: 45). In this way, Hägerström is said to have established the analytic tradition in Swedish philosophy. Hägerström is also considered to be the founder of Scandinavian Legal Realism, a radical but influential legal theoretical school that aimed at studying law as a social phenomenon (Björne 2007: 154-69, 315-37; Blandhol 1999). Sometimes Hägerström is also depicted as the originator of a non-normative or even “positivistic” Swedish tradition in social science (e.g. Eliaeson 2000; Føllesdal 2003). Moreover, Hägerström is often ascribed a significance reaching far beyond the universities. His value theory, according to which value judgements cannot be true or false but have to be interpreted as emotive outbursts, has been said to have initiated a moral tradition that continues to influence Swedish intellectual and political life. Hägerström has even been portrayed as a philosophical representative of the modernisation of Swedish society, as something of a court philosopher of the Swedish “people’s home” (*folkehemmet*), i.e. the emerging welfare state (Fredriksson 1994: 209; Sigurdson 2000: 11, 235-58). In its ambition to overcome conservative constraints and transform law into a vehicle for social reform, Hägerström’s legal philosophy has been called the legal ideology of the Swedish or Nordic welfare state (Malminen 2007: 82). Conversely, critical voices have regularly been raised about the connections between Hägerström and more problematic features of modern Swedish society. Hägerström is sometimes blamed for the de-moralisation of politics (Bexell 1995: 115), or the weak position of individual rights in Sweden (Nergelius 1996: 94-7). More incensed theorists have claimed that Hägerström’s philosophy is responsible for paternalistic, state-absolutistic and even totalitarian tendencies in Sweden (Bjarup 1982: 195ff; 2005; 12; Sundberg 1978: 191ff; 1984).<sup>2</sup> Whether positive or nega-

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<sup>2</sup> Hägerström figures regularly in the cultural debates in Swedish newspapers, mostly in negative terms. Finalising this manuscript, I came across an editorial of *Dagens Nyheter* (August 4, 2009) – characteristically entitled “The return of morality” (“Moralens återkomst”) – which claims that Hägerström turned the Swedes into narcissists and that the time is ripe to review the Hägerströmian legacy.

tive, there seems to be little argument about Hägerström's profound influence on modern Swedish society.<sup>3</sup>

From a historical point of view, Hägerström was undoubtedly a central figure in the intellectual life of Sweden in the 1920s and 30s (Källström 1984; 1986). However, it is perhaps surprising to learn that few of those historical actors that subscribed to Hägerström's programme in the 1930s and 40s seem to have studied his philosophy in any great detail. Hägerströmian scholars such as Gunnar Myrdal (1898-1987) and Herbert Tingsten (1896-1973) have, in retrospect, admitted that their knowledge of their master's theories was largely second hand (Myrdal 1958: 250; Tingsten 1961: 145). Moreover, many of those younger members of the Uppsala School, such as Ingemar Hedenius (1908-82), Konrad Marc-Wogau (1902-91) and Anders Wedberg (1913-78), who canonised Hägerström as the father of the Swedish analytic tradition, were in fact disciples of the other main figure of the Uppsala School, Adolf Phalén (1884-1931), and were in many ways very critical of the ideas and theories of Hägerström.

Indeed, it seems as if the figure of Hägerström was far more important than Hägerström's actual philosophical arguments and scholarly publications. His philosophy was well in line with the secularist and enlightenment ideals of cultural radicalism, the liberal-socialist movement that formed a pivotal part of Scandinavian intellectual life since the 1880s, and which is said to have enjoyed something of a renaissance between the wars, particularly in the 1930s (Skoglund 1991: 186-205).<sup>4</sup> Hägerström's central position and popularity was much due to the fact that he was able

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<sup>3</sup> Important exceptions are Danielsson 1990; Strömholm 2002: 35.

<sup>4</sup> Politically, the cultural radical movement of the 1880s can be interpreted as an alliance between liberals and Social Democrats. Among the leading members of the most influential cultural radical student organisation were Karl Staaf (1860-1915), the Liberal Prime Minister in 1905-06 and 1911-14, and Hjalmar Branting (1860-1925), Social Democratic Prime Minister in three different governments between 1920 and 1925. The most internationally famous names associated with Scandinavian cultural radicalism are arguably Georg Brandes, Harald Høffding, Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg. On the position of Hägerström and the value nihilistic theory within the cultural radical tradition, see e.g. Runeby 1995: 167-256; Skoglund 1991: 172-85; Wiklund 2006: 149-57; Östling 2008: 199-293.

to introduce and cement the ideas of cultural radicalism in the rather traditionalist philosophical department in Uppsala. Marking a break with Boströmian idealism, and more importantly, with Boströmian moral and political conservatism, Hägerström became something of an intellectual icon for young intellectuals with radical and progressive ambitions. Of course, neither cultural radicalism nor Hägerström were univocally celebrated. By the more conservatively inclined, the Hägerströmian ideas were charged of being uncultured and even dangerous. Hägerström was controversial and often the subject of fierce debates, but for “those who wanted to change things”<sup>5</sup> it was of utmost importance to prove that one belonged to Hägerström’s camp and to present oneself as a follower of his ideas.

However, in the course of a few years around the Second World War, Hägerström and Uppsala philosophy disappeared from the scene, and were replaced by the international influence of logical empiricism and analytic philosophy. The studies in this volume are about a young generation of scholars that struggled for, and eventually won, the right to represent Hägerström’s legacy. They focus on the challenges that these young intellectuals faced in trying to reconcile the Hägerströmian legacy with the changing philosophical and political ideas and expectations of the 1930s and 40s, particularly with logical empiricism and analytic philosophy on the one hand, and democracy and social engineering on the other.

(I) The first study, “Arvet efter Kaila och Hägerström – den analytiska filosofin i Finland och Sverige” (Strang I),<sup>6</sup> describes how the image of Hägerström as the father of the analytic tradition was created by a particular faction of younger Uppsala philosophers, i.e. Hedenius, Marc-Wogau and Wedberg, who (re-) presented the Hägerströmian philosophy as a parallel movement to logical empiricism and the Cambridge School of Russell and Moore.

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<sup>5</sup> This and all subsequent translations from the Nordic languages are mine. The original will be given in footnotes. “[Hägerström] tilltalade dem som ville ändra på saker och ting”. Gunnar Myrdal’s characterisation, quoted by Källström 1997: 151.

<sup>6</sup> In this pdf-version, the references to the five studies follow the pagination of the original publications.

(II) The second study, “*Theoria* and logical empiricism – on the tensions between the national and the international in philosophy” (Strang II), looks more closely at the introduction of logical empiricism to Sweden by examining the confrontations between Uppsala philosophy and logical empiricism in both the editorial board and in the pages of Sweden’s leading philosophical journal *Theoria*.

(III) The third study, “Two generations of Scandinavian Legal Realists” (Strang III), focuses on how the legal philosophy of Hägerström was simultaneously colonised and defeated by a second generation of Uppsala philosophers, i.e. Hedenius and the Dane Alf Ross (1899-1979), to a large extent by criticising and replacing Hägerström with ideas and arguments inspired by logical empiricism. The study also argues that their criticism was, to a large extent, politically motivated. With the rise of totalitarianism on the European continent, many critical voices were raised against the moral and legal “relativism” or “nihilism” of Hägerström, allegations that Hedenius and Ross tried to overcome by transforming and redescribing the Hägerströmian philosophy.

(IV) The fourth study, “The Scandinavian value nihilists and the crisis of democracy in the 1930s and 40s” (Strang IV), discusses the attempts of the second generation of Scandinavian value nihilists (i.e. Hedenius, Tingsten, and Ross) to overcome the accusations of a connection between value nihilism and totalitarianism, and to present value nihilism as a “democratic” philosophy.

(V) Finally, the fifth study, “Overcoming the rift between ‘is’ and ‘ought’ – Gunnar Myrdal and the philosophy of social engineering” (Strang V), examines Myrdal’s attempts to consolidate the Hägerströmian tenets with a strong normative political programme for (Social Democratic) social reform.

The studies have been written with the intention of approaching intellectual history, or the history of philosophy, *historically*; that is, to highlight the historical context and situation of the intellectuals of this period in time in order to be able to analyse what they were doing in writing their texts.<sup>7</sup> The studies should not primarily be

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<sup>7</sup> Here I draw upon the so-called Cambridge School in the study of intellectual history, programmatically launched by Quentin Skinner in his

understood as contributions to the contemporary philosophical discussion, for example to that between non-cognitivists and moral realists in meta-ethics. Neither should they be received as contributions to the debate concerning the correct interpretation of Hägerström's philosophy. Rather, one key argument of my studies is that a conscious redescription of Hägerström's ideas was an important and often very successful strategy in order to claim his legacy and to reconcile it with both philosophical and political currents. Uppsala philosophy was not a set of philosophical doctrines that remained unchanged from 1920 to 1950, rather Uppsala philosophy, and particularly the value nihilistic theory, formed an important intellectual heritage, and as such it was the subject of fierce struggles for monopolisation. It was by no means self-evident that Hägerström and the Uppsala School would end up being presented as a pre-history of the Swedish analytic tradition or as something of a court philosophy of the Swedish welfare state.

The historical ambition in these studies is pursued in two related ways. It has, first of all, been the ambition to pay special attention to the *transfer* of logical empiricism to Sweden. The transformation from Uppsala philosophy to analytic philosophy occurred in constant interaction with the international philosophical scene. Thus, in order to understand the historical situation in which the intellectuals acted, it is crucial not to separate such connected realities from each other.<sup>8</sup> The confrontation and eventual consolidation of logical empiricism and Uppsala philosophy deserves particular attention. This is not only because it has been somewhat neglected in previous studies on the history of Swedish philosophy, but also because logical empiricism, and in particular the Vienna Circle, was an intellectual movement that played a rather similar political and cultural role on the European continent as Uppsala philosophy did in Sweden.

Secondly, the studies aim to take special notice of the *political* intentions of the actors, particularly with regard to the two (related)

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“Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas” (1969), and even more programmatically redescribed in Skinner 2002. See below: Chapter ii.

<sup>8</sup> On this point I draw upon the recent discussion on cultural transfers, *histoire croisée*, and *transnationale Geschichte*. See below: Chapter iii.



main political challenges of the 1930s and 40s in the Nordic countries, i.e. the rise (and fall) of the totalitarian threat, and the emergence of a new, nationalistic and modernistic, Social Democratic political rhetoric of the people's home and social engineering. Philosophical and intellectual traditions are not construed in academic isolation, but in constant interaction with political and cultural life.<sup>9</sup> In the 1930s and 40s, it became a pressing challenge to present the Uppsala School as a politically scrupulous and "democratic" philosophy. However, the studies also attempt to examine the philosophical scene itself as a "political" game in which the difference between friends and enemies was well defined and in which the philosophers and theoreticians profiled themselves by making rhetorical-political "moves".<sup>10</sup>

History, transfer and politics will form the prism through which the studies are presented in this introduction. I will proceed as follows: The remaining parts of this preliminary chapter will define the scope of the studies, describe the historical sources and previous research that have been used in the studies, and give a brief presentation of the main actors and their intellectual and political context. The following three chapters are devoted to a discussion of the topic in the light of the three methodological perspectives: history (Chapter ii), transfer (Chapter iii) and politics (Chapter iv). Chapter v gives summaries of the five studies, while the final chapter (vi) is devoted to a discussion of the results of the studies and the prospects that they initiate.

## **b. Scope, sources and previous research**

Diachronically, the *scope* of the studies comprise the 1930s and 40s, which are periods of great change and modernisation in Sweden as elsewhere. But as our convention of categorising periods of time in

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<sup>9</sup> Here I draw upon what Kari Palonen (2003b: 3, 175) has labelled "the Skinnerian revolution in political thought", from a study of theories and ideas applied in a separate field of politics to an analysis of thought and theories as movers in the political world itself. See below: Chapter iv.

<sup>10</sup> On rhetorical "moves" see e.g. Skinner 2002: 115.

decades has little to do with the events portrayed in this volume, there should be no need for particular excuses in those cases where the studies refer to sources or events that date a couple of years before 1930 or after 1949. Moreover, due to the nature of the studies, the scope will sometimes be greatly exceeded. Some of Hägerström's main works were written many years before the 1930s; his famous inaugural lecture was delivered in 1911, but continued for some time to play a central role in marking a turning point in Swedish philosophy. Similarly, some of the things that were written about the Uppsala School during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been used as sources describing the creation of the image of Hägerström as the father of the Swedish analytic tradition.

Geographically, the studies focus mainly on Swedish philosophers and intellectuals. However, as one of the main methodological presumptions has been that intellectual history should not be written from an isolated national perspective, substantial space will be given to comparative (especially Strang I) and transfer (especially Strang II) perspectives. Moreover, the studies also proceed from the idea that intellectual life in Sweden to a considerable extent was entangled with the discussions in the neighbouring Nordic countries, and thus *Norden* forms an important extension of the geographical scope, somewhere between the national and the international.<sup>11</sup>

The historical *sources* analysed in the five studies consist mainly of theoretical texts published as books or articles in scholarly journals. For some studies, a thorough examination of all volumes of a journal in the 1930s and 40s have been called for – *Theoria* in the study on *Theoria* and logical empiricism (Strang II), and *Tidskrift för rettsvetenskap* as well as *Svensk Juristtidning* in the study on Scandinavian Legal Realism (Strang III). Some studies also make extensive use of more popular (i.e. less scholarly) publications, such as *Tiden* (a Social Democratic journal which emphasised culture and debate), and *Spektrum* (a modernist journal that appeared in the early 1930s). By contrast, newspapers have not been subjected to any detailed

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<sup>11</sup> For an account of the construction and significance of *Norden* as a cultural and historical region, see Sørensen & Stråth (eds.) 1997.

analysis – most of the references to dailies that nevertheless occur in the studies are quoted via secondary literature. The only study that makes systematic use of private correspondences is “*Theoria and logical empiricism*” (Strang II), which analyses letters from the *Theoria* archive at Lund’s University Library. In the other studies, private correspondences occur only sporadically and form no essential part of the argument. In the study of the establishment of analytic philosophy in Finland and Sweden (Strang I) important additional sources are the assessments that have been written by referees used in professorial appointments (*sakskunnigullåtanden*), and other documents related to these appointments, such as appeals and answers to these appeals.<sup>12</sup>

When looking for *previous research* on the history of Swedish philosophy in general and the Uppsala School in particular, it is undoubtedly to the writings of the intellectual historian Svante Nordin that one primarily turns. With *Romantikens filosofi – svensk idealism från Höjjer till hegelianerna* (1987), *Den boströmska skolan och den svenska idealismens fall* (1981) and *Från Hägerström till Hedenius – den moderna svenska filosofin* (1983) Nordin has given a comprehensive

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<sup>12</sup> The practice of employing a number of “independent” scholars to evaluate the competence of the applicants may be unfamiliar to non-Nordic readers and deserves some additional comment. These (public) statements form an exceptionally fascinating source as they quite explicitly, and frequently also in a rather ferocious tone, expose the dividing lines between different intellectual schools and movements. However, they are also burdened with some methodological predicaments. It is, for example, often rather difficult to distinguish an “objective” assessment of an applicant from blatant sectarianism, as the evaluation of a scholar belonging to the same philosophical movement tends to be more positive than the evaluation of an outsider, regardless of the scrupulous intentions of the evaluator. Moreover, it is not always clear that the evaluation should be understood as an assessment of the general scholarly merits of the applicant, as it might be affected by certain attributes and qualities connected to the particular Chair, whether these are explicitly stated as directives to the evaluator, or implicitly present as something of a cultural legacy. Finally, one should also acknowledge the fact that the assessments are influenced by non-scholarly factors such as language, nationality, politics, or even personal relations, particularly as the philosophical communities of Sweden and the Nordic countries in the 1930s and 40s were rather small.

account of Swedish philosophy from the early 19<sup>th</sup> to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The books continue to serve as standard references on the topic. My studies build mainly on *Från Hägerström till Hedenius*, which was the first detailed historical examination of the transformation from the Uppsala School to analytic philosophy. By emphasising the Kantian premises of Uppsala philosophy, and the many theoretical similarities to Neo-Kantianism (in particular as it was practised in Marburg by Hermann Cohen and Paul Natorp), Nordin was able to go beyond the reigning “analytic reading” of Uppsala philosophy in order to give a more accurate picture of the philosophical ambitions of Hägerström and Phalén themselves.<sup>13</sup> My studies seek to complete Nordin’s work by, on the one hand, expanding on the political connotations of the philosophical struggles, and on the other hand, by focussing more closely on the role of logical empiricism in Sweden.

Besides Nordin, Jan Bengtsson and Hans Ruin deserve to be mentioned among those who have presented alternatives to the analytic reading of Hägerström. In his *Den fenomenologiska rörelsen i Sverige* Bengtsson emphasised the phenomenological influences on many of the great names of Uppsala philosophy (Bengtsson 1991: 83-113).<sup>14</sup> Ruin, on the other hand, has made an effort to launch a discussion on the Nietzschean influences on Hägerström – obvious already in the final paragraph of “Om moraliska föreställningars sanning”, where Hägerström asks for a moral philosophy “beyond good and evil” (Hägerström 1911: 65)<sup>15</sup> – but nevertheless largely ignored by historians of philosophy (Ruin 2000). My studies have also been able to draw considerably on more theoretical philosophical analyses of Hägerström and his value theory. Especially Bo Petersson and Sven Danielsson have shown how Hägerström’s value theory was anchored in the Austrian act-psychology and

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<sup>13</sup> A more recent account of the transformation from Uppsala philosophy to analytic philosophy is provided by Nordin in the biography *Ingemar Hedenius – En filosof och hans tid* (Nordin 2004b), and a brief outline in English of the philosophical scene in Sweden in the 1930s and 40s is included by Nordin in *Ernst Cassirer, the Swedish years* (Hansson & Nordin 2006: Chapter 2).

<sup>14</sup> See Bengtsson 1992 for a brief English version.

<sup>15</sup> “...på andra sidan om gott och ont”.

*Werttheorie* of Brentano, Meinong and Ehrenfelds, and that it in this sense Hägerström's theory was very different from the semantic and linguistic version of value nihilism that was defended by Hedenius (and Ross) in the 1940s (Petersson 1973; 2009a; 2009b; Danielsson 1993).<sup>16</sup> Arguably however, whereas most of these studies have been more concerned with discussing the correct interpretation of Hägerström and his value theory, i.e. with proposing alternatives to the analytic reading of Uppsala philosophy and Hägerström, my studies aim rather at a historical examination of the emergence of the analytic reading itself.

Within the field of jurisprudence, Hägerström and Scandinavian Legal Realism continue to draw much historical attention. But while some of these studies are meticulously theoretical and thus appear rather esoteric to an outsider (Helin 1988; Lyles 2006), others tend to have a very explicit critical political message which arguably hampers the historical reconstruction (Bjarup 1982; 2005; Slagstad 1987). Of course, there are exceptions, and among them particularly Sverre Blandhol's examination of the political connotations of Alf Ross's legal theory in *Juridisk ideologi – Alf Ross' kritikk av naturretten* (1999) deserves attention. I also want to mention Patricia Mindus's biography *A Real Mind – The Life and Work of Axel Hägerström* (2009) even if it appeared too late for me to have been able to use it in my studies.

The political and cultural significance of Hägerström and the Uppsala School has been a recurring topic among Swedish intellectual historians during the past decades. For example, in his examination of the ethical and political ideas of Hägerström, Tingsten, Alva and Gunnar Myrdal, and Hedenius, Ola Sigurdson attempted to connect the value theory to the processes of modernisation and the problems of the current welfare state of Sweden (Sigurdson 2000). This was important and interesting normative approach and message, which however largely falls beyond

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<sup>16</sup> Hägerström is also mentioned in Stephen Satris's *Ethical Emotivism*. Even if language prevented Satris from making a more detailed analysis of Hägerström, he seems to be indicating that Hägerström belongs to the tradition of *Werttheorie* and not to the group of "positivistic emotivists" such as Ayer and Carnap (Satris 1987: 9, 11).

the scope and intention of my studies. Instead, I have made extensive use of the works of Staffan Källström, who has analysed the role of the value nihilistic theory in the scholarly as well as the cultural and political debates of the 1920s and 30s from a more historical perspective (Källström 1984; 1986; 1988; 1991; 1997; 2002).<sup>17</sup> In my studies I do not apply the same broad cultural perspective as Källström, rather, I seek to focus on the ways in which the philosophers and theoreticians *themselves* struggled to adjust their philosophy to the changing demands and expectations of this turbulent period. Moreover, while Källström focuses on a period when Uppsala philosophy “still was a living part of Swedish intellectual life” (Källström 1984: XI),<sup>18</sup> my studies continue his work by examining how Hägerström’s work was used and transformed by those who claimed his legacy, and how it eventually was eliminated and replaced by the new ideas of analytic philosophy.<sup>19</sup>

### **c. The main actors and their context**

The philosophical scene during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was largely marked by discussions that followed the fall of idealism and the rise (and fall) of naturalistic philosophy and experimental psychology. There were a great number of philosophical reactions and movements which can be seen not only as different proposals for a modernisation of philosophy, but also as competing accounts in a debate on the very nature of the philosophical enterprise (Heidegren 2004: 488-96; Kusch 1995; Nygård & Strang 2006). One of the key questions was philosophy’s relation to natural science – whether philosophy should merge with the natural sciences or defend its status as an autonomous discipline. In Germany, where experimental psychology was thriving, the most significant trend that defended the autonomy of philosophy was the

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<sup>17</sup> Only Källström 1988 is in English.

<sup>18</sup> “...då Uppsala filosofin fortfarande är en levande tradition”.

<sup>19</sup> The literature on the individual scholars examined in my studies will not be accounted for here. Instead I refer to the references of the particular studies.

large and heterogeneous Neo-Kantian movement that sought to overcome idealism by returning to Kantian premises. But there were also a number of alternative directions: for example, the *Lebensphilosophie* of Wilhelm Dilthey and the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl. In France, the intuitionism of Bergson challenged the empiricist-positivist tradition of Auguste Comte and Émile Durkheim. In the United States pragmatism was gaining influence, and in Britain, where there had been a late revival of idealistic philosophy, there was a reaction in the philosophical analysis of the Cambridge philosophers G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell.

It was as part of this pluralistic context that the logical empiricism of the Vienna Circle (and the Berlin Society for Empirical Philosophy – *Die Gesellschaft für Empirische Philosophie*) emerged in the late 1920s, most notably through the programmatic pamphlet *Wissenschaftliche Weltauffassung. Der Wiener Kreis* (Hahn, Carnap & Neurath 1929).<sup>20</sup> It was, first and foremost, a reaction against “school philosophy” and was characterised by the ambition to practise philosophy in close relation with the special sciences. Many of the logical empiricists shunned the label “philosophy” altogether as they thought it was tainted with metaphysical, i.e. unscientific, connotations. The theoretical background and intentions of the Vienna Circle have been a matter of extensive discussion in recent literature. Some argue that logical empiricism can be seen as a Neo-Kantian attempt to save the Kantian system from the disaster that was lurking in the revolutionary ideas of Einstein. While abandoning Kant’s idea of a synthetic *a priori* the logical empiricists (here mainly Rudolf Carnap and Hans Reichenbach) tried to use formal logic as a new relativised *a priori* that was able to adjust to changing

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<sup>20</sup> I generally prefer to use the label “logical empiricism” to “logical positivism”. This is mainly due to the fact that the pejorative label “positivism” was largely shunned by the historical actors themselves. Still, it is probably safe to say that “logical empiricism” and “logical positivism” are generally used synonymously. For example, the proceedings from a conference in Helsinki in 1992 were entitled *Eino Kaila and Logical Empiricism* on the back and front covers, but *Eino Kaila and Logical Positivism* on the spine (Niiniluoto, Sintonen & von Wright 1992). For the origin of the different labels see e.g. Stadler 1997: 28-9.

scientific paradigms (Friedman 2000; Richardson 1998). Others emphasise the anti-Kantian roots of the Vienna Circle, and argue that logical empiricism should be understood as an attempt to synthesise the empiricist programme of the Austrian phenomenalist Ernst Mach with the insights of French mathematical conventionalism (Pierre Duhem and Henri Poincaré) (Uebel 2003; Stadler 2007: 19). These different accounts on the relation between logical empiricism and Kantianism should arguably not be seen as mutually exclusive. Rather, they are signs of inner tensions as well as theoretical developments of the ideas within the movement. More than anything, the recent historical work on logical empiricism has been able to discredit the idea of logical empiricism as a set of static philosophical doctrines.<sup>21</sup>

If the first decades of the 20th century were characterised by a plurality of different philosophical movement and trends, the 1930s and 40s can be seen as a period of mobilisation and gradual polarisation, a process that eventually formed the two separate and antagonistic traditions – the analytic and the continental – that marked the philosophical discussion throughout the latter half of the 20th century (Friedman 1999). Thanks to the efforts of the administrative locomotive of the Unity of Science movement, Otto Neurath (1882-1945), the logical empiricists had established close relations to the philosophers in Cambridge and to the American pragmatists. These contacts formed a fruitful base for integration when the logical empiricists were forced to emigrate from the European continent due to the rise of fascism and Nazism in the 1930s. While many of the emigrated “pre-continental” philosophers returned to Europe after 1945 (e.g. Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno), most of the “pre-analytic” philosophers stayed in the United States. This was the ultimate reason for the emergence of the rift between Anglo-Saxon analytic philosophy and (what was later labelled) “continental philosophy” which marked Western philosophy throughout the 20th century (Strang I: 238-46).

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<sup>21</sup> Central works in the reassessment of logical empiricism and the Vienna Circle are, for example, Friedman 1999; 2000; Friedman & Creath 2007; Giere & Richardson 1996; Parrini et al 2003; Richardson & Uebel 2007; Richardson 1998; Stadler 1997; Uebel 1991; 1992.



The philosophical scene in the Nordic countries largely mirrored this development, even if the local traditions and constellations marked the reception and appropriation of international ideas. In his book on the modern breakthrough in Nordic university philosophy 1860-1915, Carl-Göran Heidegren examines the different ways and the different rhythms by which idealism was abandoned in the Nordic countries, as well as the diverse proposals for modernisation that followed (Heidegren 2004). However, as elsewhere, it was arguably the events in the 1930s that had a formative influence on the direction of Nordic 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophy (von Wright 1972: 5-6). During the late 1920s and early 1930s, three leading and rising Nordic philosophers came in contact with the Vienna Circle and gradually established themselves as international names within the logical empiricist movement (Manninen & Stadler 2010). The Finn Eino Kaila (1890-1958) repeatedly visited Vienna in the period between 1929 and 1934 and was the commentator outside the Circle to write a critical review of “logical neo-positivism” (*Der logistische Neupositivismus. Eine kritische Studie*, 1930) (Niiniluoto 2006: 186). The Dane Jørgen Jørgensen (1894-1969) came in contact with the Vienna Circle through his interest in formal logic, and received the honour of arranging *The Second International Congress for the Unity of Science* in Copenhagen in 1936 (Faye 1998; Koch 1998; 2004: 187-241; Stadler 1997: 372-7), and with Arne Næss (1912-2009), who studied in Vienna in 1934-35, Norway acquired a young representative of the movement (Thue 1997; 2006). Kaila, Jørgensen and Næss were Professors of Philosophy at the leading universities of their countries and thus logical empiricism became a major trend in Nordic philosophy at a remarkably early stage. It was the numerous and influential pupils and successors of Kaila, Jørgensen and Næss who made analytic philosophy the dominant tradition in Nordic post-war philosophy.

The Swedish analytic tradition, on the other hand, has traditionally been said to have domestic roots in the Uppsala philosophy of Axel Hägerström, often presented as a “parallel movement” to logical empiricism and the Cambridge School.<sup>22</sup> As mentioned

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<sup>22</sup> See e.g. Källström 1986: 14 or Sigurdson 2000: 45 for fairly recent subscriptions to this view. In Chapter iii, b & c, I examine how this analytic

above, this “analytic” reading of Hägerström has recently been criticised by a number of scholars who have pointed to features of the Hägerströmian and Phalénian philosophies that were firmly rooted in other philosophical traditions, such as neo-Kantianism, phenomenology, Nietzsche and act-psychology.<sup>23</sup> My studies do not aim to judge or rank these different interpretations, nor do they intend to propose yet another alternative reading of Hägerström. Rather, my focus is on how and for what purposes the analytic narrative was created in the first place (Strang I; II; III). The many different ways in which the Uppsala School has been interpreted are in themselves a good indication of the heterogeneous philosophical context that the Uppsala philosophers were part of. In a situation not yet marked by a general division between the analytic and the continental, the Uppsala philosophers were able to borrow from different philosophers and schools without being concerned about whether or not they represented the “right” tradition.

The variety of ways in which Uppsala philosophy has been placed in the international philosophical landscape of its time are also largely due to the peculiar intellectual culture in Uppsala. It was, of course, by no means unusual among the philosophers of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to conceive of their own ideas and their own philosophies as the very first properly scientific philosophy – think of Husserl or the logical empiricists. In Uppsala, however, this was combined with a rather sectarian attitude that was close to being plainly parochial. As international collaboration and foreign philosophies (not least logical empiricism) were received with suspicion, the extent to which the Uppsala philosophers actually drew upon foreign philosophical movements can be hard to determine.<sup>24</sup>

There was also a major difference between Sweden and the other Nordic countries in how the philosophers conceived of the relation between philosophy and the special sciences and, perhaps,

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reading was produced by Hedenius (e.g. 1941: 9), Marc-Wogau (e.g. 1949: 17) and Wedberg (e.g. 1966: 366).

<sup>23</sup> See Nordin 1983; Bengtsson 1991; 1992; Ruin 2000; Petersson 1973; Danielsson 1993.

<sup>24</sup> See Chapter iii.d, for a discussion of the peculiar academic culture of Uppsala.

particularly psychology. The professors of philosophy in Finland, Denmark and Norway were often also responsible for teaching psychology. So while the philosophers in these countries were often apt scholars both in philosophy and psychology, this was seldom the case among the Swedes.<sup>25</sup> Thus, while Kaila, Jørgensen and Næss might have been naturally inclined to sympathise with the logical empiricist ideal of cross-disciplinary discussion, and used a variety of psychological, mathematical (logical) and social scientific methods as integrated parts of their philosophical approach,<sup>26</sup> arguably, sometimes to the extent that they tried to reduce philosophy to natural science, the Swedes, and particularly the Uppsala philosophers were much more concerned with defending the autonomy of the philosophical discipline (Heidegren 2004: 374-7). In fact, this difference must be seen as one of the main reasons for the Uppsala philosophers' sceptical attitude towards logical empiricism. Indeed, the Uppsala philosophers often framed their debate with the logical empiricists in the late 1930s as a discussion between philosophers and physicists (Strang II: 79-83).<sup>27</sup>

Like any other school or movement, Uppsala philosophy probably seemed more united from the outside than it was for those who participated on the inside. In fact, the Uppsala School was, since the late 1920s, divided into two antagonistic wings with the disciples of Adolf Phalén challenging the position of Hägerström as the sole front man of Uppsala philosophy. Phalén was originally a pupil of Hägerström, but as Professor of Theoretical Philosophy in Uppsala (1916-31) he soon became a leading figure himself, with a group of faithful disciples that developed and implemented his "dialectical method" by which contradictions in our concepts and

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<sup>25</sup> The Nordic journal *Psyche. Tidskrift för psykologisk forskning* was established in 1906 by a docent in psychology from Sweden (Sydney Alrutz, Uppsala) and three professors of philosophy from the neighbouring countries (Harald Høffding, Copenhagen; John Mourly Vold, Oslo; Arvi Grotenfelt, Helsinki). See Heidegren 2004: 53.

<sup>26</sup> See e.g. Kaila 1934; Jørgensen 1941; Næss 1939. Kaila's and Jørgensen's interest in psychology and the natural sciences is emphasised by von Wright (1972: 6), while Næss's interest in the social sciences is documented by Thue (1997; 2006).

<sup>27</sup> Given their suspicions of "school philosophy" this way of framing the discussion was hardly contested by the logical empiricists.

conceptions were exposed.<sup>28</sup> Among “the Phalénians”, Gunnar Oxenstierna (1897-1939) was arguably the most profiled. In 1937 he was elected to represent the Phalénians (and Uppsala philosophy) in the debate with the logical empiricists (Philipp Frank) in *Theoria* (Strang II: 82-3). Oxenstierna had also been a prominent candidate to succeed Phalén as the Professor of Theoretical Philosophy in Uppsala in 1931, but he lost the race largely due to Hägerström’s negative statement (Nordin 1983: 96-9).<sup>29</sup> The Phalénians took this as a provocation, and made a series of attempts to regain their position in the 1930s (Strang I: 236-7). My studies argue that the Phalénians eventually won this battle, but that they did it by colonising the figure of Hägerström and by merging him with the novel philosophical ideas that they were importing from Cambridge and Vienna (Strang I; II; III).

The central actors in this process were three younger members of the Phalénian wing, Ingemar Hedenius, Konrad Marc-Wogau and Anders Wedberg. They all graduated with dissertations that were largely doctrinal applications of the Phalénian programme, but during the late 1930s they became increasingly interested in the ideas of Moore and Russell, as well as of logical empiricism, which they started using as weapons against their Hägerströmian rivals. The studies presented in this volume focus especially on Hedenius, who by taking over Hägerström’s role as a controversial spokesman of value nihilism, was more important than anyone else in claiming the Uppsala legacy and in transforming it in accordance with the novel philosophical ideas of logical empiricism. During the 1940s Hedenius, Marc-Wogau and Wedberg succeeded in obtaining Chairs in Philosophy in Uppsala and Stockholm, which effectively

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<sup>28</sup> See Bengtsson 1991: 96-104 and Nordin 1983: 52-9 for useful descriptions of Phalén’s philosophy. A shorter account in English is provided in Hansson & Nordin (eds.) 2006: 107-9.

<sup>29</sup> Oxenstierna emerged as a favourite after the death (suicide) of another senior member of the Phalénian wing of Uppsala philosophy, Carl Hellström (1892-1932).

meant the establishment of the analytic hegemony in Swedish post-war philosophy (Strang I: 261-3).<sup>30</sup>

Between Hägerström and Phalén there was another important senior Uppsala philosopher, Einar Tegen (1884-1965), who, although closer to the Phalénian camp, tried to maintain a mediating role between the factions. Tegen was an original figure within the Uppsala School in his interest in communication and exchange with foreign philosophers and intellectuals – he has been called “Uppsala philosophy’s window to the world” (Nilsson 1989: 58).<sup>31</sup> Tegen was the first Uppsala philosopher to obtain a Chair outside Uppsala and it was during his period as Professor at Lund University in 1931-37 that Tegen, as the first (Swedish)<sup>32</sup> Uppsala philosopher, came in contact with the logical empiricists in 1934 (Strang II: 79-80).

The Hägerströmian disciples in the field of philosophy, such as Martin Fries (1898-1969) and Erik Jonson (1889-1958), were not very vocal in the debates and therefore they play a negligible role in my studies. Instead, among the “orthodox Hägerströmians”,<sup>33</sup> it was the legal theorists Vilhelm Lundstedt (1882-1955) and Karl Olivecrona (1897-1980) who more loudly than anyone else fought the Hedenius’s attempts to claim the legacy of their master (Strang III: 70-71). Especially Lundstedt, who conceived of himself as the main representative of Hägerström’s ideas in the field of legal science, aggressively defended Hägerström against any form of criticism.<sup>34</sup> The younger Olivecrona was arguably more relaxed in his relation to the Hägerströmian legacy, but his controversial sympathies with Germany during the Second World War makes

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<sup>30</sup> Marc-Wogau became Professor of Theoretical Philosophy in 1946, Hedenius obtained the Chair in Practical Philosophy in 1947, while Wedberg became Professor of Theoretical Philosophy in Stockholm in 1949.

<sup>31</sup> “...uppsalafilosofins fönster ut mot världen”.

<sup>32</sup> The Dane Alf Ross, who can also be considered to have been an Uppsala philosopher, had been corresponding with Neurath since the spring of 1934.

<sup>33</sup> “Ortodoxa Hägerströmianer” [orthodox Hägerströmians] was a label that Hedenius and Marc-Wogau used of their adversaries. See e.g. Nordin 2004b: 120.

<sup>34</sup> See especially Lundstedt 1942.

him an important figure in the struggles concerning the political significance of Hägerström.

Among the legal theoretical followers of Hägerström, the Dane Alf Ross had a key role. Originally a pupil of Hans Kelsen, Ross became deeply influenced by the tenets of Hägerström during the late 1920s. Even though he did not belong to the Phalénian camp, he was nevertheless central with regards to the introduction of logical empiricism into Nordic philosophical and legal theoretical discussion. My study “Two generations of Scandinavian Legal Realists” examines the controversies between Lundstedt and Olivecrona on one side, and Hedenius and Ross on the other, as a struggle for the right to Hägerström’s legacy (Strang III).

Despite the vocal and central position of Hägerström in the scholarly and public debate in the 1930s, Uppsala philosophy was only one part of the philosophical scene in Sweden. There were lone wolves, such as John Landquist (1881-1974), who was a main representative of Bergson’s philosophy in Sweden and one of the fiercest critics of Uppsala philosophy (see below: 90-2). However, besides the Uppsala School, the main camp in Swedish philosophy was the heterogeneous grouping of philosophers attached to Sweden’s other main university in Lund and the university college in Göteborg (Göteborgs Högskola) (Hansson & Nordin 2006: 112-5).<sup>35</sup> To this group belonged scholars such as Alf Ahlberg (1892-1979), Gunnar Aspelin (1898-1977), Malte Jacobsson (1885-1966), Anders Karitz (1881-1961), Alf Nyman (1884-1970), and Åke Petzäll (1901-57). The Lundians did not form a school in the sense that they shared a methodological or theoretical doctrine; they honoured classical *Bildung* and many of them were interested in the history of philosophy. They were also considerably more open to foreign influences than their colleagues in Uppsala. It is hardly a surprise that it was in Göteborg, rather than in Uppsala or Stock-

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<sup>35</sup> There was something of a philosophical alliance between Göteborgs Högskola and Lund University, which meant that it was easier to move between these institutions than it was to move up north to Uppsala. A similar alliance could be said to have reigned between Uppsala and Stockholm, with Stockholm representing the modern and progressive alternative to the rather traditional Uppsala.

holm, that a chair was established for the great German philosopher Ernst Cassirer when he sought refuge in Sweden in 1935.<sup>36</sup>

It was also the Lundian philosophers that were the first in Sweden to pick up on logical empiricism. A key figure in this connection was Åke Petzäll, Professor at Lund (1939-57), who wrote an introduction to *Logistischer Postivismus* in 1931, followed by a more critical examination in 1935 (Petzäll 1931; 1935). Petzäll was exceptionally committed to international collaboration, and enjoyed a lively correspondence with Neurath during the 1930s. However, logical empiricism did not break through in Sweden with Petzäll. Although it was discussed at seminars and in the corridors of the philosophical department in Lund, it did not find any devoted adherents as it did in the neighbouring Nordic countries (Aspelin 1976: 30).<sup>37</sup> Instead, Petzäll's most lasting achievements were, on the one hand, the establishment of the international philosophical institute, *Institut International de Collaboration Philosophique*, in Paris in 1937, and the founding of the philosophical journal *Theoria* in 1935. *Theoria* rapidly became the main philosophical forum in the Nordic countries, and, with the political development on the continent, it also established itself as a leading European journal during the late 1930s (Strang II).

The political discussions in Sweden during the 1930s and 40s were, as elsewhere, overshadowed by the rise of fascism and Nazism on the European continent, the Second World War, and the reorientation and reorganisation of political life after 1945. While the Swedish government strove to keep aloof of these events in accordance with the ideal of neutrality, intellectuals and the general public were engaged in discussions in which representatives of many different political directions were represented. Even if those supporting Sweden's official policy or the Western countries

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<sup>36</sup> The arrival of Cassirer was undoubtedly a significant event in Swedish philosophy, and Cassirer took his Swedish years seriously, publishing a thorough analysis of Hägerström's philosophy (Cassirer 1939). Cassirer's Swedish years have been treated in Hansson & Nordin 2006.

<sup>37</sup> However, in my studies I argue that Petzäll nevertheless was pivotal in the transformation of Swedish philosophy through his efforts to introduce international philosophical movements, and mainly logical empiricism, in *Theoria*. See Strang II.

greatly outnumbered the proponents of totalitarian or extremist ideologies, quite a few intellectuals were active members of different national socialist factions. Despite its parliamentary failure Nazism was still a very immediate political challenge in Sweden (Berggren 2007; Götz 2001; Oredsson 1996). Moreover, there were also a great number of intellectuals who supported Germany in the war without being particularly fond of the Nazi ideology. These sympathies could instead be rooted in the traditional German orientation of Swedish and Nordic culture and science, in an anti-bolshevist attitude, or in an engagement for the struggling neighbour Finland. By 1943, when the outcome of the war became apparent, the number of German sympathisers naturally decreased.

The rise of totalitarianism and particularly Nazism has often been regarded as a response to the global economic crisis that occurred in the late 1920s and early 30s, but the economic crisis was also the background for the rise of different forms of interventionist policies under democratic rule such as Roosevelt's New Deal. Similarly, in the Nordic countries, and especially in Sweden, the depression is often regarded as a main reason for the political reorientation that spawned the welfare state.<sup>38</sup> The 1930s marked the establishment of Social Democracy as the main political force in Sweden, and saw the breakthrough of the interventionist economic policies of Keynes and the Stockholm School, as well as the great compromises on the labour market (*Saltsjöbaden*). It is, of course, possible to question the idea of the 1930s as a massive turning point in Swedish political history, for example by pointing at features associated with the Swedish welfare state that were put into effect much earlier (at the turn of the century) or later (in the 1950s or 60s). However, as argued by Pauli Kettunen, the 1930s nevertheless marked a significant change in political rhetoric, i.e. in terms of the questions that were conceived of as central (Kettunen 2008: 146). It was during the 1930s that Sweden evolved from

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<sup>38</sup> Literature examining the Nordic Welfare States from a historical perspective has in recent years become quite vast. See e.g. Finn Christiansen et al (eds.) 2006; Hilson 2008; Sejerstedt 2005; and the special issue on the Nordic welfare states in the *Scandinavian Journal of History* 2001:3. For a useful comparison between Sweden and some continental countries, see Berman 2006.



being an impoverished and peripheral part of Europe, into something of a beacon of modernisation. This new image was not only produced domestically, but also widely recognised and re-produced abroad.<sup>39</sup>

It would, of course, be wrong to credit (or blame) only the Social Democrats for this image or development; not only did they often co-operate with the Liberals (*Folkpartiet*) and the Farmer's League (*Bondeförbundet*), it is also plausible that the economic recovery (or boom) that followed the recession was a result of other, non-party-political, developments. Moreover, it is perhaps also likely that the other political parties would have employed a rather similar politics during the 1930s as the Social Democrats did. However, it is fair to say that this modernistic turn in Sweden was largely associated with the Social Democrats, and that the rise of the Social Democratic party made it an attractive forum, or vehicle, for ambitious young intellectuals with new ideas. The 1930s was the decade when the Social Democrats more strongly than before abandoned Marxist and class-based rhetoric in favour of a de-ideologised, nationalistic and modernistic (Bernsteinian) programme most succinctly captured by the concept of *folkhemmet*, the people's home, launched in 1928 by the leader of the Social Democratic party, Per-Albin Hansson, who later became Prime Minister (1932-46).

*Folkhemmet* was not a modernistic image as such. On the contrary, its connotations were conservative, nationalistic and "communitaristic", playing considerably on the unity of the nation and its people.<sup>40</sup> In this sense it was not only in the rejection of Marxism that the 1930s signified something of a "turn to the right" for the Swedish and Nordic Social Democrats (Kayser Nielsen 2004). But this nationalistic turn did not distinguish the Social Democrats from other political movements of the 1930s. Rather, the decade was generally marked by a wave of cultural nationalism,

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<sup>39</sup> Most notably by Childs 1936.

<sup>40</sup> For an analysis of the "communitaristic" aspects of the ideas of Swedish Social Democracy in the 1930s, see Berman 2006: 15 & 152-76. For an analysis of the "völkish" aspects of the rhetoric of "folkhem", see Götz 2001 and Trägårdh 1997; 2002.

which meant that almost all parties tried to claim the right to the nation and its symbols (Linderborg 2001: 250-1). The success of the Swedish Social Democratic “people’s home” rhetoric, in comparison to the right wing nationalisms on the European continent, relied on “democracy” being presented as part of this national heritage, which left little room for totalitarian nationalist political rhetoric (Berggren & Trägårdh 2006: 195-226; Kayser Nielsen 2004). Domestically, the success of the “people’s home” was perhaps that it supplied a traditionalist counter image to the progressive and modernistic ideals of the Social Democrats during the 1930s. Radicalism and modernism was veiled in a nationalistic and traditionalistic metaphor.

Clearly, this was not an uncontroversial development. By no means all of the Social Democrats adhered to the modern or nationalistic ideas, and for many, the struggle between Communism and Social Democracy remained a question of the correct interpretation of Marx.<sup>41</sup> However, for a significant faction of younger Social Democrats, it had become time to make a stronger break with the Marxist legacy, and it is to this faction that many of the intellectuals examined in the present studies belonged. In 1932, the economist and Social Democratic intellectual Gunnar Myrdal programmatically presented a social political ideology that emerged from the collapse of the great ideologies of the French Revolution, socialism and liberalism (Myrdal 1932a: 6). According to Myrdal this was an ideology that was “rational and had the romantics of an engineer” (Myrdal 1932b: 25).<sup>42</sup> Besides Myrdal, one of the main agents regarding this re-orientation of Social Democracy was Herbert Tingsten. As a member of the Swedish Social Democratic Party in the 1930s, he wrote its ideological history in two volumes (Tingsten 1941a; 1941b). One of his main theses was that the party was undergoing a gradual shift from a class-based to a general-

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<sup>41</sup> Conversely, there had been many non-Marxist Social Democrats before 1930.

<sup>42</sup> “Dess romantik är ingenjörens”.

welfare programme, and the book was undoubtedly intended as a contribution to the processes that it described.<sup>43</sup>

Closely related to this was the idea that political and social problems could be solved by rational and scientific solutions rather than by ideological confrontation and class struggle. In this connection Gunnar Myrdal, together with his wife Alva, are particularly important not only as historical actors who more than anyone else expressed the progressive, future-oriented, modern and scientific attitude of the 1930s, but also as mythical figures that epitomise the modernistic ideal of social engineering in the historical self-understanding of Sweden.<sup>44</sup> The political and cultural position of Uppsala philosophy in Sweden was intimately connected to this modernistic aura and on this point the parallels to the Vienna Circle are obvious. In the same way that the logical empiricists of the Vienna Circle were engaged with modern and progressive political and cultural movements in central Europe, for example by giving lectures to the *Bauhaus* architects (Galison 1990; 1996), Hägerströmian ideas were associated not only with progressive politics, but also with more general cultural trends such as functionalistic architecture.<sup>45</sup>

Hägerström himself was apparently very much at ease with his position in the cultural and political debates, at least he did not publicly disapprove of the ways he was used. Following the ethos of cultural radicalism, “the ideas of 1880”, Hägerström was convinced that his philosophy contributed to the progress of humankind, for example, that his value nihilistic theory would help to liberate human beings from the constraints of traditional (con-

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<sup>43</sup> Arguably, it was the failure of the Social Democrats to comply with this vision that prompted Tingssten to leave the party in 1944. See e.g. Johansson 1995: 249-50; Linderborg 2001: 204-23.

<sup>44</sup> See Marklund 2007 and 2008, and Östlund 2007, for a discussion of the history of the concept “social engineering”.

<sup>45</sup> For example, in 1932 the Danish designer Paul Henningsen (1932: 45) argued that there was a link between the current ambition to create an epistemology without the concept of “truth”, a moral theory or a *Weltanschauung* without the concept of “good”, and the architectural ambition to abandon the concept of “beauty”.

servative) morality.<sup>46</sup> He was never politically active, but lectured on socialism and was known as one of Sweden's foremost critical experts on Marxism (Olausson 1980: 325).<sup>47</sup> For those who adhered to the ideas of cultural radicalism, and for progressively-minded intellectuals, not least within the Social Democratic party, Hägerström enjoyed a position as something of a modernist prophet. Myrdal, Tingsten and many others, saw him as an icon, to whose camp it was important to belong, and whose ideas it was important to subscribe to.<sup>48</sup> They also formed something of an intellectual network in which there were vivid discussions and correspondences. From 1938 to 1943, many of them collaborated in a series of cross-disciplinary seminars at the university college in Stockholm (Stockholms Högskola) in which a wide range of philosophical, social and political issues were debated. The seminars were organised and directed by the professors of philosophy, economics and social science, i.e. Tegen, Myrdal and Tingsten (Nilsson 1989: 66-7).

After the Second World War, those who had been explicitly anti-fascist, anti-German, democratic and progressive were in an advantageous position from which they were able to determine the intellectual and political direction of Sweden and to discredit those who they conceived of as their enemies. The actors examined in these studies were leading figures among "the men of 1945" who, on the basis of the cultural radical ideas of 1880, established the anti-totalitarian (i.e. simultaneously anti-communist and anti-fascist), democratic, liberal as well as rational, pragmatic and secularised "ideas of 1945" that dominated Swedish political and intellectual life during the post-war years (Ers 2008: 92-3; Johansson 1995: 224-45; Östling 2008: 198-203). Of course, there were many diverging views within this group. Most significantly, for Tingsten the post-war era meant a radical break with Social Demo-

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<sup>46</sup> See e.g. Hägerström 1911: 63; 1932: 137; 1934b: 92 for such optimistic formulations.

<sup>47</sup> Hägerström's lectures on socialism were posthumously gathered in Hägerström 1946. See also Hägerström 1909.

<sup>48</sup> For example, Källström (2002: 21) has described how Gunnar Myrdal in the mid-1930s travelled to Uppsala in order to receive Hägerström's "blessing".

cracy and any form of planned economy, and he devoted much time and space as editor-in-chief of the leading liberal newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* to a criticism of the Social Democrats and to a promotion of his own version of the *End of Ideology* thesis. For Myrdal and Ross on the other hand, Social Democracy remained the answer to the challenges of the post-war era, and their task was rather to elaborate on how socialism was compatible with democracy, not least in the face of the arguments raised by liberal scholars such as Tingsten and Hayek.<sup>49</sup>

The emerging analytic hegemony in the discipline of philosophy was intimately connected to the “ideas of 1945”, not least as Tingsten gave much space in the culture section of *Dagens Nyheter* to Hedenius, Marc-Wogau and Wedberg (Ers 2008: 92; Nordin 2004b: 135-9). While other philosophies were stigmatised as fascistic, communistic, irrational and foreign (i.e. German), the new analytic philosophy was presented as rational, progressive and democratic (Strang IV; V). It was also furnished with domestic roots in the Uppsala tradition of Hägerström, and thus analytic philosophy also established itself as the sole heir and representative of the cultural radical tradition since the 1880s.

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<sup>49</sup> These disagreements seem to have been one of the reasons for the break in the relationship between Myrdal and Tingsten. See e.g. Johansson 1995: 65-8.



## ii. History

### a. Philosophy, past and present

The history of philosophy can be written in many ways. The studies presented in this volume aim at taking *history* seriously, which distinguishes them from studies that analyse historical texts using what they believe are the best available contemporary philosophical tools, or present the philosophical classics as a series of alternative answers to the same recurring philosophical problems, as if Aristotle, Kant, and Hägerström were participating in a round table discussion. It is undoubtedly a main dividing line that goes between historical and philosophical histories of philosophy.<sup>50</sup> The difference is frequently treated as a polarisation between two antagonistic positions that quarrel over the correct approach to the history of philosophy. The historian might accuse the philosopher of anachronism; that the historical text is interpreted as a contribution to a discussion of which the author had no intention of contributing to, or one that he or she could not have been familiar with. The philosopher on the other hand, might claim that the historical approach is merely antiquarian as it aims at conserving historical intellectual landscapes for their own sake, instead of making the ideas instrumental for current purposes.

Rather than treating the historical and the philosophical approach as two competing accounts of the nature of the relation between history and philosophy, let alone as two antagonistic ideologies or *Weltanschauungen*, I believe that they should be conceived of as two complementary perspectives. Which perspective one applies in a particular study depends not on the absolute “truth” or superiority of the one approach over the other, but on one’s own

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<sup>50</sup> The ideas presented in the following section do not pretend to be groundbreaking. I build largely on studies such as Glock 2008; Kusch 1995; Rorty 1984; Rorty, Schneewind & Skinner (eds.) 1984; Sorell & Rogers (eds.) 2005.

intentions and interests. If you want to learn what Aristotle meant, what his text were intended to say, and what role they played in their own context, you should adopt a historical perspective, and conversely, if you wish to examine to what extent the doctrines of Aristotle endure or contribute to a contemporary philosophical analysis you do not need to bother about the question whether or not Aristotle would accept your account as a description of his intentions. There can, of course, be more or less successful applications of an approach, but it is by any standard an unfair criticism to claim that a scholar has the wrong sort of interests or that he or she has written the wrong sort of book.

The historical and the philosophical perspective both provide indispensable contributions to the scholarly discussion and they complement each other in various ways. It would, in fact, be impossible to write a history of philosophy by strictly and exclusively adopting one of the perspectives; the historian of philosophy is undoubtedly always to some extent both a historian and a philosopher (Rorty, Schneewind & Skinner 1984: 9). In order to analyse a historical text, the philosopher needs to know what it says, which might prove difficult if the text presumes, or refers to, ideas and theories that have long ago disappeared from common knowledge. Philosophical vocabulary changes with time and therefore the philosopher might be in need of a “historical reconstruction” in order to have something to analyse in the first place. Conversely, the historian cannot approach the text without some philosophical and other prejudices originating from his or her own contemporary horizon. Indeed, there would be little point in a study that merely repeated the arguments of the historical text, or commented upon them from the same historical horizon (supposing that would be possible). This would merely amount to another equally (in)comprehensible text as the one we started with. After all, the job of the historian is to make sense of historical philosophical texts for a contemporary audience (Rorty, Schneewind & Skinner 1984: 10-1). The historical and the philosophical approaches are to be understood as generalisations (or ideal types) that are never practised in their extremes.

This is not to say that the distinction between the historical and the philosophical approach is unnecessary. The most problematic



and confusing studies are those in which the author is unclear or hesitant regarding his or her perspective, perhaps by alternating between them, or by confessing to one approach while practising the other. My studies proceed from the assumptions that the problems and questions that the historical actors tried to answer were in many respects different from those that occupy philosophers today and that in order to give a historical account of the texts we have to ask ourselves what questions they were intended to answer (Collingwood 1939: 39). The aim is, following the British intellectual historian Quentin Skinner, to understand what the historical actors did in writing their texts, and to interpret them as “moves” which can only be understood when their historical context is properly acknowledged.<sup>51</sup> Rather than studying the history of philosophy as a series of different answers to the same perennial questions or with the ambition of finding similarities with, or anticipations of, current philosophical ideas and trends, the ambition is to uncover the position and intentions of the author and his or her texts in their original context.

It should be emphasised that by aspiring to uncover “the intentions of the author” it is not suggested that the historian should try to empathically place him-/herself in the head of the historical actor and think as he or she did (Skinner 1988: 279-81). The intentions and meanings that the historian aims at uncovering are not subjective states of mind. The idea is to study the historical texts as linguistic acts – speech acts – that are understandable against a field of recognisable conventions.<sup>52</sup> That is, the task of the

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<sup>51</sup> See e.g. Skinner 1969. More recently, Skinner has discussed methodological questions in e.g. Tully (ed.) 1988 and Skinner 2002. The most famous applications of his ideas are Skinner 1978; 1996 and 1998. The secondary literature on Skinner is vast and, apart from Tully 1988, in which Skinner engages in discussion with both critics and devotees, I will mention only Palonen 2003b.

<sup>52</sup> Skinner adopted John L. Austin’s speech act theory as part of his methodology. According to Austin’s analysis, an utterance can be interpreted not only in terms of its syntactic and semantic aspects (i.e. as a “locutionary act”), but also as a performative utterance, i.e. as an “illocutionary act”, by which Austin meant what the speaker or author did in saying or writing something, for example, the acts of promising, recommending or warning. See Austin 1962.

historian is to draw the best possible conclusions from an examination of, for example, the linguistic conventions of the time, the background of the author, the situation in which the text was written and published, and the audience to whom the text was directed.

In the focus on the use of language and the interest in the changing meanings of concepts, the Skinnerian approach is intimately connected to the *Begriffsgeschichte* of Reinhart Koselleck. But where Koselleck and his associates often focus on how the use and meaning of a particular concept has changed over longer periods of time and have a strong lexical tendency and ambition, most ambitiously presented in the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* series (Brunner et al (eds.) 1972-97), those who follow Skinner are more interested in special situations or “moments” of conceptual innovation and change (Palonen 1999; Kurunmäki 2000: 26; Skinner 2002: 180).<sup>53</sup> Conceptual changes often occur as a result of “rhetorical redescrptions”, moves by which the historical actor, the “innovative ideologist” uses a term in a way that differs from the conventional use, or from the way the term is employed by (political) opponents (Palonen 2003b: 51-6, 161-9; Skinner 1988: 112). There are, of course, many different strategies by which an actor can attempt a rhetorical redescription. It is, for example, quite common to try to rename a phenomenon when the original label has become tainted by unwanted connotations. For example, after 1989 the label “communism” disappeared from the official names of many west-European parties on the left wing.<sup>54</sup> Conversely, sometimes one can adopt and try to take over a word or a concept that has an established positive (or negative) connotation by using it in a new way. The Social Democratic appropriation and gradual

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<sup>53</sup> The intellectual historian J. G. A. Pocock (1975) famously used the word “moment” to designate a specific political situation in which a certain move was possible. Palonen (2003b: 65) notes that the idea has since been borrowed by Rosanvallon (1985) and Palonen (1998) himself.

<sup>54</sup> In Sweden “Vänsterpartiet kommunisterna” [The Left Party the Communists] became “vänsterpartiet” [The left party] in 1990. Similarly, in Finland and Denmark the communist parties merged in left-wing alliances called “Vasemmistoliitto” [The Left Alliance] and “Enhedslisten” [The List of Unity].

monopolisation of the conservative-nationalist concept *folkhemmet*, “the people’s home”, in the late 1920s is an example of such a rhetorical move.<sup>55</sup> Successful rhetorical re-descriptions are of a rather subtle kind, playing to a considerable extent on existing connotations, but nevertheless using the term as a designation for different phenomena or in such a way that the positive or negative charge is neutralised or even reversed.

The Skinnerian perspective has mostly been applied by political theoreticians and political historians, or by historians of philosophy who have wished to point out the political context of a certain philosophical debate. It is also primarily as such that it has been used in the present studies (see Chapter iv). However, I will also argue that Skinner’s rhetorical perspective forms a fruitful approach to disciplinary history. By examining the language that the philosophers use, e.g. the labels that they use to position themselves in relation to others, the philosophical discussion can be seen as a “political” field in which the actors make rhetorical moves (see Chapter iv.d).

In its focus on the social-historical context my approach also draws upon ideas within the sociology of philosophy as it has been presented and practised by e.g. Pierre Bourdieu (1988), Randall Collins (1998) and Martin Kusch (1995; 1996). By highlighting social relations, fields, and networks, sociological perspectives have been used in the examination of both the transnational and the political aspects of philosophers and their ideas.<sup>56</sup> However, I want to distance myself from approaches that use the social-historical context as something of an *explanation* for the occurrence or birth of particular philosophical ideas and theories. Such accounts leave

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<sup>55</sup> “Folkhemmet” was originally associated with a conservative-nationalistic rhetoric, particularly with the political scientist and Conservative Member of Parliament Rudolf Kjellén. But in the late 1920s the Social Democrats, and particularly their leader Per Albin Hansson, adopted the label and transformed its meaning into a designation of their own political programme. See e.g. Berman 2006: 163-7; Götz 2001: 190-275.

<sup>56</sup> While Bourdieu himself focused on the political aspects (e.g. Bourdieu 1988), there have been many recent attempts to apply a sociological perspective on transnational fields and networks. See e.g. Casanova 1999; Espagne 1999; Nygård 2008.

little room for individual inventiveness. In its focus on the ambitions and aims of individual actors, the Skinnerian perspective enables us to focus on cases in which the ideas and actions of the intellectual stands out in its historical context, when the actor has been innovative and made an original move. Instead of reducing philosophy to the social-historical context, I wish to treat the historical context as a *Spielraum* in which historical actors made their moves, and against which these moves can be interpreted by historians like ourselves. The context and the actor should not be understood as wholly independent unities, but as inseparably interwoven (Hyrkkänen 2009: 260).

There are differences in the ways in which sociological philosophers regard the importance of their efforts for the philosophical discipline itself. Collins seems to hold that the insights of the sociology of philosophy are primarily of sociological interest and that philosophy in that sense is autonomous.<sup>57</sup> Bourdieu on the other hand is often almost imperialistic in his trust in the advantages of a sociological perspective; it is only by embracing the sociological perspective, he argues, that the philosophers can emancipate themselves from their naïve belief in the autonomy of their enterprise.<sup>58</sup> Kusch seems to position himself somewhere in between, arguing that even if he does not attempt to “condense all philosophical clouds into mere drops of sociology”, there are still many philosophical questions that would benefit from a sociological perspective; or rather, that philosophers cannot leave the social realm to sociologists without abandoning some of its most central questions (Kusch 1996: 95-6).<sup>59</sup>

For Skinner the relation between philosophy and history is framed somewhat differently. Skinner holds that historical studies are important mind-openers that help us appreciate the contingency of our present views (Skinner 1969: 52-3). Historical studies

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<sup>57</sup> See also Lundberg 2007: 214.

<sup>58</sup> “If there is a question that philosophy, itself so questioning, manages to exclude, this is the question of its own socially necessary conditions” (Bourdieu 1983: 4).

<sup>59</sup> Such as “the study of meaning, the enquiry into the conditions of the possibility of knowledge, and investigations into the grounds of normativity and objectivity” (Kusch 1996: 95).

acquaint us with philosophical, cultural and political arrangements that might serve as alternatives in the contemporary debate. By studying how we came to be who we are, and how we acquired the ideas and theories we believe in and the concepts we use, our present perspective appears as less uniquely privileged, and thus, Skinner claims, we might become less prone to think of our present arrangements as necessary and unchangeable (Skinner 1988: 287). To follow the Finnish political scientist Kari Palonen, the historical perspective can, by appealing to plurality, complexity and imperfection, serve as a safeguard against the urge for coherence, unity and system that often characterise philosophical studies (Palonen 2003b: 27). In this sense, the dividing line between studies that are “genuinely philosophical” and those that are “merely historical” should certainly be overcome, even though, as I have argued, it is important to be explicit about whether the study applies a historical or a philosophical perspective.

### **b. Analytic philosophy and the history of philosophy**

It should be no secret that many of the scholars examined in my studies held diametrically opposed views concerning the objectives and methods of a study in the history of philosophy. According to them, the history of philosophy should primarily be studied, if at all, in order to find arguments or theories that could be useful in contemporary philosophical discussion, or, perhaps, in order to discover the origins of erroneous conceptions in contemporary theories. Explorations of the historical context, let alone speculations regarding the motives, interests or intentions of the historical authors, were often considered obsolete or even futile. The most famous Swedish example of the history of philosophy practised in this vein is Wedberg’s *Filosofins historia* (1958), which was explicitly marketed as “the first book in the Swedish language that in the interpretation and evaluation of the ideas of the past has made use of the achievements of modern logic, semantics and

epistemology” (Wedberg 1958: back-cover).<sup>60</sup> Wedberg’s three-volume series was undoubtedly an ambitious project that generated many novel insights both regarding the philosophical classics and the advantages of novel philosophical methods. But from the historian’s point of view, the approach had serious problems. It seems as if the history of philosophy for Wedberg was a timeless container of theories and ideas. Moreover, chapters entitled “Plato’s Theory of Forms as a Semantic Theory” and “Megarian-Stoic Discussion of the Truth Conditions of Composite Propositions” appear blatantly anachronistic.<sup>61</sup> By forging the historical theories into a contemporary vocabulary, Wedberg made his task of criticising the historical classics almost trivially easy, and doing so, he gave a rather one-dimensional image of a progressive and cumulative philosophical discipline.

For sure, during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century analytic philosophy gained a reputation of being thoroughly disinterested in the history of philosophy in its “antiquarian” form. The aim of analytic philosophy is/was not to look backwards in time, but to produce new knowledge that served the purposes of modern science and society. According to Tom Sorell, for example, there is little room for antiquarian history of philosophy within the English-speaking world. Analytic philosophy, he claims, is often not merely ahistorical but also explicitly anti-historical, i.e. more or less hostile to historical contextualisation (Sorell 2005: 1-5). Indeed, in his attempt to define “analytic philosophy” Hans-Johann Glock has observed that the claim against the analytic philosophers does not seem merely to be that they are anachronistic, but also that they are “historiophobic” (Glock 2008: 90). Some even accuse analytic phi-

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<sup>60</sup> “Denna är den första i sitt format på svenskt språk, som vid tolkningen och värderingen av gångna tidens idéer tagit hänsyn till den moderna logikens, semantikens och kunskapsteoris resultat.” However, the statement is somewhat doubtful – a result of a restricted national outlook, perhaps – as the Finnish philosopher Erik Stenius five years earlier used ideas adopted from Kaila, particularly the notion of “invariance”, in his examination of pre-Socratic philosophy, which was written and published in Swedish. Stenius 1953. See also Österman 2004.

<sup>61</sup> The original Swedish titles were: “Idéläran som logisk teori” and “Megarisk-stoisk diskussion av sanningsvillkoren för sammansatta satser” (Wedberg 1958: 5-6).

losophers of lacking historical self-consciousness as they take themselves “as the first to have understood what philosophy is, and what questions are the genuinely philosophical ones” (Rorty, Schneewind & Skinner 1984: 11). Analytic philosophers tend to reduce historical debates into a prehistory of *real*, i.e. analytic, philosophy, and thus the historical actors and their ideas are judged according to how well they have succeeded in anticipating ideas or positions represented in the current philosophical discussions.

These complaints might have been fair a couple of decades ago, but they certainly jar with the great many historical studies that have recently emerged from within the analytic tradition. Already at the beginning of the 1990s the Finnish philosopher Georg Henrik von Wright was able to talk about a “retrospective turn” within analytic philosophy (von Wright 1993: 47).<sup>62</sup> While von Wright was undoubtedly right in noting that the interest was “in the first place, concentrated on arguments and thoughts of individual philosophers who can be considered as remote ancestors of analytic philosophy” (i.e., Aristotle, Kant, the British empiricists and logicians of various periods),<sup>63</sup> the focus has since been turned to the more recent history of the analytic tradition, prompting some to talk about a “historical turn” in the philosophy of science (Hardcastle & Richardson 2003: vii). There has emerged an abundance of literature on the linguistic turn and the development of modern formal logic,<sup>64</sup> on Moore and Russell and their revolt against idealism,<sup>65</sup> on Wittgenstein,<sup>66</sup> and, perhaps particularly, on the Vienna Circle. The numerous publications of the *Vienna Circle Institute* (especially Friedrich Stadler’s *Studien zum Wiener Kreis*, 1997) have emphasised with increased strength that the Vienna Circle and logical empiricism were part of a distinct philosophical, social and

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<sup>62</sup> In characteristically pessimistic terms von Wright analysed this retrospective turn as “a sign of tiredness and slackening of the enthusiasm for the conquest of virgin land which animated the protagonists of what was then ‘a new philosophy’” (von Wright 1993: 47).

<sup>63</sup> And, I would like to add, with an especially fond interest in the Pre-Socratic philosophers.

<sup>64</sup> See e.g. Dummet 1993; von Plato 1994.

<sup>65</sup> See e.g. Griffin (ed.) 2003; Monk & Palmer (eds.) 1996.

<sup>66</sup> See e.g. Janik & Toulmin 1973; Monk 1990.

political context that must not be overlooked in order to understand their programme.<sup>67</sup> By employing an “antiquarian” historical perspective they have been able to overturn the received view of logical empiricism as a dogmatic and foundationalist philosophy in favour of a more balanced picture that acknowledges the disagreements and tensions within the Circle, as well as the development of their views of time. Logical empiricism was not a static doctrinal position that remained unchanged throughout the 1930s and 40s; rather, the views of the logical empiricists gradually developed as a result of internal and external criticisms. It has even been argued that logical empiricism succeeded in overcoming itself (e.g. Uebel 1992).

Also, in the Nordic countries the analytic tradition has recently been subject to an increased historical interest.<sup>68</sup> For example, in Norway Fredrik Thue has written two volumes on the group around Arne Næss, in which he shows how they imported and transformed the ideas of the Vienna Circle and how, with inspiration and assistance from the United States, they were able to establish a hugely influential social theoretical school (Thue 1997; 2006). Similarly, the legal historian Sverre Blandhol has argued that Alf Ross’s legal philosophy, which was inspired by both the Vienna Circle and the Uppsala School, was connected to the rise of the Danish welfare state (Blandhol 1999). In fact, even the analytic philosophers’, for example Wedberg’s, ahistorical attitude has been the subject of historical analyses in which it has been related to the processes of modernisation and specialisation of the philosophical discipline (Shiött 2000). The philosophic-anachronistic approach has been seen as a way in which analytic philosophers tried to accumulate historical legitimacy for their own position (Ers 2004: 73; 2008: 226-8). By refuting both historical philosophers and contemporaneous philosophers with historical interests, the analytic philosophers sought to prove the superiority of their own methods.

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<sup>67</sup> See e.g. Cartwright et al 1996; Heidelberger & Stadler (eds.) 2003; Nemeth 1981; Nemeth & Stadler (eds.) 1996; Uebel 1991; Richardson & Uebel (eds.) 2007.

<sup>68</sup> Not least manifested by *The Vienna Circle and the Nordic Countries – Networks and Transformations of Logical Empiricism* by Manninen & Stadler (eds.) 2010.



The merits of a historical perspective on analytic philosophy have been exemplified not least by Michael Friedman, who has succeeded not only in discrediting many misleading beliefs about the origins, motives and philosophical aims of logical empiricism (Friedman 1999), but also in revealing both the philosophical and political reasons that eventually generated the division between analytic and continental philosophy (Friedman 2000). Looking back at an era in which the philosophical field was not yet divided in this sense might provide a key to bridging the great divide between analytic and continental philosophy that for a long time hampered the philosophical discussion. Indeed, when it comes to historicising the current philosophical scene, and especially to acknowledging the contingency of the division between analytic and continental philosophy, it is arguably within the analytic tradition that most of the work has been done. To press the point: while many historically interested philosophers trained within the analytic tradition have started reading Husserl, Heidegger and Horkheimer in order to learn about the origins and the unrealised eventualities of their own philosophical tradition, it is rather rare to find philosophers from the continental tradition referring to, or discussing, Frege, Carnap or Russell in order to discover something about themselves. Of course, there is no point in denying that one major reason for this might be that the first three philosophers are more captivating and topical than the latter, or perhaps even that the nature of the doctrines of the two traditions is such that the analytic philosophers might have more to gain from the continental tradition than the other way around. Be that as it may, the poor balance does nevertheless raise serious doubts over the recurring claim that the analytic philosophers are particularly unaware of the historical origins and contingency of their position.

It is not least to these efforts of historicising the analytic tradition that the present studies are intended as contributions. By applying a historical perspective on the construction of the analytic tradition in Sweden, my ambition has been to analyse the transformations and redescriptions of philosophical positions and traditions. It should be emphasised, however, that the studies are not intended to *judge* or *criticise* this young generation of intellectuals, or to claim that they were *wrong* in interpreting Uppsala philosophy as

a parallel movement to logical empiricism, or in presenting it as a democratic and progressive philosophy.<sup>69</sup> Rather, the aim has been to investigate these interpretations and redescriptions as moves in a particular historical context. In this way, one of the main purposes of the studies is to act as a reminder of the contingency of our present views, positions and constellations, i.e. as a reminder that Hägerström and the Uppsala School could have served as anchors for very different philosophical, legal or political traditions if it had been others who had won the right to represent their legacy (Strang I: 266).

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<sup>69</sup> To put the point somewhat bluntly: by calling something a “construction” it is often implied that it does not “really” exist. From my point of view, the term “construction” is more appropriately combined with an affirmative rather than a negative ontological statement.

### iii. Transfer

#### a. Beyond the nation

The Uppsala School of Axel Hägerström can be said to have been the last genuinely Swedish philosophical school, and the process described in my studies can be viewed as one of internationalisation of the philosophical discipline in Sweden. However, such a narrative is only partially true. The first generation of Uppsala philosophers did not live and act in national isolation, and those who succeeded them by no means abandoned the national context in favour of some kind of denationalised cosmopolitan space. Local, national and international contexts were constantly and simultaneously present, and intellectuals and philosophers developed different strategies for coping with the often conflicting expectations of these different frameworks. The purpose of this chapter is to describe a perspective for studying the interplay between the national and the international.

The nation has for some time been conceived of as the natural category by which the world, people, and cultural material are structured. The Olympic Games practice of presuming that everyone and everything represents a (single) nation continues to reign despite the fact that in the age of globalisation it has become more obvious than ever before that cultural relations, networks and societies are not confined to the nation-state.<sup>70</sup> Unquestionably, the humanities and social sciences have traditionally served more or less explicit nation-building purposes, furnishing the nation with a history, social characteristics, and sometimes even a philosophy. But even if this programmatically nationalistic way of writing social science and history has been abandoned, the national outlook continues to permeate many studies as a (hidden) methodological

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<sup>70</sup> I borrow the Olympic Games simile – “If you don’t represent a nation, you don’t exist” – from Henrik Stenius. See e.g. Stenius & Haggrén 2005: 81.

premise determining the perspective of the observer, separating historically interwoven cultural and political realities from each other and presenting the nation as a natural and enclosed unity. This is what Ulrich Beck, among others, calls “methodological nationalism” (Beck 2004: 24).

There is a growing discussion on the methods of overcoming a restricted national outlook in the historical disciplines. One of the most established ways of looking beyond the nation is by comparing it with other nations. Comparisons are valuable not least because they open the eyes of the historian towards different “might-have-beens”, i.e. developments, events and outcomes that were also possible in other contexts. Such an acknowledgement of historical contingency undermines the apparent danger of presenting the national history as natural, functional or cumulatively progressive. However, even if comparisons are useful in widening the perspective of the historian, it is not altogether evident that they actually overcome the main problems of methodological nationalism. It is, for example, not easy from a comparative perspective to acknowledge the ways in which the compared units interact with and transform each other (Werner & Zimmermann 2006: 33-5).<sup>71</sup> Especially in intellectual history, a strictly national perspective is bound to be misleading. A comparison between the Vienna Circle and the pupils of Russell and Moore in Cambridge might certainly be illustrative in many ways, but if it ignores the ways in which the representatives of the schools influenced each other, such a story is undoubtedly seriously incomplete.

Another way to transgress the national perspective is therefore to focus on the relations between actors in different national, regional or local cultures. There is, of course, a long tradition in intellectual history of examining the travels of intellectual and philosophical ideas. But arguably, in many of these studies the cultural transfer is portrayed as a rather mechanical and one-dimensional process of dissemination or reception. From such a perspective the theoretical precedence is often given to the sender (the great philosopher), while the mediators themselves, their

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<sup>71</sup> Moreover, as noted by Kettunen (2006), comparisons themselves are often used as arguments for change in a national context.

intentions and interests, and the context in which they try to introduce the new ideas, tend to be overlooked. The transfer of logical empiricism to Great Britain cannot be studied without taking into account the strong British empirical tradition, as well as Russell's works in logic and his relationship with Wittgenstein, i.e. the many ways in which British philosophy was intertwined and entangled with logical and scientific philosophy on the European continent. Indeed, if the nations and the national contexts are taken as self-evident and fixed frames of reference – as more or less closed points of departure and arrival – transfer studies hardly do better than comparisons in overcoming the main problems of methodological nationalism (Secord 2004: 669; Werner & Zimmermann 2006: 34-6).

Recently, a number of different approaches have emerged that seek to pay more careful attention to the peculiar logic of cultural transfers. Whether called entangled history, *transnationale Geschichte* or *histoire croisée*, the claim is that the intellectual and cultural world does not consist of self-enclosed cultural totalities, but of individual actors that are connected to each other in a complex web of relations which often transgresses the national borders.<sup>72</sup> Accordingly, the aim is to focus on the relations and crossings between different intellectual cultures, on the problems and challenges involved in cultural transfers and on the transfer agents themselves and their various strategies. It is important, for example, to pay attention to the different “filters” that embody the transfer processes (Andersen & Grønlie 2007: 19-20). There are several intellectual, cultural, political and economic factors that can have an effect on how well a new philosophy is received in a new context. Previous efforts to introduce the same or a very similar philosophy might facilitate (or, perhaps, hamper) the transfer, and so can a domestic tradition with which the philosophy can be associated. Radical philosophies might (or might not) be easier to introduce in periods of political turmoil than in peaceful times. Moreover, the cultural position of the export country or culture in the country or

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<sup>72</sup> “Transnational history” is presented in e.g. Budde et al (eds.) 2006, while *histoire croisée* was programmatically launched by Werner & Zimmermann 2002; 2006.

culture to which the ideas are imported also plays an important role with regard to the success of a transfer; in the aftermath of the Second World War it was quite impossible to introduce German ideas into the Scandinavian countries. And in relation to this, language also influences the transfer process: it is easier to introduce ideas that are presented in a language that is familiar.<sup>73</sup>

These filters should, however, not be understood as factors that *determine* the transfer processes; rather, they constitute the context, or *Spielraum*, in which the actors employ different strategies and make different (Skinnerian) moves in order to introduce a foreign philosophy (or prevent it from getting introduced). Indeed, the cultural mediators must not be understood as passive receptors of foreign philosophies; rather, they have chosen the ideas, theories and philosophies that they want to transfer as well as the manners in which they present them. The reception or transfer processes always involve interpretation and redescription, and therefore many transfer theorists prefer to talk about “appropriation” than “reception” (e.g. Simon & Herran 2008: 9). Intellectual goods do not travel in sealed containers, isolated from all external influence and identically reconstruable in any new context. It is more likely that the ideas and philosophies are transformed in order for them to fit in to or gain attention in the new context. Sometimes the novel ideas are simply misunderstood, and sometimes they are more or less consciously altered and redescribed.<sup>74</sup> Even the same philosopher is likely to modify his theories and ideas when travelling from one context to another. There have, for example, been many studies on the transformation of logical empiricism in connection with the emigration to the United States in the 1930s and 40s. The “philosophy of science” that Carnap and his fellow European logical empiricists promoted as immigrants in the United

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<sup>73</sup> The popularity of a foreign culture is, of course, intimately related to the knowledge of its language. In the Nordic countries around the Second World War, the knowledge of English increased with the cultural import from the Anglo-Saxon world, while the knowledge of German and the cultural import from Germany decreased.

<sup>74</sup> It has, for example, been claimed that the Swedish school reform of 1962 was based on Alva Myrdal’s idealised misconception of the system in the United States back in the 1940s. See Larsson 2003.

States borrowed many elements from the American pragmatic tradition, while the socialist and internationalist commitments of the Unity of Science programme were downplayed in the emerging new political constellation of the Cold War (Richardson 2003; Howard 2003; Reisch 2005). Moreover, as will be emphasised in what follows, it is not always imported intellectual goods that are redescribed or transformed in order to facilitate (or hamper) the transfer. It is equally possible for the transfer agent to attempt at redescription of the (national) context, its traditions and characteristics, in order to pave the way for cultural transfer.

It should be evident that methodological nationalism cannot be overcome by completely disregarding the national outlook. Many professional relations and networks were (and are) undoubtedly still local, regional or national, and the relative importance of these different contacts should not be ignored. The aim of the transnational perspective is rather that the national outlook “becomes disenchanting, that is, de-ontologized, historicized, and stripped of its inner necessity” (Beck 2006: 17). The scholar should strive at distancing himself from the national perspective, or, in Palonen’s words, aim at studying the nation as a foreign country, albeit a very familiar one (Palonen 2003a: 569).<sup>75</sup> The national context, the national loyalties and even the national ideology itself must be recognised as important social and historical factors constituting the field in which the actors made their moves. In fact, the national context is often decisive. Even the most programmatically cosmopolitan intellectual has had a background in a specific national context that has shaped his international agenda (Casanova 1999: 41; Nygård 2008: 16). Often scholars look abroad to strengthen their position in the domestic field. It has, for example, been argued that the internationalism of Neurath – his strenuous efforts to internationalise the Vienna Circle through his Unity of Science programme – was to a significant extent motivated by the polarised political situation in Austria. The rise of fascism prompted Neurath to gather international support for his cause (Cartwright et al 1996: 82-4). Similarly, Petzäll’s cosmopolitanism was largely caused by the

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<sup>75</sup> This is certainly a methodological ideal that I hope my own studies live up to.

fact that the Uppsala dominance hampered his professional prospects in Sweden. His persistent efforts to confront the Uppsala School with foreign philosophies in *Theoria* can be seen as attempts to compensate for what he experienced as a stifling Swedish intellectual atmosphere and to accumulate foreign support in his mission to break the Uppsala hegemony (Strang II: 71-4).

For similar reasons, the tendency among transfer historians to belittle the comparative approach has been criticised by, among others, Jürgen Kocka, who points at important questions that can only be answered, and indeed asked, from a comparative perspective (Kocka 2003; 1999). Claims for national exceptionalism (*Sonderweg*), for example, can only be judged through meticulous international comparison. The special conditions for, and features of, the transfer of logical empiricism to Sweden come to light especially in comparison with the introduction and appropriation of logical empiricism in other countries, for example Finland. It is therefore undoubtedly more useful to consider the comparative approaches and transfer studies or *histoire croisée* as complements of each other rather than as competing perspectives (Kocka 2003: 44; Simon & Herran 2008: 9).

## **b. The colonisation of Hägerström**

The transformation from Uppsala philosophy to analytic philosophy was undoubtedly a process that took place gradually and in constant interaction with the international philosophical scene, particularly with logical empiricism and the Cambridge School. Nonetheless, the use that the younger generation of Uppsala philosophers made of these foreign ideas was thoroughly shaped by the national context. In the 1930s, “Uppsala philosophy” was the subject of fierce internal struggles between two antagonistic wings. Hedenius, Marc-Wogau and Wedberg were disciples of Phalén and in many ways at war with the orthodox Hägerströmians (Nordin 1983: 52-3). However, in the public mind, as well as at the university (especially after Phalén’s death in 1931), Hägerström unquestionably represented the key figure of Uppsala philosophy



not least due to the attention and position of the so-called “value nihilistic” theory in Swedish debates.

For the Phalénians the Hägerströmian dominance was a source of distress, not only because they were shadowed or overlooked in public debates, but also as they were in a rather weak position with regard to professional advancement in obtaining a permanent academic position. It was in this context that Hedenius, Marc-Wogau and Wedberg appropriated the ideas of logical empiricism and the Cambridge School. My studies are by no means the first to notice the shift in the philosophical orientation of this younger generation of Uppsala philosophers during the late 1930s and early 1940s, or the key role that Hedenius’s modification of Hägerström’s value theory played in the transition.<sup>76</sup> However, more strongly than previous studies my work strives to interpret the shift in terms of a colonisation of the figure of Hägerström. This was more than a mere appropriation and redescription of Hägerström’s ideas; it was also a matter of claiming the ownership of the Uppsala tradition in order to facilitate the introduction of foreign ideas. In this way Hägerström came to serve as an anchor for the new (analytic) tradition that Hedenius, Marc-Wogau and Wedberg were establishing.

From this perspective, Hedenius is by far the most interesting of the three. In the study “*Theoria* and logical empiricism” I describe how Hedenius, only eleven days after Hägerström’s death, contacted Petzäll and volunteered to take Hägerström’s place in a projected debate with Cassirer in the pages of *Theoria* (Strang II: 84-5). In the resulting article “Über den alogischen Charakter der sog. Werturteile” Hedenius argued that Cassirer had misinterpreted Hägerström’s value theory as a reformulation of the *homo mensura* thesis of the Ancient Sophists. Thus Cassirer had presented Hägerström as a value relativist who holds that value statements can be true or false (Hedenius 1939). Whether Hedenius was correct in his

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<sup>76</sup> Nordin (e.g.1983; 2004a; 2004b) has on several occasions described the transformation from Uppsala philosophy to analytic philosophy, not least by focusing on Hedenius’s redescription of Hägerström’s value theory. Furthermore, in order to point out how the phenomenological side of Uppsala philosophy was suppressed, thus facilitating the establishment of the analytic hegemony, Bengtsson (1991: 151-61) devotes a chapter to the transition from Uppsala philosophy to analytic philosophy.

criticism is a matter of discussion (Hansson & Nordin 2006: 162-3; Thomasson 2004; 106-10). At the very least there are many indications suggesting that Hägerström actually believed that value statements can be false (but never true). However, more important from my perspective is the fact that the article was the first significant step in Hedenius's attempt to replace Hägerström as the main advocate of the value nihilistic theory. In the years that followed Hedenius published a series of popular articles on Hägerström and value nihilism in the Social Democratic journal *Tiden*, which were later gathered as the successful popular book *Om rätt och moral* (1941), by means of which Hedenius firmly established himself as the new Hägerström.

But Hedenius did not merely adopt the value theory of Hägerström. On the contrary, he explicitly set out to improve it by “formulating it in a different manner from what is common amongst Hägerströmians” (Hedenius 1941: 13), and by proposing “an important modification” of it (Hedenius 1941: 53).<sup>77</sup> Hägerström had based his argument on the act psychology and *Werttheorie* of Brentano and Ehrenfelds (Peterson 1973: 30-58; Danielsson 1993: 35-8). For him a value judgement is not a real judgement (*Urteil*) as it is not a representation (*Vorstellung*) of something as existent. Instead, a value judgement is characterised by always involving a feeling or an attitude (*Gemütsbewegung*) towards that which is represented. While for Hägerström it had been important to prove that value judgements (or representations) involve feelings and attitudes, this was very much a secondary point in Hedenius's analysis. In his version of the value nihilistic theory the references to act psychology had disappeared. Instead he proceeded from a distinction between a sentence (*sats*) and a statement (*påstående*); while “my father is dead” and “mein Vater ist gestorben” are two different sentences, they express the same statement. Furthermore, Hedenius claimed, every statement is by necessity either true or false and it is only statements that can be true or false. This was “a

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<sup>77</sup> “...den skall även formuleras något annorlunda än vad som brukas hägerströmianer emellan” and “...en viktig modifikation”. See also e.g. Danielsson 1993; Nordin 1983: 150-1; 2004: 106-13; (and especially) 2004a.

cornerstone of logic and undoubted by every respected philosopher” (Hedenius 1941: 14).<sup>78</sup> The value nihilistic theory then, Hedenius continued, is a theory that claims that there are certain sentences that seem to express statements – “this is good”, “this is evil”, “this is right”, “this ought to be done” – but which on closer examination do not express any statement about anything (Hedenius 1941: 16-7).

Besides re-articulating the value theory of Hägerström, Hedenius also criticised the Hägerströmians for failing to acknowledge the distinction between what he called “genuine (*äkta*) and non-genuine (*oäkta*) value statements” (Hedenius 1941: 58). According to Hedenius, Hägerström’s theory only applied to genuine value statements, i.e. in cases when “stealing is wrong” is used in order to pressure someone into refraining from a certain conduct. But the very same sentence can also, as a non-genuine statement, be used in order to refer to the presence of genuine evaluations, i.e. to the fact that some (legal or moral) authority, people in general or people in this particular culture, actually condemn stealing. As a non-genuine value statement, Hedenius claimed, “stealing is wrong” is a purely descriptive statement that can indeed be true or false. In this way, by limiting the scope and significance of value nihilism, Hedenius tried to move beyond Hägerström.

The origin of Hedenius’s new ideas has been the subject of some discussion. Many scholars have observed that Hedenius (and Marc-Wogau) uses Moore’s distinction between the meaning of a statement and an analysis or theory concerning its meaning as a main argument against orthodox Hägerströmians (Nordin 2004b: 111; Petersson 2009a: 37).<sup>79</sup> There is certainly no point in disputing

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<sup>78</sup> “...som är en hörnsten i logiken och icke betvivlas av någon ansedd filosof”.

<sup>79</sup> For example, in a discussion with the orthodox Hägerströmian legal theoreticians Olivecrona, Marc-Wogau noted that one can either analyse the meaning of a concept, or the theories that philosophers and theoreticians have regarding the meaning of the concept. While Marc-Wogau himself, thought it was best to stick to the first type of analysis, he complained that Olivecrona frequently slid over to the second type (Marc-Wogau 1941: 143-6).

the significance of the Cambridge School with regard to the shift from Uppsala philosophy to analytic philosophy in Sweden, especially as the philosophers themselves autobiographically confirm these influences.<sup>80</sup> My focus on logical empiricism should therefore not be understood as an assessment of the relative importance of the different, but related, sources of influence, but rather, as an attempt to highlight a chapter in the history of Swedish philosophy that has been somewhat downplayed in previous studies.<sup>81</sup>

Even if Hedenius did not explicitly refer to the emotivistic theory as presented by leading logical empiricists such as Ayer (1936) or Carnap (1935), there were undoubtedly many striking similarities. Both Ayer and Carnap argued in a Russellian way that value statements have a deceptive grammatical form, which might cause one to think that they are regular statements (Ayer 1936: 108; Carnap 1935: 24). But where both Ayer and Carnap based their argument on the principle of verification (or testability), i.e. on the idea that value statements are meaningless as there is no way to empirically verify (or test) them, Hedenius was more reluctant in specifying what actually determines whether a statement is true or false, or indeed, if a sentence is a statement or not. In a rather vague manner, Hedenius claimed that it was “a difficult, and perhaps still unsolved, problem” (Hedenius 1941: 14-5).<sup>82</sup> However, later in the same book (*Om rätt och moral*), when discussing the

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<sup>80</sup> See e.g. what Hedenius (1951: 69) and Marc-Wogau (1951: 122) have written about themselves in Alf Ahlberg’s autobiographical lexicon *Filosofiskt lexikon* (1951). In the same lexicon Wedberg (1951: 206), in turn, refers only to “international philosophical movements” and to studies in logic in the United States. The importance of the Cambridge School, and particularly G. E. Moore, on the development of Hedenius’s ideas in the late 1930s have been emphasised by e.g. Nordin 1983: 146-9; Henschen-Dahlquist 2009: 10-1.

<sup>81</sup> A third related and important, but equally neglected, source of influence with regard to the transformation of Uppsala philosophy in the 1940s is Wedberg’s studies in the United States in 1939-43 (Princeton and Harvard). It is arguably largely due to Wedberg that formal logic became a leading field in Swedish philosophy during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>82</sup> “...ett svårt, kanske ännu olöst problem”.

problem of “meaning” which, according to Hedenius “was emerging as the central challenge of philosophy”, he subscribed to the view that “the meaning of a statement is the fact (*sakförhållande*) that makes it true” (Hedenius 1941: 62),<sup>83</sup> which undoubtedly echoes Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* as well as subsequent formulations by different logical empiricists (e.g. Carnap 1928b: 325).

There were also other signs of an increasing influence from logical empiricism in *Om rätt och moral*. It is, for example, likely that one of the sources for Hedenius’s distinction between genuine and non-genuine value statements was an article on “Imperatives and Logic” by the Danish logical empiricist Jørgen Jørgensen in *Theoria* (1938). Here Jørgensen stated that an imperative such as “You ought to close the door!” could also be used as a description of the fact that such a command exists, which undoubtedly seems to point in the direction of Hedenius’s distinction (Strang III: 72).

A couple of years later, in 1943, Hedenius tried to reconcile Moore’s commonsense realism (that there are certain empirical statements that cannot be doubted, e.g. “This is a hand”) with “dem Satz des logischen Positivismus”, namely that empirical statements are by necessity merely hypothetical as they can never be conclusively verified. According to Hedenius it was a great misunderstanding to contrast these statements with each other because while the first was a statement regarding an empirical fact, the latter was a logical analysis of statements regarding empirical facts. “Persönlich glaube ich”, Hedenius concluded, “dass sowohl Moores Gedankengang als auch die These des logischen Positivismus wahr sind” (Hedenius 1943: 173). Indeed, for Hedenius it was important to show that he was part of a coherent international philosophical movement. That he (autobiographically) emphasised the influences from Cambridge over those from Vienna was perhaps only natural given Petzäll’s self-evident position as the main representative of logical empiricism in Sweden and the rather hostile confrontations between Uppsala philosophy and logical empiricism in *Theoria* during the late 1930s.

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<sup>83</sup> “Detta problem framstår alltmer som ett av filosofiens centralaste” and “...en sats’ mening utgörs av det sakförhållande, vars existens gör satsen sann”.

Be that as it may, from Hedenius's perspective, the Cambridge School and logical empiricism belonged to the same larger movement, a movement to which he also wanted to connect his own Uppsala philosophy. Even if influences from Moore and from logical empiricism moved Hedenius's philosophical views away from the ideas of Hägerström and Phalén, it was by no means his intention to make a definitive break with the Hägerströmian legacy. On the contrary, his mission was to emphasise continuity and thus to claim the ownership of the Uppsala legacy. By colonising and redescribing ("improving") Hägerström, Hedenius effectively started to create an image of Hägerström as the father of the Swedish analytic tradition (Strang I: 262-4). Hägerström's own philosophical intentions and contexts were repressed, and instead he was portrayed as a loner, an autodidact or something of a philosophical oracle. In the beginning of *Om rätt och moral* Hedenius explicitly described Hägerström and Uppsala philosophy as "a similar and contemporaneous reaction against metaphysics as the Cambridge School and logical empiricism" (Hedenius 1941: 9).<sup>84</sup>

Hedenius' companions Marc-Wogau and Wedberg soon joined Hedenius in this construction of the Swedish analytic tradition. In his inaugural lecture "Uppsalafilosofin och den logiska empirismen" (1947) Marc-Wogau argued that Uppsala philosophy and logical empiricism were "united against a wide range of different movements in modern philosophy" (Marc-Wogau 1947: 49).<sup>85</sup> Marc-Wogau did note that there were significant differences between Hägerström and the logical empiricists, particularly regarding their views on natural science and formal logic, but he emphasised that these were points where "younger Uppsala philosophers had moved closer to the position of the logical empiricists" (Marc-Wogau 1947: 49).<sup>86</sup> Similarly, when Gilbert Ryle's (et al) famous book *The Revolution in Philosophy* (1956), which

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<sup>84</sup> "...en nära nog samtidig, rent av negativ reaktion mot den s.k. metafysiken". He had written in a similar fashion in the journal *Tiden* a year earlier. See Hedenius 1940: 36-7.

<sup>85</sup> "...bilda gemensam front mot en hel rad andra riktningar i modern filosofi".

<sup>86</sup> "...där yngre uppsalafilosofer närmat sig den logiska empirismens inställning".

canonised Frege, Moore, the Vienna Circle, Wittgenstein and ordinary language philosophy (Strawson) as a distinct revolutionary philosophical movement, was translated into Swedish, a chapter by Marc-Wogau on “Axel Hägerström och Uppsalafilosofin” was included. The preface explained the addition by claiming that the three most significant branches of modern scientific philosophy – “often called analytic philosophy” – are the Cambridge School, logical empiricism and Uppsala philosophy (Marc-Wogau & Wennerberg 1957: 7).<sup>87</sup> Some years later, in a three-volume collection of central historical texts in philosophy, *Filosofin genom tiderna*, Marc-Wogau did not include a text by Hägerström or Phalén, but the Uppsala school was again mentioned – in the introduction to an excerpt from Carnap’s *Aufbau* – as a parallel to Russell, Moore and logical empiricism (Marc-Wogau 1964: 123).<sup>88</sup>

Wedberg, the youngest of the three, was arguably less concerned with construing continuity between Uppsala philosophy and analytic philosophy. Instead he did his best to historicise Uppsala philosophy, i.e. to present it as a past stage in the development of analytic philosophy – or, in Jonas Schiött’s words, “as a talented but uncultivated provincial cousin” of the Cambridge and Vienna Schools (Schiött 2000: 155).<sup>89</sup> In the small two-piece pamphlet *Den nya logiken I-II* (1945a; 1945b) Wedberg argued that the analytical

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<sup>87</sup> “[De uppsatser som återges i det följande] behandlar den moderna vetenskapliga filosofin och i viss mån dess historiska utveckling. Det utmärkande draget i denna filosofi är dess avvisande inställning till metafysik och dess åsikt att filosofi är liktydig med vetenskaplig analys av de i vetenskapen använda grundläggande begreppen. Den kallas därför ofta analytisk filosofi. De mest betydande riktningarna inom denna filosofi är Cambridgeskolan (G. E. Moore och B. Russell m fl.), den logiska empirismen (i dess tidiga skede Wienskolan, M. Schlick, R. Carnap m.fl) och Uppsalaskolan (A. Hägerström, A. Phalén, m.fl). I den engelska upplagan av detta arbete har den sistnämnda riktningen inte behandlats. Det har därför ansetts lämpligt att den svenska upplagan kompletteras med en karekteristik av denna.” The preface was not signed, so it is a matter of speculation if it was the translator Hjalmar Wennerberg or Marc-Wogau himself who wrote these lines.

<sup>88</sup> Two years later, in his *Filosofins historia* Wedberg (1966: 366) repeated the same narrative of Hägerström’s philosophy as a parallel to the Cambridge School and logical empiricism.

<sup>89</sup> “...en begåvad men obildad kusin från landet”.

intentions of Hägerström had been honourable, but that his mission had been compromised by his poor insights into modern logic. According to Wedberg, this was the main reason for some of Hägerström's paradoxical ideas, for example, that the concept of a "relation" was metaphysical (Wedberg 1945b: 5-6).

In 1944 Wedberg published two articles on logical empiricism in the journal *Theoria*. The first was a review of von Wright's textbook *Den logiska empirismen* (1944), which was welcomed by Wedberg "as the knowledge of logical empiricism in the Swedish philosophical world is deplorably scarce" (Wedberg 1944a: 78). The second was a critique of Carnap's *Aufbau* (1928a), in which Wedberg argued that Carnap's programme had failed and that the projected phenomenalist construction "remained but a mere philosophical hypothesis" (Wedberg 1944b: 246). Together the articles give a rather ambivalent picture of Wedberg's familiarity with the recent developments of logical empiricism. While he criticised von Wright for remaining trapped in the past stages of the development of logical empiricism (Wedberg 1944a: 80), his own article on *Aufbau* appeared rather strange as by 1944 the phenomenalist approach had long since been abandoned by leading logical empiricists, including Carnap himself (see e.g. Uebel 1992). The articles should perhaps be understood as moves by which Wedberg, in two different ways, tried to historicise logical empiricism in order to legitimise the emerging analytic philosophy.

Hedenius, Marc-Wogau and Wedberg used international philosophical ideas in order to overcome the Hägerströmian dominance that had been in their way in the early 1930s. They succeeded not by straightforward confrontation, but by monopolising the Hägerströmian tradition and gradually replacing it with new ideas. In the late 1940s, Hedenius and Marc-Wogau obtained the Chairs in Philosophy in Uppsala, while Wedberg became Professor in Stockholm. Hedenius was also successfully able to replace Hägerström in the Swedish public debate as not only the main advocate of the value nihilistic theory, but also the leading "modern" philosopher-intellectual – a position he both used and strengthened through his infamous criticism of religion in *Tro och vetande* (1949b).

The colonisation of Hägerström was a great success and was met with little opposition. Among the orthodox Hägerströmians it



was mainly the legal theoreticians Lundstedt and Olivecrona that protested, arguing that Hedenius had misunderstood and belittled Hägerström. According to Lundstedt, for example, Hedenius had trivialised the value theory and failed to acknowledge Hägerström's true originality (Lundstedt 1942: 14). But also in legal theory there gradually emerged a second generation of Scandinavian legal realists who relied more on the tenets of logical empiricism than on Hägerström's philosophy (Strang III).<sup>90</sup> In the public debate, no one really noticed that Uppsala philosophy had gradually been furnished with new ideas.<sup>91</sup> Neither did anyone notice that suddenly Uppsala philosophy had disappeared altogether. When no longer needed, Hägerström and Uppsala philosophy were rapidly disposed of; the references to Hägerström were replaced in the late 1940s with the great names in analytic philosophy. In 1949 it was not Hägerström but Charles Stevenson's classic *Ethics and Language* (1944) that was hailed by Hedenius as the foremost representative of the value nihilistic theory (Hedenius 1949a: 211), and in 1954 Hedenius was already engaged with Richard Hare's *The Language of Morals* (1952) (Pettersson 2009a: 54-5). In just a few years, Uppsala philosophy, which had dominated the cultural and political debates in the 1930s, completely disappeared from the agenda. It had gradually been replaced by something which was coming to be known as "analytic philosophy".

### c. The Hedenian moment

Hedenius's move of colonising the legacy of Hägerström in order to use it as an anchor for the introduction of a foreign philosophical movement was undoubtedly a result of some innovative redescription and interpretation. But the amalgamation would hardly have succeeded if there had not been some similarities in the

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<sup>90</sup> Logical empiricism formed the philosophical starting point for not only Ross's *Om ret og retfærdighed* (1953) but also, for example, Björn Ahlander's *Är juridiken en vetenskap?* (1950).

<sup>91</sup> This was, according to Nordin (2004b: 170), one of Hedenius's main advantages in the debate on his next book *Tro och vetande* (1949b).

philosophies of the Uppsala School and logical empiricism that he could take advantage of. Such common features were, for example, the interest in language and logical analysis, the anti-metaphysical attitude, and the basic idea of the value theory (see e.g. Nordin 1983: 51, 157). Moreover, a striking similarity can also be found in the modernistic and progressive cultural and political atmosphere that surrounded the two movements. In the same way that the Vienna Circle was associated with Social Democracy, with the *Freidenkerbund* and with the *Banhaus* movement, Uppsala philosophy was associated with progressive leftist politics, secularism, as well as functionalistic architecture.<sup>92</sup> In this sense, there were also political and cultural factors that facilitated Hedenius's move (Strang I: 259-60).<sup>93</sup>

But this raises the question of why there had not been any attempts to merge Uppsala philosophy with logical empiricism before 1940. There seem to have been good prospects for a close collaboration between the movements at a much earlier stage. Marc-Wogau has argued that the similarities between Uppsala philosophy and logical empiricism actually hampered the breakthrough of logical empiricism in Sweden. According to him, the anti-metaphysical programme and emphasis of conceptual analysis were received with more scepticism in Uppsala and Sweden than in many other places where these ideas appeared as novel and revolutionary (Marc-Wogau 1949: 17).<sup>94</sup> This is probably a fair point, even if Marc-Wogau's judgement must be seen in the light of his own ambitions at the time, i.e. as part of the move in the making of Hågerström as the father of the Swedish analytic tradition. Of crucial importance was undoubtedly also the fact that Petzäll, with whom logical empiricism was long associated in Sweden, was a vehement opponent of Uppsala philosophy. For him, the Uppsala

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<sup>92</sup> On the cultural-political relations of the Vienna Circle, see e.g. Stadler 1997: 178-94; Galison 1990; 1996. For the cultural-political relations of Uppsala philosophy, see e.g. Källström 1984: especially Chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>93</sup> This even if logical empiricism was actually used in a somewhat different way, i.e. as an argument *against* the political radicalism of Uppsala philosophy. See below: 79.

<sup>94</sup> In an overview of Scandinavian philosophy written much later, von Wright (1972: 6) presents the same idea.

School represented a self-sufficient, doctrinaire, and sectarian philosophy that had nothing in common with the international and cross-disciplinary programme of logical empiricism. In fact, when Neurath, after discussions with Tegen and Ross in 1934, asked Petzäll for bibliographic data on Scandinavian members of the “empiristisch-logischer Zug”, Petzäll did not even understand that Neurath was referring to the Uppsala philosophers, about whom he had been informed by Alf Ross (Strang II: 79).<sup>95</sup>

Despite some similarities, there was in the mid-1930s little that suggested that Uppsala philosophy and logical empiricism would jointly form the basis for a Swedish analytic tradition. There were fundamental philosophical disagreements on, for example, the nature of logical analysis, and the relation between philosophy and natural science, which surfaced not least in the debates in *Theoria* in 1937 (Strang II, 78-83). When Hedenius, Marc-Wogau and Wedberg gradually converted from Uppsala philosophy towards analytic philosophy, it was not only a matter of innovative interpretation and redescription; it was also to a considerable extent a matter of timing. In fact, the move would hardly have been possible five or ten years earlier; around 1940 there were a number of factors that worked in their favour.

First of all, Hägerström died in 1939. With him alive, the change would hardly have been possible.<sup>96</sup> It is striking that this group of young Phalénians started to show a positive interest in Hägerström’s philosophy immediately after his death in 1939. While Hedenius focused on the value theory, Marc-Wogau wrote several articles on Hägerström’s ontology and epistemology (Marc-Wogau 1940; 1946; 1949). Even if Marc-Wogau’s articles must be seen as candid efforts to make sense of Hägerström’s philosophy rather than attempts to redescribe him, they can nevertheless be understood as moves to claim the right to interpret the Hägerströmian

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<sup>95</sup> See the correspondence between Petzäll and Neurath in November 1934. The bibliographic data of leading members of “Die Richtung von Upsala (Schweden)” was eventually published at the end of a 30-page bibliography of the logical empiricist movement in *Erkenntnis* 1935: 427-8.

<sup>96</sup> In 1934, Hägerström defended his follower Lundstedt against criticisms by Hedenius and Wedberg, thus effectively denying them the right to interpret his legacy. See below: 83-4.

legacy. Hägerström's death made it possible to discuss the Uppsala legacy without the great man interfering himself, and it was only now that it became possible, as in the case of Hedenius, to merge his ideas with a philosophy that he himself had opposed.<sup>97</sup>

Secondly, the move was also aided by the fact that by 1940 logical empiricism was by no means a novelty in the philosophical discussion in Sweden. Petzäll had published two studies on the movement, which, even if they failed to reach large recognition, undoubtedly made the Swedish philosophical community aware of the Vienna Circle (Petzäll 1931; 1935).<sup>98</sup> Even more important in this respect was the strong position of logical empiricism in the neighbouring countries. The Nordic countries are good examples of nations with entangled histories; the relationship between the countries was (and is) close and in many ways self-evident. For example, even if the journal *Theoria* was launched and financed as a *Swedish* journal and in order to promote *Swedish* philosophy, it still had the explicit aim of furthering dialogue between the Nordic countries.<sup>99</sup> And even if some members of the editorial board, most notably Marc-Wogau, were strongly opposed to Petzäll's ambitions of internationalising the journal, no voices protested against the Nordic contributions. There was no conflict between the national and the Nordic, and even if there certainly were great differences in

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<sup>97</sup> Hägerström did not, to the best of my knowledge, directly comment on logical empiricism in his publications, but his negative attitude towards any contemporary philosophy, not least empiricism, certainly indicates that he was less than impressed with logical empiricism. Martin Fries, Hägerström's disciple who was responsible for editing the Swedish translation of Hägerström 1929, claims that Hägerström, in refuting "the common movement in modern epistemology" [den vanliga riktningen i modern kunskapslära] was referring to logical empiricism. Hägerström 1929: 111, 120.

<sup>98</sup> In his dissertation, Hedenius had himself referred critically to Carnap's (1932: 240) famous statement that "metaphysicians are musicians without musical capacity". According to Hedenius, at this time still very faithful to the Uppsala doctrines, this was to take the threat of metaphysics too lightly, as the dialectical nature of the metaphysical systems "reflects difficulties inherent in our common-sense notions, difficulties that have not so far been solved by philosophical research" (Hedenius 1936: 10).

<sup>99</sup> This was programmatically stated in the first editorial of the journal in 1935: v.

the philosophical traditions of the four countries, there was nevertheless a well-established practice of reading philosophical literature from the neighbouring countries. In the 1930s logical empiricism may not have had (m)any active proponents in Sweden, but it was nevertheless a living part of the Swedish philosophical scene through the writings of Kaila, Jørgensen, and soon also Næss.<sup>100</sup>

Thirdly, the shift from Uppsala philosophy towards logical empiricism and analytic philosophy was also assisted in a direct and institutionalised way by the Nordic neighbours as Kaila, Jørgensen and Næss regularly figured among the referees in the professorial appointments in Sweden.<sup>101</sup> These were splendid opportunities to make a long-lasting mark on the direction of Swedish philosophy. The most striking example was Kaila's verdict in the race for the Chair in Theoretical Philosophy in 1945 (Strang I: 262). In Kaila's view there was a main dividing line between the orthodox Hägerströmian applicant Fries on the one hand, and the "Uppsala philosophy in progress" represented by Hedenius, Marc-Wogau and Wedberg on the other (Kaila 1945-46: 12).<sup>102</sup> Kaila strongly encouraged the interest that the younger generation of Uppsala philosophers was showing in logical empiricism. He even promoted Hedenius over the more experienced Marc-Wogau, as Hedenius, according to Kaila, was more original and independent, and because he was more rapidly than his competitors abandoning the Uppsala doctrines in favour of "the more advanced logical-empiristic (neopositivistic) platform" (Kaila 1945-46: 28).<sup>103</sup> Even if Hedenius, as the far less experienced scholar, eventually lost the race to Marc-Wogau, Kaila's verdict made him an unchallenged favourite for the

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<sup>100</sup> In this sense the transfer of logical empiricism to Sweden can be seen as an example of what Michel Espagne calls "triangular transfers" (Espagne 1999: Chapter VIII, quoted by Nygård 2010 [forthcoming]).

<sup>101</sup> Foreign evaluators were often, in the name of impartiality, preferred over Swedish. However, as most works to be evaluated were written in Swedish the evaluators were often appointed from the neighbouring countries.

<sup>102</sup> "...en uppsalafilosofi i utveckling".

<sup>103</sup> "...den mera avancerade logisk-empiriska (nypositivistiska) plattformen". In the next breath, Kaila also notes that Hedenius himself seemed to believe that he still remained true to Uppsala philosophy.

next available Chair, which happened to be Hägerström's old Chair in Practical Philosophy in Uppsala (Nordin 2004b: 126-9).

It is also, fourthly, crucial to acknowledge that logical empiricism itself had undergone a significant transformation during the 1930s, evolving from a small and rather informal discussion group into "something more nearly resembling a political party" (Ayer 1959: 4), aggressively promoting the Unity of Science program in its search for international allies. Logical empiricism had become a focal point of the international philosophical discussion. Its philosophy had been presented in a number of popular and widespread introductions such as Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic* (1936), Carnap's small pamphlets in the *Psyche* miniature series *The Unity of Science* (1934) and *Philosophy and Logical Syntax* (1935), and von Mises' *Kleines Lehrbuch der Positivismus* (1939). Indeed, the Vienna Circle had been transformed into an international Unity of Science movement that hosted a number of international publication series, and organised annual congresses. The leading light of this expansion and internationalisation was Neurath, who in the spring of 1934 had been forced into exile in The Hague, and who spent much time travelling and organising different events and giving lectures on the Unity of Science, as well as on the method of picture statistics (ISOTYPE) (Cartwright et al 1996: 63-88). In the autumn of 1934, Neurath made a trip to Scandinavia giving lectures in Copenhagen, Lund, Oslo, and Gothenburg, which were undoubtedly very important in establishing closer relations between the logical empiricists and the Swedish philosophers.<sup>104</sup> It was Petzäll who arranged Neurath's lectures in Gothenburg, and he also invited Neurath and other leading members of the movement to participate in the discussion in *Theoria*. During the same trip Neurath also made contact with Ross who seems to have been the first to direct Neurath's attention to the teachings of Hägerström and the Uppsala School (Strang II: 79).<sup>105</sup> Among the Swedish

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<sup>104</sup> Carnap also visited the Nordic countries in the 1930s (see e.g. Nordin 1983: 146).

<sup>105</sup> Ross was later central in introducing logical empiricism into the Nordic legal theoretical discussion, where he joined Hedenius in merging it with the legacy of Uppsala philosophy. See Strang III: 73-7.

Uppsala philosophers, Tegen was the first to come into contact with the logical empiricists. Serving as Professor of Practical Philosophy in Lund he attended Neurath's lecture in 1934 and in the correspondence that followed Neurath persuaded Tegen to participate in the first international congress for Unity of Science in Paris 1935, which, however, proved to be a disappointing experience for Tegen (Strang II: 81).

Thus, the central position of logical empiricism in not only the international, but also, fifthly, in the Nordic philosophical discussion, was undoubtedly an important factor that contributed to the success of Hedenius's (and his collaborators') move to merge logical empiricism with the Uppsala legacy. The most revealing sign of how well-established the relations between Scandinavia and logical empiricism were in the mid-1930s was the fact that the Second Congress for the Unity of Science was arranged in Copenhagen in 1936.<sup>106</sup> This was an event of great magnitude for the Nordic philosophical community, and it was naturally attended by some Uppsala philosophers as well (at least Marc-Wogau, Tegen and Ross). It was at this congress that Petzäll launched his plans for an extensive internationalisation of his journal *Theoria* by, for example, organising a debate between logical empiricism (Frank) and Uppsala philosophy (Oxenstierna) that appeared in 1937.

Finally, the shift from Uppsala philosophy to analytic philosophy must also be seen in connection with the general cultural shift towards the English-speaking world (Strang I: 237). Whereas the Swedes had previously looked to Germany for the latest innovations in art, music and literature, the United States gradually emerged as the new cultural centre for the Nordic countries during the 1930s and 40s. The academic world was no exception; the Americanisation of science, medicine, and especially social science was facilitated not least by generous scholarships by American agencies such as the Rockefeller foundation (see e.g. Thue 2006: 157-62). The transformation from Uppsala philosophy to analytic philosophy fits well into this general picture, and it is after all,

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<sup>106</sup> The sixth congress for Unity of Science was set to take place with Næss in Oslo in 1940, but the Nazi occupation cancelled the plans. See e.g. Stadler 1997: 391; 2010: 26-7.

perhaps no great surprise that it was allowed to transpire in a rather unproblematic and even unnoticed manner.

#### **d. Uppsala – a self-sufficient periphery?**

An important question that needs to be addressed is *why* Hedenius anchored the new ideas that he imported from abroad in the domestic and local Uppsala tradition? Why did he not simply profile himself as a logical empiricist, as a follower of Moore, or as an analytic philosopher, and in explicit opposition to the Uppsala legacy? There are several reasons that must be taken into account. First of all, it must be emphasised that by 1940 there was no single rising philosophical movement to which Hedenius and his collaborators could associate themselves. Logical empiricism was dispersed around the world and its main organ, *Erkenntnis*, was closed down. The Cambridge philosophers Moore and Russell were arguably no longer the latest fashion, and analytic philosophy had yet to establish itself as a definite movement. Secondly, it must also be judged from a personal perspective. Hedenius, Marc-Wogau and Wedberg had been philosophically brought up within the Uppsala School, and it was arguably only natural that they conceived of and presented the shift as a gradual one (Nordin 1983: 216). Thirdly, the central cultural-political position of Uppsala philosophy in the Swedish debates made it a desirable prey. By emerging as the new Hägerström, Hedenius acquired a natural position as a leading intellectual in Sweden. But finally, it can also, from a sociological perspective, be argued that the academic culture in Sweden or Uppsala at the time was such that it was impossible for Hedenius to play the foreign card as a trump. Instead, in order to succeed with the transfer of logical empiricism to Uppsala and Sweden, he needed to elaborate the more sophisticated strategy of smuggling it in the disguise of Hägerström's value theory.

The discussion on cultural transfers, *transnationale Geschichte* and *histoire croisée* has mainly been a French and German discourse, with some occasional glances to other large cultures such as the United States, Great Britain, or Russia. It is, as the Finnish historian Henrik



Stenius rightly points out, not very often that the peculiar conditions, problems and challenges involved in “asymmetrical transfers”, between the large “centres” and smaller “peripheries” where the degree of reciprocity is rather small, have been recognised (Stenius 2004: 176). It cannot be denied that the intellectual life in the periphery consists to a large extent of discussions that mirror the debates and positions in the centres. But this does not mean that scientific and intellectual ideas are produced only in the centres, from where they are transmitted to the passive peripheries where, in turn, faithfulness to the original is a measure of success (Guillem-Llobat 2008: 292-4). The recent discussion on cultural transfers can undoubtedly provide useful tools by which a static centre-periphery model can be overcome, without pretending that there is not a peculiar logic involved in asymmetrical transfers. Even when the outskirts of the intellectual republic are concerned, cultural transfers are hardly ever questions of passive reception (Nygård 2008: 9-23). Rather, in the same way as in transfers between two large and symmetrical cultures, the national context often determines both what and how ideas are transferred. It is important to analyse the different selective and instrumental ways by which small country intellectuals approach the centres in order to gain cultural capital to be used at home.

The intellectual life in the peripheries can also be understood in terms of what Pauli Kettunen, in his studies on the history of the Nordic Welfare State, has labelled “the avantgardism of the intellectual elite of a peripheral country” (Kettunen 2008: 136).<sup>107</sup> Kettunen gives examples of how social politicians of a “backward” periphery such as Finland travelled to more “advanced” countries in order to be able to anticipate solutions to problems that had not yet emerged at home. Even if philosophical problems arguably cannot be anticipated in the same manner as social problems, the study trips and the references to the philosophical centres nevertheless often played a similar role in setting the agenda in the domestic discussions. It was not only a matter of “catching up”, but also of defining philosophy and the tasks of an intellectual on the

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<sup>107</sup> “...perifeerisen maan oppineen eliitin avantgardismi”. See Kettunen 2006: 37-8 for an English discussion of the phenomenon.

basis of the foreign experiences. In a small periphery novel philosophies can rapidly become dominant trends if they are adopted and promoted by the right people, in the right way, at the right time. The tenets of logical empiricism were at a strikingly early stage made part of the reading list at many Nordic universities, and thus this “backward periphery” came to establish itself in the forefront of the international philosophical discussion (albeit within a very specific part of it).<sup>108</sup>

The smallness of the Nordic countries might have contributed to the dominance of analytic philosophy in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, as it contributed to the idealistic dominance a century before. The number of chairs in philosophy was rather small and the reigning professors were often called upon to give assessments of the candidates for a vacant chair, and thus a leading tradition could easily become dominant, even hegemonic. Within a few years after the Second World War, and with considerable help from their Nordic colleagues, the analytic school had claimed nearly all the chairs in philosophy in Sweden. On the other hand, the smallness and peripheral location might also prevent the leading philosophical tradition from becoming dogmatically hegemonic. Small peripheral countries are by necessity “translation cultures”, and thus a small-country intellectual is arguably more likely to be aware of the existence of different academic and philosophical discourses, and, indeed, of different competing intellectual centres (Stenius 2004: 176-80). In the periphery it is self-evident that one has to position and define oneself not only domestically, but also in relation to foreign intellectual cultures. In this way translation, transfers and reflexivity form unavoidable parts of the intellectual discussion to a greater extent than in larger cultures where universalistic modes of thinking are closer at hand (Casanova 1999: 41, 43).<sup>109</sup> Moreover

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<sup>108</sup> As early as 1929 Kaila ordered ten copies of Carnap’s *Abriss der logistik* (1929) in order to use them in his teaching (Nüniluoto 2006: 186). The Nordic philosophers were also early in producing rather programmatically logical empiricist textbooks in their native languages. See e.g. Jørgensen 1942; Kaila 1939; Næss 1941a; 1941b; von Wright 1943.

<sup>109</sup> As Jani Marjanen (2009) points out, references and connotations to foreign countries and languages were (and are) omnipresent in a minority

the intellectuals of the periphery are perhaps not forced to position themselves as aggressively as their colleagues in the intellectual centres where schools and movements are often gathered and institutionalised at different universities and departments. The fact that representatives of different philosophical movements were forced to meet each other on a daily basis at a small peripheral university such as the one in Helsinki might have prevented many academic disputes from developing into fierce antagonisms (Nygård 2008: 9). In this way, the peripheries can become venues for discussions between different intellectual movements that are hardly ever confronted in the centres, thus providing a fruitful soil for creative thinking beyond conventional borders (Casanova 1999: 43; Skirbekk 1997: 10). For example, both von Wright and Næss made early and widely recognised attempts at bridging the gulf between analytic and continental philosophy (Næss 1965; von Wright 1971).

However, the problems and challenges of the periphery were undoubtedly framed in a different way in Sweden than they were in Finland and Norway.<sup>110</sup> It was by no means self evident for Swedish intellectuals to conceive of themselves as belonging to a cultural periphery in the same way as it was for their neighbours. Swedish intellectuals were less concerned with looking abroad in order to catch up with, or to imitate, foreign developments, and in this sense Sweden can be conceived of as a more self-sufficient intellectual culture than its Nordic neighbours (Nygård & Strang 2006: 9-10). While in Finland and Norway it was seen as a merit and advantage to be in contact with a celebrated foreign philosopher or school, such connections were more often received with suspicion in Sweden. While Kaila and Næss were able to use their

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language such as Finnish, and thus it is difficult to pretend that there is a universally accepted meaning of, for example, "liberalism".

<sup>110</sup> Denmark, in turn, has traditionally played the role of a regional centre through which foreign ideas have been transmitted to the more peripheral parts of the Nordic countries. In philosophy Harald Høffding (1843-1931) is more than anyone associated with this role (see e.g. Heidegren 2004: 510-23; Nygård 2008: 143.) One could argue that Jørgensen, at least to some extent, (for example by arranging the congress in 1936) continued this legacy.

contacts with the Vienna Circle as trumps in the domestic meritocratic struggles,<sup>111</sup> this was not possible for Petzäll in Sweden (Strang II: 88-9). This is not necessarily to say that Swedish intellectuals were less dependent on cultural imports than their Finnish or Norwegian colleagues. It merely meant that they had to present foreign ideas in a different way. When Hedenius brought logical empiricism to Uppsala and Sweden during the 1940s, he seldom used the term “logical empiricism” or explicit references to foreign philosophers. Instead, logical empiricism was introduced in the veil of Hågerström, and thus effectively as a continuation of a national tradition (Strang I; Strang II). In this sense, Hedenius’s move of strongly anchoring foreign ideas to a national tradition is more akin to how cultural imports are performed in larger, more self-sufficient, cultures than in dependent peripheral cultures like Finland. For example, when introducing logical empiricism to Great Britain with his famous *Language, Truth and Logic* in 1936, Ayer portrayed the new philosophy as “the logical outcome” of the British empiricist tradition (Ayer 1936: 31).<sup>112</sup>

The difference between the self-sufficient Swedish and the dependent Finnish and Norwegian intellectual cultures can, on the one hand, be seen in connection with a general turning point in Swedish political and cultural life. As previously mentioned, in the 1930s Sweden evolved from being a poor, small and peripheral country, to a modernistic beacon that had little to learn from the outside world (see above: 24-5). On the other hand, the difference between Sweden and Finland can also be traced back to at least the 19<sup>th</sup> century. While German Hegelianism enjoyed nothing less than a hegemonic position in Finnish philosophy during the 19<sup>th</sup> century,

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<sup>111</sup> For a discussion of the turns regarding the appointment of Kaila to the Chair in Philosophy in Helsinki 1930, see Niiniluoto 2006: 171-5. For a discussion of the appointment of Næss in Oslo 1938, see Thue 1997: 47-9; 2006: 127-30.

<sup>112</sup> Ayer (1936: 31-2) began his book by declaring that his views “derive from the doctrines of Bertrand Russell and Wittgenstein, which are themselves the logical outcome of the empiricism of Berkeley and Hume”. On the next page he claimed, “the philosophers with whom I am in the closest agreement are those who compose ‘the Viennese Circle’ [...] commonly known as logical positivists”.

not least through the national philosopher Johan Vilhelm Snellman (Manninen 1996: 175-248),<sup>113</sup> the vastly influential Swedish 19<sup>th</sup> century idealist, Professor of Practical philosophy 1840-1866, Christopher Jacob Boström, was conceived of as an indigenous national philosopher and was often explicitly defined in contrast to Hegelianism (Heidegren 2004: 293-315; Nordin 1981: 47-58).

Arguably, however, this must not merely be interpreted as a difference in national culture. The situation in Sweden was more like that in the greater European countries, where different intellectual and philosophical traditions and cultures were concentrated around different universities, departments and chairs. The main dividing line in the Swedish philosophical scene was between the two old universities, Uppsala and Lund (and their respective allies, Stockholm and Göteborg).<sup>114</sup> To a certain extent it is possible to interpret Lund as a “periphery” in which it was important to use foreign references as alternatives to the universalistic and hegemonic claims of the “centre” Uppsala. For example, Johan Jacob Borelius (1823-1909) had in the 19<sup>th</sup> century represented a Lundenian Hegelian opposition to the Boströmian dominance much in the same way as Petzäll tried to introduce logical empiricism as an alternative to the Hägerströmian school. On the other hand, the (comparative) internationalism of Lund must also be understood in terms of its geographical location close to Copenhagen, which made relations not only to Denmark but also to the European continent, easier and more natural than in Uppsala. In any case, it was hardly a surprise that the journal *Theoria* was founded and led by Petzäll in Göteborg and later Lund; or that Cassirer was invited to Göteborg; and that the philosophers in Lund were the first to come into contact with the logical empiricists. From this perspective, my study on “*Theoria* and Logical Empiricism” not only concerns the confrontations between Swedish intellectuals and an international philosophical movement, but also the struggles

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<sup>113</sup> Norwegian 19<sup>th</sup>-century philosophy was also largely dominated by a Hegelian, Marcus Jacob Monrad (1816-97).

<sup>114</sup> The division was, however, not without exceptions. Einar Tegen, for example, was Professor of Practical Philosophy in Lund in 1931-37 before moving over to Stockholm.

between two different academic cultures in Sweden. Petzäll's efforts to internationalise the journal were repeatedly met with resistance from the Uppsala faction in the editorial board, not least by the Uppsala philosopher Marc-Wogau (Strang II: 72-4).

## iv. Politics

### a. Philosophy and politics

It was largely the position of Uppsala philosophy in the Swedish cultural and political debates that made it so important for the younger generation. It is therefore necessary to give considerable weight to politics as an important aspect of the field in which these intellectuals manoeuvred. But if the relation between philosophy and history is complex and troublesome, the relation between philosophy and politics arguably raises even more methodological challenges. Philosophy is often conceived of as primary and sometimes even foundational to political praxis. Philosophers are pictured as visionaries that from the safe academic distance of their university offices or, perhaps, from their eremite cottages in the mountains, construe political ideologies and models that, to various degrees of success, are adopted and implemented by politicians “in real life”. Certainly, studies that discuss the *impact* of “positivistic philosophy” on 20<sup>th</sup> century society or Hägerström’s *influence* on the Swedish welfare state might certainly constitute important contributions to the current political debate.<sup>115</sup> However, as *historical* accounts they tend to be misleading, not only because they give too much weight to philosophers and their ideas – philosophers are rarely kings and the general public and politicians are often wise enough not to be too influenced by their ideas, but also, and even more importantly, because they fail to acknowledge that the philosophers themselves are participants in political life. Philosophical ideas, theories and texts are seldom intended as complete and coherent ideologies – as models applicable in any given society – but rather as contributions to particular philosophical and political debates in particular historical contexts. In this sense, the idea of the eremite philosopher is surely a misleading myth.

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<sup>115</sup> For studies that go in this direction, see e.g. Bexell 1995 and Sigurdson 2000.

It should be emphasised, again, that my intention is not to argue that the history of philosophy should be understood or studied as mere epiphenomena of economic or social structures. The claim, to repeat what has been said earlier, is not that the historical-political context *determines* the actions of the individual; instead the context should be understood as a *Spielraum* in which actors make their moves, which simultaneously constitutes a background against which their actions can be interpreted by the historian. The aim of my studies has neither been to analyse the political effects of Uppsala philosophy or logical empiricism, nor to scrutinise the relation between an alleged philosophical superstructure and a certain social-political basis. Rather, the intention has been to look at how a number of philosophers and intellectuals manoeuvred in a historical context that was largely defined by certain political challenges. This is in Kari Palonen's words to follow "the Skinnerian revolution in the study of political thought", i.e. to shift the perspective from an analysis of thoughts and theories applied to a separate sphere of politics, to an analysis of thoughts and theories as moves in the political world itself (Palonen 2003b: 3, 175). Philosophical ideas are not examined as answers to perennial philosophical problems, but as attempts to overcome challenges raised by the particular historical situation.

There are many recent studies that have with great success applied a historical-political perspective to the philosophers and philosophies of the 1930s and 40s.<sup>116</sup> For example, by turning the attention from the customary discussion of the possible influences of (mainly, Hegelian) philosophy on the politics of the Third Reich to an examination of the philosophers as actors in this turbulent political period, Hans Sluga has been able to argue that it was not so much a case of politicians making use of philosophers and philosophies, as of philosophers making use of Nazism for differ-

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<sup>116</sup> Inspiring examples of similar studies on a period preceding the 1930s are Kusch's (1995) examination of the fall of naturalistic philosophy in Germany between 1880 and 1920, and Nordin's (1998) vivid presentation of (mainly German and French) philosophers and their activities during the First World War.



ent opportunistic purposes (Sluga 1993: 15).<sup>117</sup> Moreover, as hinted above, the political perspective has also proved fruitful in the recent reassessment of logical empiricism. Many studies have emphasised the political context in which the Vienna Circle was formed – their relations to the Monists, the Freethinkers, the *Baubaus* movement, and to the labour organisations – and argued that it cannot be viewed as essentially separate from the philosophical programme of the circle.<sup>118</sup> The increasing political polarisation of Austria provides a background that cannot be overlooked when accounting for the formation of the programmatic Unity of Science movement, its interest in international collaboration, and also the hostile attitude of many logical empiricists towards what they conceived of as reactionary and metaphysical philosophies, particularly Heidegger. The political dimension of logical empiricism was also central to how the Vienna Circle was understood in its domestic context. As pointed out by Friedrich Stadler, the official organisation of the group, the *Verein Ernst Mach*, was dissolved as a Social Democratic organisation when the Austro-fascists of Engelbert Dollfuss gained power in 1934 (Stadler 2001: 61, 582). Eventually the rise of fascism and finally the *Anschluss* meant the exodus of logical empiricism from the European continent. It has even been argued that the post-war divide between analytic and continental philosophy was largely an indirect consequence of the political development around the Second World War, as most of the logical empiricists remained in the United States after the war (Collins 1998: 751-3; Simons 2001; Sluga 1993: 11; Strang I: 242-3). George Reisch, in turn, has analysed the transformation and depoliticisation of logical empiricism after the move over to the United States, particularly during the era of McCarthyism in the early Cold War period (Reisch 2005).

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<sup>117</sup> Sluga (1993: 147-8) is, however, cautious not to *reduce* philosophy to politics, as he argues that this was one of the main problems with Bourdieu's (1988) analysis of Heidegger's political ontology.

<sup>118</sup> Some significant examples of studies that have utilised a political perspective on logical empiricism are: Cartwright et al 1996; Dahms 1994; Gabriel 2004; Galison 1990; 1996; Heidelberger & Stadler (eds.) 2003; Howard 2003; Nemeth 1981; Reisch 2005; Richardson & Uebel 2007 (particularly part one); Stadler 1997; Uebel 2004; 2005.

My studies contribute to this discussion by proceeding from the idea that the relation between the Uppsala philosophers and politics should be studied not so much in terms of how much, for example, the Nordic welfare state originates in, or was influenced by, the philosophical ideas of Hägerström and Hedenius, but rather, in terms of how the actors themselves tried to make sense of their philosophy in a historical context that was largely defined by the threat of totalitarianism on the one hand, and the rise of the Swedish people's home on the other. The aim of my studies has been to read the authors in a political way, i.e. to interpret their writings as actions, or moves, in a particular political context.

It must be emphasised that not all the intellectuals examined in my studies were active in party politics. In fact, it was only Gunnar Myrdal, Herbert Tingsten and Alf Ross who were members or active supporters of the Social Democrats, and among them it was only Myrdal who can be considered to have been a leading, albeit very controversial, ideologist of the party.<sup>119</sup> By contrast, Tingsten became one of the most famous renegades of the Social Democratic party, abandoning it in 1945 and quickly establishing himself as a major critic of Social Democracy from his position as editor-in-chief of the leading liberal newspaper in Sweden, *Dagens Nyheter* (1946-59). Ross supported Social Democracy in the years that followed the Second World War, but was by no means a pivotal figure for the party (Strang IV: 58-9).<sup>120</sup> The professional philosophers discussed in my studies were even less involved in party politics. Hägerström himself had undoubtedly been sympathetic with the labour movement, although he vehemently criticised teleological elements in Marxism (Källström 1984: 101; Nordin 1983: 48-9; Sigurdson 2000: 69-70). Hedenius, in turn, swung between the

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<sup>119</sup> Bo Rothstein (2002: 206-25) has argued that Alva and Gunnar Myrdal had a rather small influence on the practical decisions in comparison to Gustav Möller, the Minister of Social Affairs (1924-26 and 1932-51). However, following Götz (2002: 37-40) the difference between the visions of Möller and the Myrdals was marginal. In any case, as public intellectuals and agenda setters, the Myrdals must be seen as very important, and their position in modern Swedish history is almost mythological.

<sup>120</sup> Some years later, in 1966, Ross also broke with Social Democracy. See e.g. Fonsmark 1990: 62-5.

Social Democrats and the Liberals (*Folkpartiet*), whom his wife represented in the municipal council (Nordin 2004b: 315). Except for their criticism of Marxism, there are few signs of political engagement in the writings of Marc-Wogau and Wedberg.

But this relative lack of party-political engagement does not mean that the philosophical and theoretical writings of these intellectuals were without political connotations. Indeed, one of the main benefits of a Skinnerian perspective on the relation between philosophy and politics is that one can avoid generalising and essentialising claims that the Uppsala School was a Social Democratic philosophy without abandoning the idea that the historical actors nevertheless conceived of their philosophical and political ambitions as intimately connected. The threat of totalitarianism and the rise of the Swedish people's home were significant aspects of the historical context even if the ambitions of the intellectuals were not explicitly party-political.

## **b. Value nihilism and politics**

It was, above all, Hägerström's value nihilistic theory that gave Uppsala philosophy its political significance. Even if, from the perspective of disciplinary philosophy, Hägerström has been portrayed as a turning point, and as the first philosopher to deny value judgements truth value altogether,<sup>121</sup> his theory must from a historical perspective be seen as a continuation of the cultural radical heritage from the 1880s (Wiklund 2006: 149-57; Östling 2008: 199-200). The value nihilistic theory was used as part of a radical and progressive cultural and political rhetoric that aimed to overcome traditional and conservative views in favour of social and political reforms (see e.g. Källström 1986: Chapters 3-5). This was undoubtedly also largely the source of the great symbolic value of Hägerström for the younger generation.

Hägerström's value theory has always been controversial. Its critics conceived of it as a culturally and politically dangerous

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<sup>121</sup> See e.g. Danielsson 1990: 13.

philosophy that undermined the conditions for a traditional and humanist morality. With the rise of totalitarianism on the European continent and eventually the Second World War, these critical voices gained strength. The value nihilistic theory was accused of preaching that everything is allowed, or of leaving people in a spiritual void which was being exploited by destructive forces (Källström 1986: 110-6; Strang IV: 38-40). Accordingly, the young generation of value nihilists found themselves in a position where the theory that they supported (and were establishing themselves as the main representatives of) was under increasing political fire. The situation prompted a reply, and it was not only a matter of finding an answer that would satisfy themselves and their critics; it was also, to a considerable extent (especially for the philosopher Hedenius), a matter of saving the reputation of Uppsala philosophy. It is important to notice that the intellectuals never seemed to consider abandoning the value nihilistic theory. Value nihilism constituted a central part of their worldview, and instead they put much effort into elaborating and redescribing it.

My studies can be said to examine three different but closely related topics that emerged from the political context of the late 1930s; “juridical rights” (Strang III), “democracy” (Strang IV), and “social engineering” (Strang V).

(1) *The problem of juridical rights* emerged largely from the legal theoretician Vilhelm Lundstedt’s extensive use of Hägerströmian slogans such as “there are no rights” and “the notion of rights is meaningless and metaphysical” for radical purposes in both scholarly and political debates during the 1920s and 30s (see e.g. Källström 1991: 14-31). This caused much frustration, not least as the legal sovereignty of the Nordic countries was under increasing threat from revolutionary political movements and also from foreign armed forces. Approaching the Second World War critics noted that the Hägerströmians, in their strict separation of law and morals, were forced to accept that the Nazi system was a “legal order” in the same way as any democratic “legal order”. To make things even worse, in 1939, in a well-written and succinct presentation of the Hägerström’s legal philosophy, the Hägerströmian disciple Olivecrona made use of the Uppsala philoso-

phical criticism of the notion of “legal rights” as part of an argument in support of the strongest power in Europe (Olivecrona 1940b: 226-9; 1940c: 195-8).<sup>122</sup> In this situation it became a pressing task for the younger generation of Uppsala philosophers not only to find a way in which totalitarian legal systems could be criticised, but also to save the notion of “legal rights” (Strang III: 68-73).

(2) This discussion was, of course, intimately connected to *the problem of justifying democracy*. Several critics claimed that there was some kind of connection between the moral “relativism” or “nihilism” of Hägerström and the rise of totalitarianism on the European continent – that value nihilism formed a theoretical foundation of the modern totalitarian states and thus it became important for the value nihilists to find ways in which democracy could be defended despite the value nihilistic theory (Strang IV).

(3) Finally, *the problem of reconciling value nihilism with a strong programme for social reform*, or social engineering, is in the present studies primarily examined as a personal struggle in the development of Gunnar Myrdal’s ideas on social engineering (Strang V). While Myrdal in the late 1920s and early 30s primarily used Hägerström and the value nihilistic theory as a critical weapon by which he unveiled the concealed political aims, “the hidden value premises”, in the theories of his scholarly opponents, it soon became apparent for him that the same arguments could be directed at his own normative programme. From 1932 onwards, Myrdal’s main methodological challenge was to elaborate ways in which the social scientist was able to propose certain political and social reforms without violating the Hägerströmian premises.

The three challenges were, of course, intimately related to each other; not only because most of the intellectuals examined in my studies were supporters of both democracy and (Social Democratic) social reforms, but also because the challenges basically concerned the same problem: how can the value nihilistic theory be combined with a strong normative political conviction and programme? If value statements cannot be true or false, how is it

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<sup>122</sup> In a subsequent pamphlet, *England eller Tyskland* (1940a), Olivecrona explicitly gave his support to Germany.

possible to justify legal rights, democracy or social reforms – indeed, how is it possible to justify anything? My studies argue that the younger generation of Uppsala philosophers looked for a solution to the challenges in two separate directions. On the one hand, they often stressed the responsibility and fate of the individual to make a personal moral decision, and in this sense they expressed an almost existentialist view on morals. On the other hand, they often seemed to argue that there was, as a matter of (empirical) fact, a strong consensus on a basic set of fundamental values and that these shared values could be taken as a starting point in an instrumental argument in favour of democracy or social engineering.

The usual response of the value nihilists to the charges that their theory, in one way or another, led to the decline of civilisation, to the rise of totalitarianism or to a practical nihilism (according to which everything is allowed), was to insist on a strict epistemological division between fact and value, between science (*vetenskap*)<sup>123</sup> and morals (*moral*). As a scientific theory on the proper analysis of moral judgement, they argued, value nihilism could not serve as a basis for any normative moral judgement, not even one that claimed that everything is allowed (e.g. Hedenius 1941: 145-6). In this connection, the younger generation, and particularly Hedenius, also distanced themselves from paragraphs in which Hägerström suggested that the value nihilistic theory would have positive emancipatory effects, and that it would lead to a more humane and understanding moral.<sup>124</sup> To follow Nordin, Hedenius reduced the significance of value nihilism, which for Hägerström had been a concern for nations and peoples, to a rather specific theory, of interest mainly to academic philosophers (Nordin 2004b: 107).

Nevertheless, the younger generation of value nihilists emphasised that the distinction between science and morals, between meaningful and meaningless sentences, was not to be understood as a claim that ethics and values were unimportant. On the contrary,

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<sup>123</sup> The Swedish word “vetenskap” is akin to the German “Wissenschaft” and is accordingly used also of the humanities and the social sciences.

<sup>124</sup> See e.g. Hägerström 1911: 63; 1934b: 92.

they were keen on stressing that the value nihilistic theory did not prevent anyone from having or expressing strong moral beliefs. “Because a point of view is a point of view and not a scientific truth, it naturally does not follow from this that one cannot have some point of view”, Ross argued in his book *Hvorfor Demokrati?* (Ross 1946: 182).<sup>125</sup> Thus, even if Ross admitted that the Nazi laws, precisely like the laws of a democratic country, formed a “legal order”, he insisted that one could, as he did, conceive of it as one’s highest moral obligation to do whatever it takes to destroy that order (Ross 1953: 44). Indeed, from the point of view of Hedenius and Ross, it was one of the main strengths of their theory that they could distinguish the fundamental and important political and moral questions, such as the one between democracy and totalitarianism, from the mere empirical and scientific questions of how a legal system is construed (Blandhol 1999: 21). From their perspective, they defended the autonomy of morality and the integrity of the individual from alleged moral authorities that by means of rational-scientific arguments tried to prove that a certain moral behaviour was correct. Everyone is free to choose his or her own values, but must also be responsible for his or her choices, they argued. On this point the value nihilists seemed, as Bo Petersson has noted, to nurse ideas parallel to contemporaneous existentialists such as Jean Paul Sartre (Petersson 2009b: 59). Indeed, Bernt Skovdal points out that one of the few times Tingsten tried to make a moral appeal for democracy, he did it by referring to Sartre and by stressing that “we are alone, and the responsibility is ours” (Skovdal 1992: 404; Tingsten 1948: 303).<sup>126</sup>

It might strike a contemporary reader as surprising that in this way the value nihilists expressed lines reminiscent of existentialism; not least as they were often rather hostile towards existentialism in their efforts to legitimise their own school of philosophy (see below: Chapter iv.c). But the connection is by no means absurd. In his examination of the circle around Arne Næss, Fredrik Thue

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<sup>125</sup> “*Fordi et Standpunkt er et Standpunkt og ikke en videnskabelig Sandhed, følger heraf naturlignvis ikke, at man ikke kan have noget Standpunkt.*” Ross emphasised the argument by printing it in italics.

<sup>126</sup> “Vi är ensamma, och ansvaret är vårt”. See also Strang IV: 49.

notes an “underlying ambivalent attraction” towards the fundamental existentialist theme of human freedom and responsibility among many of Næss’ students (Thue 2006: 411-4). Gottfried Gabriel and Thomas Mormann, in turn, have argued that Carnap’s emotivism was largely rooted in German *Lebensphilosophie*, and thus anchored in the idea that morals and politics was based on a *Lebensgefühl* rather than on scientific reasoning (Gabriel 2004; Mormann 2007).<sup>127</sup> Against this background Thomas Uebel has explicitly claimed that Carnap’s emotivism must be understood as “something of a proto-existentialism” (Uebel 2005: 764). Likewise, in his quest for British intellectuals, Stefan Collini notes that for a short period after the Second World War, the logical empiricist Ayer was actually known as one of the few people in Britain who knew something about existentialism (Collini 2006: 397-8).<sup>128</sup> Quite like the Scandinavian value nihilists, Ayer’s emotive theory led him to the conclusion that morality is ultimately something concerns the individual him- or herself. There are no authoritative answers to how people ought to live their lives; in the end each individual has an inescapable responsibility of choice. But, as pointed out by Ayer’s biographer Ben Rogers, while the absence of transcendent meanings for the existentialists was conceived of as something of a moral tragedy, it remained little but a logical necessity for Ayer (Rogers 1999: 197). A similar attitude can to a large extent be said to have characterised the Scandinavian value nihilists during the 1930s and 40s. Even if they strongly argued that moral statements cannot be true or false, none of them appeared to be concerned that this might represent an existential problem.<sup>129</sup> Quite the

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<sup>127</sup> One of the first to notice this is Næss 1965: 18.

<sup>128</sup> However, Ayer (1977: 284) strongly preferred Camus’s “...semi-philosophical essay *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* to Sartre’s very much longer and more pretentious metaphysical treatise *L’Être et le Néant* [which was] principally an exercise in the art of misusing the verb ‘to be’”.

<sup>129</sup> Thue (2006: 413-4) suggests that one reason for this might lie in the different war experiences of the French and Scandinavian scholars. While both France and Norway were occupied by the Nazis, the German occupation in Scandinavia was arguably conceived of as less precarious, agonizing, and nationally shattering than it was in France. Sweden, in turn, was never occupied.



contrary, they seemed to view it as a source for optimism; as evidence of the fact that the world is ours to make.

The existentialist response was, however, bound to be criticised as impotent when it came to the challenge of totalitarianism. According to the critics, the value nihilist appeal to the responsibility of the individual was effectively to surrender to the destructive forces at play. Another response, therefore, proceeded from the idea that people do in fact choose to endorse certain values, and that these valuations can (as empirical facts) be used as starting points in an instrumental argumentation in favour of democracy or social engineering (Strang IV: 45-7; Strang V: 168-71). Hedenius, for example, argued that the only way one could give arguments in favour of democracy was by pointing at certain features in the democratic system that one presupposes that the audience actually likes (Hedenius 1949: 210-1). Similarly, for Gunnar Myrdal, the social scientist was able propose social reforms as long as they were based upon values actually present in the society in question (see e.g. Myrdal 1930: Chapter 8; 1944: appendixes 1 & 2).

It might seem to be a rather curious idea that moral argumentation presupposes shared values (*värdegemenskap*), but as shown by Ola Sigurdson, it was actually a rather common idea among the Scandinavian value nihilists (Sigurdson 2000: 240-7). And it was by no means a Swedish curiosity. For example, Ayer also famously claimed, “argument on moral questions is only possible if some system of values is presupposed” (Ayer 1936: 111). Philosophically, the idea seems to be based on a kind of axiomatic reasoning common among many scientists and scholars during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, not least in logical empiricism (Aspelin 1935: 259; Strang V: 161-2). In 1949, Hedenius explicitly argued that all of our beliefs, theoretical as well as practical, must rest on some ultimate principles that have to be accepted without conclusive evidence. The difference between science and ethics is, Hedenius continued, merely that while the theoretical principles can be true or false (even if they cannot always be verified) the moral principles cannot (Hedenius 1949: 211-2). The idea of presupposing a set of values also seems to have been part of Hedenius’s distinction between genuine and non-genuine legal statements. As mentioned above, it was in its appeal to the presence of a genuine norm that

the non-genuine value statement acquired its meaning. This “presence” could then, in turn, be either the legal system (for legal norms) or some kind of moral community (for moral norms) (Hedenius 1941: 81).

It must also be noted that the idea that shared values is a prerequisite for democracy was also very much present in the international literature in political science. Among those referred to in Tingsten’s *Demokratiens problem* (1945), Joseph Schumpeter and Ernest Barker most explicitly stressed the need for some kind of “agreement on fundamentals”. In his influential *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* Schumpeter argued that “democracy cannot be expected to function satisfactorily unless the vast majority of people in all classes are resolved to abide by the rules of the democratic game” which, in turn, required that “they are substantially agreed on the fundamentals of their institutional structure” (Schumpeter 1942: 295, 301). Similarly, the liberal British political scientist Barker argued that democracy requires a “mental habit of agreement upon a number of axioms” concerning the democratic procedure, such as “the majority principle” and “the principle of compromise” (Barker 1942: 63-9). Clearly, there is a difference between agreeing on the principles of democracy on the one hand, and a cultural or ethical conformity or harmony on the other. But in Tingsten’s and Ross’s writings this difference was often blurred, not least when instead of “agreement on fundamentals” they wrote about “värdegemenskap”/“värdifälleskab” [value-community] (see e.g. Tingsten 1945: 65, 136; Ross 1946: 283).

Given the frequent references to this community of shared values, it is striking that the Scandinavian value nihilists seldom tried to specify the values, nor the limits of the society or culture that shared them. Among the scholars examined in my studies it was only Myrdal who made a thorough attempt at finding a way of determining the values of a particular community or culture. In the years from 1932 to 1944 he tried a wide range of solutions, from opinion polls to an eclectic cultural analysis based on interviews and central written material, such as the Constitution and canonised fiction, in order to specify the values, or “creed”, of a society (Strang V: 157-77). For most of the other intellectuals, these values were tacitly presupposed or taken as somewhat self-evident,

perhaps tailored to suit particular rhetorical or political purposes. For example, in their defence of democracy the value nihilists often appealed to a set of national or Nordic values, which was based, for example, on the idea of a Nordic democratic heritage. In my studies I argue that these arguments must be seen in connection with the form of “communitaristic” (Berman 2006) or “culturally nationalistic” (Kayser Nielsen 2004) rhetoric that characterised the political discussion in the Nordic countries during the 1930s and 40s (Strang IV: 63). However, I am not claiming that the idea of shared values was used specifically in order to promote the Social Democratic idea of a “people’s home” (*folkhemmet*). As argued above, nearly all political factions tried to claim the nation and its symbols during the 1930s, and therefore, a nationalistic or “völkish” rhetoric was as such no indication of a particular political inclination.

There was no logical conflict between the existentialist conception of morality and the idea of shared values: even if every individual is doomed to choose his or her own moral values, there can be statistical similarities within a certain domain of people. Still, there was undoubtedly a peculiar tension in the argumentation of the Scandinavian value nihilists between the idea of the autonomous individual and the idea that people share their basic values with one another. It was a tension between the unscientific acceptance that there are certain things in life that lie (and should remain) beyond the domain of science, and the scientific ambition that science should indeed be able to solve any problem.

This tension manifested itself not least in the different ways in which the value nihilistic theory was used by Myrdal and Tingsten respectively. Myrdal used the strict division between facts and values as an argument for the necessity of revealing hidden political premises in rival social scientific and economic theories. For him, it was important not to present political views as if they were scientific truths. He did not want to eradicate politics from social science; instead, he called for explicit value premises. Only in this way could social science become politically relevant (Myrdal 1930; Strang V). Tingsten used the separation between facts and values in a very different way. It was often argued, he claimed, that political ideologies cannot be criticised as they consist of values which, following Hägerström, cannot be true or false. However, Tingsten

claimed, properly analysed, (totalitarian) ideologies are not essentially characterised by their values, but by their (erroneous) factual statements regarding, for example, the differences between races, the existence of a natural law, or a teleological conception of history (Tingsten 1941c: 12; Strang IV: 50-2). That is, while Myrdal used Hågerström's theory in order to unveil valuations that were concealed as facts, Tingsten used it in order to unveil facts that were concealed as valuations. Indeed, for Myrdal, it was the values that were important, while for Tingsten it was the facts.

### **c. Politics as rhetorical struggle**

The conceptual historians that follow Skinner and Koselleck undoubtedly have an important point in claiming that political theory and intellectual history has much to gain from shifting the perspective from the attempts to give unambiguous definitions of certain political key concepts such as “freedom”, “liberty”, “democracy”, “justice”, “progress”, “the state”, “people” or “citizen”, to a study of the various meanings that different actors have given these terms in different historical contexts. This shift in perspective proceeds from the nominalistic idea that the meaning of a term is not given once for all, but that it is constantly contested and thus subject to struggles for changes and redefinitions. In the present studies, the political nature of conceptual struggles is exemplified not least in the post-war discussion of “democracy”. In this debate Ross reacted against what he conceived of as communist attempts to claim the term “democracy” by using it to denote a particular economic policy. According to Ross, the opposite of “democracy” is “autocracy”, while the opposite of “socialism” is “capitalism”, and it is possible to combine these in any way one likes. Ross's intention was, of course, to pave the way for a position that was both democratic and socialist, i.e. Social Democratic (Strang IV: 57-8).<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Doing so, he was naturally also very much concerned with arguments about the incompatibility of socialism with democracy presented at the

The intellectuals examined in my studies can certainly be seen as “innovative ideologists” in the Skinnerian sense, i.e. as actors who have striven for political change by attempting to redefine certain central political terms (Palonen 2003b: 51-6; Skinner 1988: 112; see above: 32). The value nihilistic theory itself can be interpreted as a manifest attempt to redefine a set of moral and political key concepts such as “value”, “justice”, “duty” or “right”. To deny that moral judgements can be true or false was to challenge the prevailing understanding of these terms, and as such, the value nihilistic theory served progressive political purposes.

It has become a commonplace to claim that while the Nazi experience and the Second World War in many other places prompted a revival of natural law philosophy, this was not the case in the Nordic countries (Nergelius 1996: 94-9; Skirbekk 1984: 31; Östling 2008: 181-98). However, in my study “Two Generations of Scandinavian Legal Realists” I argue that Hägerström’s legal philosophy did not go unchanged through the Second World War. With the rise of totalitarianism on the European continent, and as the legal sovereignty of the Nordic countries was threatened by foreign forces, the conceptual redescrptions proposed by orthodox Hägerströmians were often received with suspicion, particularly Lundstedt’s repeated claims that “there are no rights”. In this situation, Hedenius’s and Ross’s modification of the value nihilistic theory can be interpreted as a rhetorical move to deradicalise the Hägerströmian doctrine (Strang III: 73). Not only did Hedenius and Ross vehemently criticise the idea that value nihilism was a radical theory that would lead to a social or moral upheaval; they also attempted to provide alternative definitions of “rights”, “duties” and “justice” which were closer to public and juridical conceptions. According to Hedenius and Ross, it was perfectly sensible to continue to use these legal concepts as long as one recognised that they do not refer to something divine or metaphysical, but rather to a set of human conventions and stipulations. Moreover, even if Hedenius and Ross preserved the core of Hägerströmian radicalism – that there are no objective moral

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time by famous liberal theorists such as Hayek, whose ideas were loudly represented in a Nordic context by Tingsten. Strang IV: 58-61.

truths, that law is man-made and can be used as a vehicle for social reform – they nevertheless strongly anchored moral and political attitudes to cultural and national traditions and heritages, for example by referring to a shared Nordic democratic tradition (Strang IV: 39, 63). In this way the second generation of value nihilists represented a blend of social and political radicalism and traditional, even conservative, nationalism that can be said to have marked the rhetoric of Scandinavian and particularly Swedish Social Democracy in the 1930s (see e.g. Berggren & Trägårdh 2006: 195-226; Kayser Nielsen 2004; Trägårdh 2002).

In this connection it is interesting to note that Hedenius and Ross gave logical empiricism a different political significance than the one it had in its original Austrian context in the 1920s and 30s. In Sweden, it was the Uppsala School and particularly Hägerström that occupied the position as the rational, scientific and modernistic enlightenment philosophy. In this situation, logical empiricism could no longer be imported and presented as a radical philosophy. Instead, when Hedenius and Ross introduced logical empiricism to the Scandinavian legal discussion, they used it as an argument *against* the radicalism of Uppsala philosophy (Strang III). This shows that the context to which ideas are transferred is often of greater significance than the context from which they are adopted. However, it must also be acknowledged that by this time (the 1940s), logical empiricism was itself undergoing significant transformations as it was dispersed around the world, particularly to the United States. The Swedish appropriation of logical empiricism can undoubtedly be said to have fallen in line with the disarmament of the political aspects of the Unity of Science programme that occurred in connection with the transfer of logical empiricism to the United States in an emerging Cold War context (Howard 2003; Reisch 2005; Strang I: 245).

It is perhaps not surprising that analytic philosophy was depoliticised as it was transferred from the original context which had given rise to the political charges in the first place. On the other hand, the political disengagement of analytic philosophy can also be interpreted as a professionalisation of the philosophical discipline (Edgar 2009), and undoubtedly this was also to a large extent the way in which the young generation of Uppsala philos-

ophers conceived of it themselves. But in claiming that their own philosophical standpoint was autonomous and wholly free from any political underpinnings, rivalling philosophers were also often portrayed as politically suspicious. This was accomplished, for example, by associating them with a German intellectual tradition, preferably Hegelian idealism, i.e. by giving them what the Swedish historian Johan Östling has labelled “a secondary Nazi-stigmatisation” (Östling 2008: 116). Both Hedenius and Tingsten were active in representing German idealism as something like the ideological origin of totalitarianism, and in this task they were able to appropriate ideas from foreign philosophers and intellectuals such as Karl Popper and Friedrich Hayek (see e.g. Ers 2008: 96-110; Östling 2008: 123-34, 149-51).<sup>131</sup> Similarly, in 1945, Ross made the most of an opportunity to discredit and outmanoeuvre his older colleague Vinding Kruse by presenting the choice between legal realism and natural law philosophy as, ultimately, a choice between democracy and totalitarianism (Blandhol 1999: 121-3).

But the stigma of Nazism was not the only manner in which “the other philosophies” were discredited.<sup>132</sup> For example, in his inaugural lecture, Hedenius claimed that neo-Thomism and Marxism were popular philosophies largely only because of the support that these philosophies received from the Catholic Church and the Communist party. Existentialism, in turn, was refuted as a psychological symptom of the crisis and war on the European continent (Strang I: 263). In fact, Hedenius explicitly claimed that if philosophy was given full freedom everywhere, the philosophical tradition to which he himself subscribed, i.e. the most scientific one, would most certainly prevail (Hedenius 1948: 17-9).<sup>133</sup> In this

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<sup>131</sup> In retrospect Tingsten (1967: 389-91) has claimed that it was Hayek’s *Road to Serfdom* (1944) that made him abandon Social Democracy. Tingsten also gave an enthusiastic review of Popper’s *Open Society and its Enemies* (1945) in *Dagens Nyheter*, August 21, 1947.

<sup>132</sup> “The other philosophies” [De andra filosoferna] was Hedenius’s (1977: 33) way of denoting “...not only structuralisms, but also other existentialisms and neo-Marxisms and driveltheologies” [inte bara strukturalismer utan också andra existensialismer och nymarxismer och svammelteologier].

<sup>133</sup> Marc-Wogau contributed to the same stigmatisation in the introduction to his textbook *Att studera filosofi* (1961). Before presenting philosophy as it

way, the new Uppsala philosophy, i.e. analytic philosophy, was presented in Scandinavia as the only politically scrupulous philosophy; it was more autonomous, scientific and rational than its contenders. This depoliticisation and professionalisation of analytic philosophy was little more than the *End of Ideology* thesis without a political agenda or connotation of its own. As the other philosophies were presented as fascist or Communist, analytic philosophy emerged as the democratic alternative. Moreover, as the other philosophies were presented as German, Catholic or Soviet, analytic philosophy was both more “Swedish”, due to the Hägerströmian roots, and more “Western”, as analytic philosophy was by now emerging primarily as a British and American movement.

The making of the image of analytic philosophy as a democratic philosophy was accomplished by monopolising the figure of Hägerström, by redescribing his philosophy, and by discrediting rivalling philosophies. In hindsight, these efforts must be conceived of as successful. But the connection between analytic philosophy, logical empiricism or Uppsala philosophy and the democratic Swedish welfare state was, of course, by no means a necessary one. An important counterexample is the Finnish logical empiricist Eino Kaila, who in 1941 also claimed the political autonomy of his philosophical programme, but not in contrast to the politics of other philosophical movements, but rather, in contrast to Neurath’s increased politicisation of logical empiricism (Kaila 1941: 49; Strang I: 251).<sup>134</sup> In Sweden, Olivecrona’s book *Law as Fact* (1939) pro-

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should be studied in the chapter “Analytic philosophy” [Analytisk filosofi], Marc-Wogau made a brief settlement with philosophy as it should *not* be studied in a chapter entitled “Unscientific philosophy” [Ovetenskaplig filosofi]. This chapter had the telling subchapters “In the grip of politics. Philosophy in Soviet Russia” [I politikens våld. Filosofin i Sovjetryssland], “In the duty of religion. Neo-Thomism” [I religionens tjänst. Nythomismen], and, finally, “In the wake of the World Wars. Existentialism” [I världskrigens kölvatten. Existentialismen]. See Marc-Wogau 1961: 1-24.

<sup>134</sup> During the Second World War both Kaila and von Wright wrote supportive articles for Finland’s co-operation with Nazi Germany in the war against the Soviet Union. However, there are good reasons to interpret these publications as wartime propaganda efforts (commissioned or not), rather than as spontaneous utterances of sympathy with the Nazi regime. See Gasche & Strang 2009; Manninen 2007; Salmela 1998: 171-84.



vides an alternative form in which Hägerströmian ideas were given political significance. Whether Hägerström could have served as the anchor for a Swedish philosophy in a Nazi-dominated Europe is, of course, a matter of speculation, but it is in any case not *a priori* impossible that he could have done so.

#### **d. The politics of philosophy**

Philosophers often look upon the labels of intellectual movements, such as “idealism”, “positivism”, “existentialism” and “pragmatism” with great suspicion and sometimes even contempt. By labelling a scholar a representative of a particular philosophical or intellectual movement that person is reduced to an advocate of simplistic philosophical slogans or erroneously ascribed ideas and theories that he or she does not in fact support. Also among intellectual historians it is quite common to argue that scholarly labels are more likely to confuse than to bring clarity. A philosophical label is seen as the result of an unwarranted generalisation that blurs the ideas and theories of the historical actor and makes it utterly impossible to appreciate the originality of the individual intellectual. Countless articles and books have been written in order to revise the received view of an intellectual as belonging to a particular school or movement, and, to be sure, on closer examination almost any scholar will turn out to be something of an exception to the school that he or she is commonly regarded as a representative of.

In my studies, I have tried to take these labels seriously and to examine the rhetorical struggles involved in the formation of scholarly movements. From a conceptual history perspective, the name of a philosophical movement or school is not understood as a definite description of a certain set of philosophical doctrines, but as a contested “political” term that has been used by various actors with various intentions. There are good reasons to pay careful attention to the labels of philosophical schools and movements from this perspective, not least because they reveal how the

historical actors thought about themselves in relation to others and how they distinguished friends from enemies. From this perspective, philosophical struggles and debates have similar rhetorical features as the political ones, and in this sense, it is justified to talk about a form of “politics of philosophy”.<sup>135</sup> Just as when it is applied to political labels and terms, the nominalistic perspective is particularly rewarding when studying periods of great turbulence, for example, when opposing philosophical schools and movements are formed and defined against each other (“analytic” vs. “continental”), or when two factions of the same school dissociate and struggle for the sole right to represent the movement and its legacy (Phalénians and Hågerströmians on “Uppsala philosophy”).

The label “Uppsala philosophy” was originally a pejorative label used by Hågerström’s and Phalén’s critics. A significant example of this rhetoric was John Landquist’s pamphlet *Uppsalafilosofien och sanningen* (1929), which he wrote when Hågerström had deemed him unqualified for the Chair in Philosophy in Lund. In a very angry and dejected tone, Landquist used not only “Uppsala philosophy” (Uppsalafilosofien), “the Uppsala School” (Uppsalaskolan) and “the Uppsala thinkers” (Uppsalatänkarna) but also “the Uppsala sect” (Uppsalasekten) which he thought was threatening to take over every single philosophical chair in Sweden, thus “stifling the philosophical freedom of thought in the country” (Landquist 1929: 29).<sup>136</sup> By using the geographical name, Landquist emphasised the sectarianism and narrow-mindedness of the Uppsala philosophers, implying that they were self-satisfied, introverted, and provincial. Moreover, Landquist also depicted their philosophy as a form of “anti-metaphysical abracadabra” that was heartlessly trying to demolish morality, religion and every philosophy but their own (Landquist 1929: 29).

Understandably, perhaps, the Uppsala philosophers themselves initially disapproved of the label. In an article in the Swedish newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* (March 5, 1934), Hedenius and Wedberg responded to a criticism against “the barbaric Uppsala School”

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<sup>135</sup> For a different, but related use of “politics of philosophy”, see e.g. Palonen 2003b: 138; Pulkkinen 2003.

<sup>136</sup> “...förkväva all filosofisk tankefrihet i landet”.

raised by the famous literary critic Fredrik Böök, by claiming that there is no such thing as an Uppsala philosophy. The philosophers in Uppsala, Hedenius and Wedberg argued, did not propose any common doctrines save the call for a careful analysis of the concepts involved, and these individual philosophers could not be brushed aside by a single argument. However, later in the same debate, and as part of the struggles between the Phalénians and the Hägerströmians, Hedenius and Wedberg suddenly adopted “Uppsala philosophy” and used it as a label for their own position. They attacked their fellow Uppsala philosopher, the Hägerströmian legal scholar Lundstedt, accusing him of making illegitimate use of Hägerströmian ideas for popular and political purposes. By presenting these simplistic caricatures Lundstedt had “damaged the reputation of Uppsala philosophy far more than the antagonists Böök and Landquist” (Hedenius & Wedberg 1934).<sup>137</sup> This attempt to expel Lundstedt from the distinguished group of Uppsala philosophers provoked a reply from Hägerström himself who entered the discussion by publically sanctioning the writings of Lundstedt and by arguing that “Uppsala philosophy” should be evaluated on the basis of its arguments rather than its public reputation (Hägerström 1934a).

By now, “Uppsala philosophy” had become a positive term and a subject of internal struggles between the two different branches of the school: the Hägerströmians and the Phalénians. One of the most explicit efforts to promote Adolf Phalén as the main representative of Uppsala philosophy was the small pamphlet with the revealing title *Vad är Uppsala-filosofien?* [What is Uppsala philosophy?] by Gunnar Oxenstierna (1938). Here Phalén is hailed as the sole originator of nearly every aspect of Uppsala philosophy except the value nihilistic theory, while some early works by Hägerström were considered to have “nothing to do” with Uppsala philosophy (Oxenstierna 1938: 4).

Later, when the transformation from Uppsala philosophy to analytic philosophy was completed, the term “Uppsala philosophy”

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<sup>137</sup> “...därigenom har uppsalafilosofiens anseende skadats i långt högre grad än vad som kunnat ske genom angrepp sådana som prof. Bööks och dr Landquists”.

was mostly used to denote a past phase in the development of Swedish philosophy. By presenting it as a parallel movement to logical empiricism and the Cambridge School, Hedenius, Marc-Wogau and Wedberg gave domestic roots to the analytic tradition that they were establishing at the same time as they legitimised their own personal philosophical development from Uppsala philosophy to logical empiricism or analytic philosophy.

Another contested philosophical label was “value nihilism” which, apparently, was launched by the same Landquist in the newspaper *Aftonbladet* (May 23, 1931).<sup>138</sup> “Value nihilism” was used by Landquist as a pejorative term which implied that Hägerström’s theory entailed a practical nihilism according to which “everything is allowed”. By using “nihilism” Landquist and other critics suggested that the theory was responsible for moral degeneration and the decline of civilisation. “Value nihilism” rapidly established itself not only among the antagonists but also among neutrals, and the Hägerströmians struggled to overcome the negative connotations that it gave rise to (Strang IV: 38-40). Eventually, however, precisely like “Uppsala philosophy”, “value nihilism” became a term that its proponents would use themselves. In this connection Hedenius’s book *Om rätt och moral* (1941) marked a decisive turning point (Strang I: 261; II: 86-8; III: 69-73). Hedenius was perhaps not the first Uppsala philosopher to use the label,<sup>139</sup> but he was certainly the first to programmatically defend “value nihilism” as a philosophical position. It was a conscious rhetorical move; his motivation to use this, what he called, “totally misleading term” was partly brevity, and partly the aspiration to “wear out the dismal, but unfounded associations, that have made the word a useful weapon against Uppsala philosophy” (Hedenius 1941: 13).<sup>140</sup> It is probably safe to say that Hedenius succeeded with this ambition. There were no complaints about the terminology in the reviews of *Om rätt och*

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<sup>138</sup> According to Marc-Wogau 1968: 202.

<sup>139</sup> Wedberg (1933: 433) had used “nihilism” in a review of Ross’ book *Kritik der sogenannten praktischen Erkenntnis* already in 1933.

<sup>140</sup> “...i hoppet att genom nötning få bort de kusliga, sakligt ogrundade associationer, vilka någon gång gjort ordet i fråga användbart som tillhygge mot uppsalafilosofien”.

*moral*, and “value nihilism” quickly became a rather neutral term for the theory in Sweden.

But there are good reasons to presume that Hedenius had additional and more subtle intentions in using the term “value nihilism” in 1941. It must also be seen as a move to colonise the heritage of Hägerström and Uppsala philosophy in the ongoing struggles between the antagonistic wings of Uppsala philosophers (Strang I: 261-2). By adopting the pejorative but popular label “value nihilism”, Hedenius emerged as Hägerström’s successor and as the main proponent of value nihilism in Sweden, ahead of more doctrinal Hägerströmian scholars such as Lundstedt. Moreover, Hedenius’s use of “value nihilism” must also be seen as a move to facilitate the introduction of logical empiricism and analytic philosophy to Sweden (Strang II: 87-8). By using the familiar rhetoric of “value nihilism”, “Uppsala philosophy”, “conceptual analysis” and “scientific philosophy” Hedenius and his companions (Marc-Wogau, Wedberg and Ross) were able to blur the transformation of their ideas, from Hägerström and Phalén to the doctrines and methods of logical empiricism and analytic philosophy. It is striking that even if Hedenius and particularly Ross were clearly inspired by the tenets of logical empiricism, the labels “logical empiricism” or “logical positivism” hardly ever figured in their writings. Instead they preferred terms that served as rhetorical bridges between Uppsala philosophy and logical empiricism.

In this sense the term “analytic philosophy”, which made its international breakthrough around 1950, fitted particularly well into this Swedish and Scandinavian context (Strang I: 265). Even if the form of analysis that had been conducted by the Hägerströmians was rather different from the logical analysis of the logical empiricists, Hedenius and Ross were nevertheless able to subscribe to the rhetoric of “analytic philosophy” as a link between their Hägerströmian past and their logical empiricist present. Ross’s book *Om ret og retfærdighed* (1953), which was dedicated to Hägerström (as well as to Kelsen and the Danish legal scholar Viggo Bentzon) but was also a very consistent application of the tenets of logical empiricism (verificationism, behaviourism etc.), could hardly have been given a

more suitable subtitle than *en indførelse i den analytiske retsfilosofi* (an introduction to the analytic philosophy of law).<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> In the English translation *On Law and Justice* (1959), the subtitle was, however, dropped.

## **v. Summaries**

The five studies reprinted in this volume have not been written with the governing ambition that they would be gathered as a complete and exhaustive examination of the topic. They are intended, rather, as five separate contributions to particular discussions in different scholarly forums. As a consequence, they follow primarily the demands and requirements of their original contexts instead of the ones raised by the volume at hand. This means, for instance, that the studies overlap each other to some extent, and that there will inevitably be some repetition.<sup>142</sup> It also follows, that the methodological underpinning of the articles, as well as the general historical background of the actors, is somewhat undercommunicated. These problems have hopefully been amended by this introduction. The intention has been to write the studies in a manner that is accessible to anyone interested in the topic, regardless of scholarly background, and not least, by writing most of them in English, to communicate this interesting piece of Swedish intellectual history to a larger international audience. In what follows, I will give brief summaries of the backgrounds and aims as well as the main arguments and results of the five studies.

### **I. Arvet efter Kaila och Hägerström – den analytiska filosofin i Finland och Sverige**

The study “Arvet efter Kaila och Hägerström – den analytiska filosofin i Finland och Sverige” (The legacy of Kaila and Hägerström – analytic philosophy in Finland and Sweden) was written as a contribution to an anthology on the Finnish and Swedish reception of international philosophical movements and schools

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<sup>142</sup> Similarly, the articles also use different systems for giving references, as well as, to a certain extent, different forms of spelling due to the preferences of the editors of, and proofreaders assigned by, the different publishers.

between 1880 and 1950 (Nygård & Strang (eds.) 2006). The purpose of the book was to portray an era of great plurality in Nordic philosophy, i.e. the period between the dominance of idealistic philosophy in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and analytic philosophy during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. My task was to give an exposition of the birth of the latter hegemony.

The article makes use of conceptual history as well as a combination of comparative and transfer perspectives. The key argument is that the analytic tradition was not created by Kaila and Hägerström as is usually stated, but by their successors who canonised Kaila and Hägerström as the fathers of a tradition that they themselves were interested in representing. The structure of the article is threefold. In the first section I describe the consolidation of the analytic tradition on the international (or Anglophone) philosophical scene. A brief statistical analysis of the usage of the term “analytic philosophy” in the digital archives of JSTOR indicated that, even if “the method of analysis” had been practised by Moore and Russell since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was not until after the Second World War that the term “analytic philosophy” was established as a label for a fairly distinct philosophical movement. In this process the Cambridge School, the Vienna Circle and American pragmatism were canonised as the basic pillars of the analytic tradition.

In the second section of the article I examine the narrative of Eino Kaila as the father of the Finnish analytic tradition. Kaila visited the Vienna Circle in 1929 and 1932-34, brought logical empiricism to Finland, and provided his successors with both the theoretical means and the social contacts that enabled them to make successful careers within the analytic tradition. However, looking at Kaila’s philosophical programme it becomes evident that while he sympathised with the general aims of the logical empiricist movement of the 1920s and early 30s, he did not look kindly on its development in the 1930s and 40s. Kaila was never particularly impressed with British analytic philosophy, neither with Ayer’s version of logical empiricism, nor with the ordinary language philosophy that emerged after the Second World War. In fact, Kaila was rather suspicious of the term “analytic philosophy” as his personal ambition remained to establish a “synthetic” world



conception on the basis of the empirical sciences. But Kaila was (and is) nevertheless conceived of as the self-evident father of the Finnish analytic school that his successors (e.g. von Wright and Jaakko Hintikka) established in his name.

In the third section of the article I argue that the construction of the Swedish analytic tradition was completed by a particular branch of Uppsala philosophers (i.e. Hedenius, Marc-Wogau and Wedberg), who assumed Hägerström's mantle and used him as an anchor to which they attached the new philosophical ideas that they had imported from abroad. Over the past few decades intellectual historians have often pointed out that the story of Hägerström as the father of the Swedish analytical tradition is seriously misleading, as the philosophical tenets of Hägerström and Phalén were largely abandoned by their successors. However, in this article I argue that this perspective is hardly less misleading than the one which promotes the notion of Kaila as the father of the Finnish analytical school, or the idea that logical empiricism is the basis of analytic philosophy. The analytic tradition was created in hindsight, and the theoretical ambitions of those who were canonised as the fathers of the tradition were often downplayed or redescribed in order for the tradition to emerge.

It is the comparative perspective of this article that makes it of paramount importance for my project. The comparison to Finland points out significant differences in the way that the national analytic traditions were established, for example in terms of their relationship to logical empiricism. But even more importantly, the comparison seems to indicate a common basic structure of the establishment of the analytic tradition in Finland and Sweden. This tradition was established in hindsight by a younger generation who colonised some predecessors who they chose to present themselves as followers of. The article also contributes to the political side of my project, as Finland seems to be a case that falsifies the idea of a necessary connection between Social Democracy and logical empiricism. Already in the 1930s Kaila was rather cautious of, if not explicitly hostile to, the increased political profile of Neurath's Unity of Science programme.

## **II. *Theoria* and logical empiricism – on the tensions between the national and international in philosophy**

This article on the Swedish philosophical journal *Theoria* and logical empiricism was written, more or less, as a commissioned work on behalf of the organisers of the symposium *Networks and Transformations of Logical Empiricism: The Vienna Circle and the Nordic Countries* in Helsinki, September 2007.<sup>143</sup> My task was to examine *Theoria* as a forum for logical empiricists. The aim of the article is on the one hand to examine the role that the journal had for the logical empiricists at a time when the conditions on the European continent were rapidly deteriorating, and on the other hand to examine the appropriation and breakthrough of logical empiricism in Sweden.

The article is divided into two parts. In the first half I describe the repeated efforts of Åke Petzäll, as the editor-in-chief of *Theoria*, to internationalise the journal, and the resulting struggles in the editorial board. Petzäll invited leading representatives of different international philosophical movements to participate in the discussions in *Theoria*. But as it was only the logical empiricists who answered the call, the internationalisation of *Theoria* became intimately connected to logical empiricism. It was also often met with scepticism by the other members of the editorial board, especially by the Uppsala philosopher Konrad Marc-Wogau who argued that internationalisation should not take place at the expense of Swedish (or Nordic) contributions.

The second half of the article focuses more closely on the confrontations between Uppsala philosophy and logical empiricism in the pages of *Theoria*. While the logical empiricist Otto Neurath seemed to be interested in collaboration with the Uppsala School (although on his own terms), the Uppsala philosophers remained for some time rather hostile towards logical empiricism. In an article in 1936, Einar Tegen attacked what he conceived of as the two basic pillars of logical empiricism, logic and empiricism (Tegen 1936), and the following year Gunnar Oxenstierna was engaged in a

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<sup>143</sup> That is, Juha Manninen and Friedrich Stadler.

fierce discussion on the theory of relativity with Phillip Frank (Oxenstierna 1937; Frank 1937). Indeed, at this point in time, there was little that suggested that Uppsala philosophy and logical empiricism would soon merge and jointly form the Swedish analytic tradition. This, however, was largely the achievement of Hedenius who, after Hägerström's death in 1939, succeeded in amalgamating the traditions by on the one hand taking up Hägerström's mantle by becoming the main apostle of the value nihilistic theory, and on the other hand by gradually approaching and adopting the ideas and theories of logical empiricism. In this way Hedenius succeeded in presenting analytic philosophy as a natural continuation of the Uppsala legacy.

It is chiefly in the discussion and elaboration of different transfer strategies that the study on *Theoria* forms an essential contribution to my project. By contrasting Hedenius's strategy Petzäll's, I am able to bring out the importance of redescriptions in cultural transfers. While Petzäll's rather straightforward attempt to introduce logical empiricism to Sweden by participating in the international discussion arguably failed, Hedenius's move to anchor logical empiricism to the national tradition after Hägerström was more successful. However, Petzäll's attempts must not be seen as a complete failure. Hedenius's move would hardly have been possible without Petzäll's efforts, and thus Petzäll nevertheless succeeded both in breaking the Uppsala hegemony, and in transforming and internationalising the Swedish philosophical scene. His journal *Theoria* became a leading journal of analytic philosophy in the Nordic countries, and one of the few forums for analytic philosophy outside of the English-speaking world.

### III. Two generations of Scandinavian Legal Realists

The article on "Two generations of Scandinavian Legal Realists" was published in the Nordic journal for jurisprudence, *Retfærd*. The central claim of the article is that there are good reasons to distinguish between two generations of Scandinavian Legal Realists, which are marked by different theoretical as well as political

ambitions. While the first generation of Scandinavian Legal Realists, i.e. Lundstedt and Olivecrona, used Hägerströmian arguments to propose a radical transformation of not only the relation between law and politics, but also of the legal system as such, the second generation, i.e. Hedenius and Ross, was inspired by logical empiricism and was considerably more concerned with political continuity and democracy.

It has often been claimed that whereas the experience of Nazism prompted a revival of natural law philosophy on the European continent, the Nordic legal discourse continued its realistic-positivistic emphasis. In this article I argue that Scandinavian Legal Realism was not unaffected by the Second World War. One of the main ambitions of the second generation of Scandinavian Legal Realists was to deradicalise Hägerströmian ideas, which had become increasingly questioned due to the political situation. It was partly due to this criticism that Hedenius and Ross adopted and utilised ideas and arguments from logical empiricism and the Cambridge School. Hedenius emphasised that the meaning of a statement is not some psychological state of mind, but the facts that would make the statement true. Accordingly, he argued, a value statement could be meaningful if it referred to the actual legal system, i.e. the particular legal situation and its consequences. In a similar vein Ross argued that the term “rights” had a perfectly legitimate use in legal language despite the fact that it lacked a “semantic reference”.

This study combines cultural transfer and political perspectives. It shows Hedenius and Ross appropriated logical empiricism in a way that enabled them to use it as part of their criticism of the radicalism of the Hägerströmian doctrines. It is also important to note that even if Hedenius and Ross vehemently criticised the tenets of the first generation, they nevertheless presented their critique as if it was part of a discussion within the same scholarly community. They preserved the core of the Hägerströmian message – that the law is man-made and can be revised in any way we like, but they supplied these ideas with a new philosophical motivation adopted from logical empiricism. In this way they presented their ideas as an improved and updated version of Uppsala philosophy. They were not trying to completely disprove of Hägerström’s ideas,

rather, their ambition was to claim his legacy and change the direction of Scandinavian Legal Realism.

#### **IV. The Scandinavian value nihilists and the crisis of democracy**

The article “The Scandinavian value nihilists and the crisis of democracy” was published in the German journal *Nordeuropaforum* (2009/1). The main aim of this article is to examine how a group of Hägerströmian scholars tried to defend democracy, given their support of the non-cognitivist, emotivist value theory. This was a pressing problem for democratically minded Uppsala philosophers in the 1930s and 40s as many critics saw Hägerström and the value nihilistic theory as a symptom of the same moral and cultural nihilism and decadence that spawned the rise of totalitarianism and the Second World War.

The standard reply of the value nihilists was to emphasise the rift between science and politics. Ingemar Hedenius, for example, did his best to present the value nihilistic theory as a purely academic affair, with little or no consequences for political or cultural life in general. However, this line of argumentation gave added fuel to those critics who claimed that the value nihilists were forced into indifference with respect to the choice between democracy and totalitarianism. The value nihilists tried to counter such arguments by stressing that their theory did not imply that morality was unimportant: Alf Ross, for example, argued that even if it could not be established as a scientific truth that democracy is better than totalitarianism, the value nihilists could nevertheless conceive of it as their highest moral duty to do whatever they can to promote democracy. Herbert Tingsten’s strategy on the other hand was to hold that the democratic line in the debate was less a positive ideology than a criticism of irrational elements in other ideologies. According to Tingsten, totalitarian ideologies were not to be understood as sets of valuations, but as (erroneous) factual theories about the world, and that they, as such, could be subjected to scientific criticism.

An important result of the article is that the defences of democracy presented by the value nihilists in the 1930s and 40s seemed to involve a peculiar idea of the necessity of shared values. For Hedenius, the idea of shared values was a logical consequence of the value nihilistic theory, as moral discussions are only possible if the discussants share the same basic values. For Tingsten and Ross the idea of shared values was more of a precondition for a well-functioning democracy. It was only if the individuals in a society shared the same basic values that the minority were able to accept the decisions of the majority. However, the idea of shared values can also be interpreted in connection to the political context of the 1930s where nationalistic and “völkish” rhetoric prevailed not only within the political right wing, but also among Social Democrats, most notably through the slogan of a “people’s home” (*folkhem*).

This study on the defences of democracy forms an important part of my thesis as it examines not only how the Uppsala philosophers succeeded in overcoming the associations with fascism and Nazism, but also how they succeeded in presenting analytic philosophy as an inherently democratic philosophy. It was not only a matter of finding theoretical solutions that satisfied them as intellectuals, it was also to a considerable extent a matter of saving the reputation of the philosophical tradition that they represented.

## **V. Overcoming the rift between ‘is’ and ‘ought’ – Gunnar Myrdal and the philosophy of social engineering**

This article on Gunnar Myrdal was published in a thematic issue on “social engineering” in the journal *Ideas in History*. The aim of the article is to examine the ways in which Myrdal used Hägerström’s value nihilistic ideas in his economic, social and political thinking, i.e. as a premise in his philosophy of social engineering. Whereas the value nihilistic theory provided the young Myrdal with a powerful critical weapon that he used to expose and invalidate hidden value premises in the theories of his predecessors and scholarly rivals, it did not take long before Myrdal became painfully

aware of the problems that the theory mounted for his own political agenda. His challenge came to be to elaborate on a way in which the value nihilistic theory could be reconciled with a strong normative programme for social reform.

Myrdal's basic idea, already hinted at in 1930 but more comprehensively developed in the appendixes of *An American Dilemma* in 1944, was to establish a set of valuations that could be used in an instrumental argumentation for social reform. Myrdal argued that a normative social scientific programme had to proceed from explicit value premises anchored in the society under study. These value premises had to be explicitly accounted for in the name of scientific objectivity, i.e. in order to ensure that social science was not used as political propaganda; and they had to be anchored in the investigated society in order for the study to be of political relevance. It was especially the question of relevance that occupied Myrdal during the 1930s and 40s. He toiled hard in order to establish a way in which the actual values of a society could be determined as an empirical fact. Arguably, however, his efforts failed. He did not succeed in developing a method to establish the actual values of a society that met his own requirements. Eventually it seemed as if the same Enlightenment values were characteristic of practically any society that Myrdal studied (the United States, Sweden or South Asia), and therefore an observer could easily be led to think that Myrdal was simply promoting his own valuations.<sup>144</sup> Indeed, there remained a peculiar tension in Myrdal's writings between the idea that moral questions are ultimately a matter of personal conviction and that politics therefore cannot be reduced to science, and a rather dogmatic faith in the universal validity of the modernisation and Enlightenment values he endorsed.

This article forms an essential contribution to my project in its examination of the varying and sometimes paradoxical political uses and implications of the value nihilistic theory. One of the central arguments in the article is that the Hägerströmian claim that

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<sup>144</sup> This is arguably what Ulrich Beck (2004: 51) calls the "universalism of sameness" – the true American, Swede, and Asian share the same enlightenment values.

valuations cannot be true or false did not lead Myrdal to believe that values or politics were unimportant or to argue that these “irrational” valuations should be replaced by scientific truths. For Myrdal (as opposed to e.g. Tingsten) value nihilism was more of a defence of the autonomy and primacy of politics than a call for scientific purity. Accordingly, his main ambition in the 1930s and 40s was not so much to solve the problem of objectivity as to find a way for social science to be politically relevant.



## vi. Results

The joint aim of these studies has been to examine how a group of younger scholars colonised the legacy of Hägerström and Uppsala philosophy, and faced the challenges they met in trying to consolidate this legacy with the changing philosophical and political currents of the late 1930s and 40s.

The perspective of cultural transfers has been adopted in order to emphasise that the transformation from Uppsala philosophy to analytic philosophy was not a development that occurred in national isolation, but something that transpired in constant interaction with the international philosophical scene. The transfer perspective has been rewarding in emphasising the role of cosmopolitan and transnational actors such as Petzäll, the editor of the journal *Theoria*, who tend to be somewhat neglected in nationally centred histories. And the studies have also shown that it was by using ideas acquired from abroad that the younger generation of Uppsala philosophers was able to overcome the Hägerströmian legacy. However, a more significant result is arguably that the young generation did not intend to break completely with Hägerström; rather, what they did was to monopolise Hägerström and use him as an anchor for the new ideas that they were importing. By highlighting the move of transferring logical empiricism by anchoring it in the Uppsala tradition, I have been able to emphasise the active role of the transfer agents in redescribing not only the transferred intellectual goods, but also the national context into which the foreign ideas were introduced. In this sense, my studies contribute to the discussion of cultural transfers by stressing the importance of the context to which the ideas are transferred. From this perspective, methodological nationalism is not so much a failure to look beyond the nation, as a failure to historicise the national outlook.

The political connotations of these debates have been examined not by studying how political development in Sweden was influenced by philosophers, but by looking at the ways in which the philosophers themselves manoeuvred in this particular political

context. From this perspective, the studies have been able to show that many of the transformations and redescriptions that the younger generation employed in their appropriation of the legacy of Hägerström were prompted by political concerns. In a context defined by the rise of totalitarianism and the Second World War, it became one of the main aims of the younger generation to moderate the image of the radical and revolutionary Uppsala philosophy and to make way for a defence of, for example, juridical rights, democracy and social engineering. It is important to emphasise that the value nihilists themselves conceived of the value nihilistic theory not as a scientific philosophy by which values, morals and politics would be replaced with reason, rationality and science, but rather as a defence of an autonomous individual in the face of alleged moral authorities. On the other hand, their conceptions nevertheless also seemed to be based on an idea of shared values, akin to the “communitarian” or culturally nationalistic rhetoric of the people’s home (*folkhem*) era.

The studies presented in this volume have by no means exhausted the topic. A more complete examination would probably generate two separate monographs in which the cultural transfer and the political perspectives could respectively be more meticulously pursued. A comprehensive study on the transfer of logical empiricism to Sweden would, for instance, have to look more closely at the role that logical empiricism played in Lund during the 1930s, and especially at the relations that were established in connection with Neurath’s and Carnap’s lecture trips in Sweden and at the dialogue and confrontations in connection with the Copenhagen congress in 1936. It would also be imperative to investigate more thoroughly the intra-Nordic relations, for example, by studying the correspondences between the Swedish philosophers and Næss, Jørgensen and Kaila. A study that aimed at a more complete examination of the establishment of analytic philosophy in Sweden would, in turn, also have to look more closely at the influences from the Cambridge School.<sup>145</sup> Another crucial, but

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<sup>145</sup> In this connection a particularly interesting chapter would be C. D. Broad’s Swedish visits after the Second World War. Broad even translated

largely neglected, chapter in modern Swedish philosophy is Wedberg's study trips to the United States in 1939-43, during which he established himself as a leading scholar of formal logic, for instance by publishing regularly in the highly esteemed *Journal of Symbolic Logic*. Finally, it would also be important to pay more careful attention to those who were outmanoeuvred in the establishment of the Swedish analytic tradition, i.e. those who tried to preserve Uppsala philosophy as an indigenous Swedish philosophy, or tried to connect it to other foreign philosophical trends.

Similarly, a more thorough examination of the political undertones of Uppsala philosophy would also have to look more closely at the losers, i.e. those who strove to give Uppsala philosophy other political connotations. Furthermore, a more political study would also have to pay considerably more attention to both official political documents and the discussions in newspapers and other media. While Källström's work focuses on the 1920s and 1930s, the immediate post-war era would certainly deserve more attention. There are many topics that would be of great interest in such a study, for example, how the analytic tradition was related to and consolidated with Sweden's official politics of neutrality in the emerging Cold War.<sup>146</sup> It would also be important to examine how Hägerström's heirs related themselves to the wave of natural law philosophy on the European continent, and, for example, how they received and interpreted the United Nation's declaration of human rights. After all, even in Hedenius moderated version the notion of "rights" remained, if not plainly metaphysical, at least a highly doubtful concept. Finally, the time is certainly also ripe for a thorough historical examination of how the analytic hegemony in Sweden was challenged during the *Positivismusstreit* of the 1960s and 70s.<sup>147</sup>

On the face of it, my studies seem to have generated more questions and challenges than answers. However, this is not to say

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some of Hägerström's legal theoretical work into English, i.e Hägerström 1952.

<sup>146</sup> In this connection, the position of the NATO supporters Tingsten and Lundstedt would be of special interest.

<sup>147</sup> In the vein of Dahms 1994.

that the double perspective applied in the present studies has been worthless. On the contrary, it is only through a simultaneous study of the cultural transfer and political aspects that I have been able to show, for example, that the modernistic leftist political agenda of the Vienna Circle was largely overlooked, if not reversed, in Sweden. This might seem paradoxical, as Sweden was one of the few countries in the world actually governed by Social Democrats. One of the main reasons for this was that Hägerström and Uppsala philosophy already occupied the role of a radical and modernistic philosophy in the political and cultural debates. Thus, when the younger generation introduced logical empiricism it was actually used as an argument *against* excessive political use of Hägerström's philosophy. In this sense, the turn from Uppsala philosophy to logical empiricism fell in line with the "apolitical" analytic philosophy that emerged in the wake of logical empiricism in the United States after the Second World War.

The combination of cultural transfer and political perspectives has also generated an account on how one can study a philosophical movement, or indeed what constitutes a philosophical movement such as analytic philosophy. Many scholars have pointed to the fact that a philosophical school or movement cannot be defined by means of common philosophical doctrines, and that genealogical or sociological perspectives must be included (see e.g. Glock 2008; Sluga 1997). However, by employing a Skinnerian actor-focused perspective, my studies emphasise that philosophical movements and traditions are often consciously construed by historical actors for certain particular purposes. In the case of analytic philosophy in Sweden it was a matter of rhetorical struggles in which the actors strove to position themselves not only in relation to different contemporary and historical philosophers, but also in relation to political traditions and currents. The analytic tradition in Sweden was launched as the sole heir of the radical and progressive Uppsala School, and thereby as a continuation of the cultural radical heritage since the 1880s. But it was simultaneously also presented as an updated version that was more able to face contemporary challenges than its predecessors: less radical perhaps, but also more professional, democratic, and internationally oriented.

## References

The authors are listed alphabetically in the Swedish manner, i.e. with å, ä (æ) and ö (ø) following z. The works of the same author/editor (or group of authors/editors) are listed chronologically. I have used the original publication year even if the first edition has been inaccessible to me, and in such cases, the publication year of the edition I have used is mentioned at the end of the reference. I have not separated sources and secondary literature, as such a distinction would have been difficult to maintain due to the nature of the study.

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## **PART 2**

### **Five Studies on the Legacy of Uppsala Philosophy**

## Study I

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## Study II

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## **Study III**

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