Titles and Abstracts

Peter Simons

To Be and/or Not to Be: Metaphysical Diversity in Austrian Philosophy

Over less than two centuries, Austrian philosophers embraced an exceptional diversity of opinions about the status, method and results of metaphysical enquiry, from absolute rejection of metaphysics to its unquestioning primacy, from parsimonious nominalism to abundant platonism, from reism to *Außersein*, from physicalistic monism to Three Worlds, from metaphysics as natural science to its elimination by logico-linguistic analysis. We trace the story from Bolzano to Popper, uncovering not just the diversity but a few incidental surprises.

Maria van der Schaar

The Satz in the Tractatus

On the one hand, Wittgenstein writes that the elementary sentence *asserts* the obtaining of a state of affairs (Tr 4.21). On the other hand, assertive force should play no role in logic, for that would imply a form of psychologism (Tr 4.442). Furthermore, in order to give an account of *Modus Ponens*, there needs to be a common p in p standing alone and in $p{\rightarrow}q$. By making a distinction between mood and force, I will argue that the *Satz* in the Tractatus contains the mood, but not the actual force. It can thus be explained that the sentence *says* something, without understanding this as already involving assertive force.

Kevin Mulligan

The Essentialisms of Menger and Mises

What varieties of essentialism die Menger and Mises espouse, presuppose, employ and reject? What are the conceptual relations between them? How plausible are they ?

Olivier Massin

Kolnai's conservatism

I shall articulate the main tenets of Aurel Kolnai's conservatism and their connection with his realist axiology, paying particular attention to his views on hierarchy and his rejection of vitalism.

Johannes Brandl

The Austrian Greenhouse for Metaphilosophy

Austrian philosophy is often seen as a resistance movement: it resisted the influence of Kant and post-Kantian German idealism, and developed a strong anti-metaphysical agenda. However, these negative strands in Austrian philosophy are only the tip of a much richer and broader historical reality. I will therefore propose a new way of approaching the complex pattern of what has come to be called 'Austrian philosophy'. At its centre, I propose, we find a greenhouse in which all sorts of metaphilosophical ideas have been cultivated.

My talk will be in two parts. In the first part I will describe the metaphilosophical views of three founding fathers of Austrian philosophy: Bernard Bolzano (1781-1848), Franz Brentano (1838-1917), and Ernst Mach (1838-1916). They all had strong views about what philosophy could achieve and how it should be done, and these convictions showed little flexibility. The pattern we find here can best be described as one of partial agreement: They may hold similar views about the goals of philosophy, but disagree about its proper methods; or they may converge on a common methodology, but hold different views about the goals of philosophy.

In the second part, I will show how this pattern of partial agreement gave rise to an even richer wildlife of metaphilosophical ideas in subsequent generations, where we find Husserl and Twardowski extending the work of Bolzano and Brentano, and Wittgenstein and Schlick extending the work of Mach. If time permits, I will end my tour with a brief look at the metaphilosophical agenda of logical empiricism advocated by Neurath and Carnap, while the next generation - including Popper and Feyerabend - pushed against it.

Julia Franke-Reddig

On the Anti-Metaphysical Positions of Schlick, Neurath, and Carnap in the Vienna Circle

The Vienna Circle is widely recognized for its sustained critique of metaphysics. Yet, what precisely constitutes the shared anti-metaphysical stance among the various members of the Vienna Circle? As their philosophical positions diverge in several significant respects, so too does the Circle's critique of metaphysics.

This is particularly evident in the philosophical tensions between Moritz Schlick and Otto Neurath. Schlick had already argued a decade prior to the Circle's formal establishment that the notion of "intuitive knowledge" (intuitive Erkenntnis) constitutes a contradictio in adiecto.1 His later critiques of metaphysics are grounded in these early reflections.

Neurath approached the scientific worldview from a markedly different perspective than Schlick's more philosophical orientated view. Indeed, he went so far as to characterize Schlick himself as a metaphysical thinker.2 Carnap functioned as a mediating figure between the two, both personally and philosophically.

In this talk, I aim to outline the similarities and differences in the critiques of metaphysics advanced by these three thinkers and offer a sketch of what may still be regarded as the Vienna Circle's central objective in its opposition to metaphysics, despite internal divergences.

Wolfgang Huemer

Writing what Cannot Be Said: From Langauge Crisis to the Magic of Form

In my contribution, I will focus on two topics that traditionally come to mind when one thinks about the relation between philosophy and literature in the Austrian Traditions (mainly in the late 19th and early 20th century): the "Sprachkrise" (language crisis) and the fascination with form.

The idea that language sometimes is (or at least: can be) a most unreliable or inappropriate instrument, unable to fulfil its very function, was widespread in Vienna at the turn of the century. While some argued that language was often (but not always) used inappropriately and called for a purification and the development of more appropriate and rigorous forms of linguistic expression (Karl Kraus, Ludwig Wittgenstein, the Vienna Circle), others turned skeptical towards language as a whole, arguing that it cannot fulfill its epistemic function (Mauthner) or describing how words for them come to lose their meaning and their friction with reality (Hofmannsthal).

Both the poets and the philosophers who had voiced their concerns regarding language kept on writing, though. Wittgenstein's Tractatus logico-philosophicus is the most striking example, as he suggests in the last sentences the text that all propositions contained in it are meaningless. So why formulate them nonetheless, why write them down and publish the text?

In my paper I will argue that language crisis results from a very clear-cut (and narrow) view of the workings of language and of the relation between language and thought – a view that can have a strong fascination for intellectuals who work with and on language. Writers and philosophers who had adopted this image came to see its limits – but kept on writing nonetheless, as if they wanted to acknowledge that a diagnosis of the limits of language cannot be the last word. This resilience led to very different reactions: while Wittgenstein notoriously questioned the underlying conception of language, replacing the referential model of language with a theory that focuses on how it is used; poets like Ingeborg Bachmann, influenced by Carnap, elaborated on the saying / showing distinction, while others gave in the magic of form and explored the the limits of language. (In this last part I will focus on the Wittgenstein reading we find in authors like Ingeborg Bachmann, Thomas Bernard, Peter Handke or the members of the Wiener Gruppe)

Arkadiusz Chrudzimski

From Brentano to Husserl: Higher order intentions and higher order objects