AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

THE VIENNESE CIRCLE DOES NOT PRACTICE PHILOSOPHY

The reader may find it easier to understand the main article if I preface it by some remarks on the general nature of the views held by the Viennese Circle to which I and my friends belong.

In the first place I want to emphasize that we are not a philosophical school and that we put forward no philosophical theses whatsoever. To this the following objection will be made: You reject all philosophical schools hitherto, because you fancy your opinions are quite new; but every school shares this illusion, and you are no exception. No, there is this essential difference, must be the answer. Any new philosophical school, though it reject all previous opinions, is bound to answer the old (if perhaps better formulated) questions. But we give no answer to philosophical questions, and instead reject all philosophical questions, whether
of Metaphysics, Ethics or Epistemology. For our concern is with *Logical Analysis*. If that pursuit is still to be called Philosophy let it be so; but it involves excluding from consideration all the traditional problems of Philosophy. In origin, Philosophy included Mathematics and also, until recently, the sciences of Sociology and Psychology. At the present time, these studies have been separated from Philosophy in order to constitute independent branches of Science. Both General Logic and the Logic of Science, i.e. the Logical Analysis of scientific terms and statements, must be separated from Philosophy, in the same fashion, in order to be pursued according to an exact, non-philosophic, and scientific method. Logic is the last scientific ingredient of Philosophy; its extraction leaves behind only a confusion of non-scientific, pseudo problems.

*Metaphysicians*—whether they are supporters of Monism, Dualism or Pluralism, of Spiritualism, Materialism or some other 'ism' propound questions concerning the essence of the Universe, of the Real, of Nature, of History, etc. We supply no new answers but reject the questions
themselves as questions in appearance only.

*Epistemology* claims to be a *Theory of Knowledge*, to answer questions as to the validity of knowledge, the basis on which knowledge rests. Here again are to be found many answers from various ‘-isms’; naive and critical Realism, subjective, objective and transcendental Idealism, Solipsism, Positivism, etc., have as many different answers. We supply no new answer but reject the questions themselves since they seem to have the same character as those of Metaphysics. (The case is altered if the questions are formulated not as philosophical enquiries but as a *psychological* enquiry concerning the origin of knowledge; in the latter form the question is proper to Science and can be investigated by the empirical methods of Psychology; but such an answer has nothing to do with the philosophical theses of the -isms mentioned.) If ‘Epistemology’ is understood to denote unmetaphysical, purely logical analysis of knowledge, our work certainly falls under that classification.

*Ethics* raises the question of the basis of validity of moral standards (principles of value) and of the specification of valid norms. Answers are given
by Idealists, Utilitarians, Intuitionists, etc. Here again we reject the questions themselves in view of their metaphysical character. (The case is otherwise in psychological or sociological investigations of the actions and moral judgments of mankind; such a method is certainly both unobjectionable and scientific, but its results belong to the empirical sciences of Psychology and Sociology, not to Philosophy. It is better to avoid the term 'Ethics' for such investigation in order to avoid confusion with normative or regulative Ethics.)

As against the preceding subjects, our own field of investigation is that of Logic. Here are to be found problems of pure Logic, i.e. questions relating to the construction of a combined logical and mathematical system with the help of symbolic Logic. Further, the problems of applied Logic, or the Logic of Science, i.e. the logical analysis of terms, statements, theories, proper to the various department of science. Logical Analysis of Physics, for example, introduces the problems of Causality, of Induction, of Probability, the problem of Determinism (the latter as a question concerning the logical structure
of the system of physical laws, in divorce from all metaphysical questions and from the ethical question of freedom of will). Logical Analysis of Biology, again, involves the problems of Vitalism, to take one example (but here again in a form free from Metaphysics, viz. as a question of the logical relations between biological and physical terms or laws). In Psychology, Logical Analysis involves, among others, the so called problem of the 'relation between Body and Mind' (here also a non-metaphysical question, concerned not with the essential nature of two realms of being but with the logical relations between the terms or laws of Psychology and Physics respectively). In all empirical sciences, finally, Logical Analysis involves the problem of verification (not as a question concerning the essence of Truth, or the metaphysical basis of the validity of true statements, but as a question concerning the logical inferential relations between statements in general and so called protocol or observation statements).

In this fashion we use Logical Analysis to investigate statements of the various kinds proper to the various departments of Science. The statements of traditional
Philosophy can also be subjected to the same treatment. The result is to reveal the absence of that logical relation (of implication) to empirical statements and, in particular, to protocol statements, whose presence is a necessary condition for the verifiability of the statements in question and is therefore usually, and with justice, required in the findings of all scientific procedure. All statements belonging to Metaphysics, regulative Ethics, and (metaphysical) Epistemology have this defect, are in fact unverifiable and, therefore, unscientific. In the Viennese Circle, we are accustomed to describe such statements as nonsense (after Wittgenstein). This terminology is to be understood as implying a logical, not say a psychological, distinction; its use is intended to assert only that the statements in question do not possess a certain logical characteristic common to all proper scientific statements; we do not however intend to assert the impossibility of associating any conceptions or images with these logically invalid statements. Conceptions can be associated with any arbitrarily compounded series of words; and
metaphysical statements are richly evocative of associations and feelings both in authors and readers. It is precisely that circumstance which so hinders recognition of their non-scientific character.

In traditional Philosophy, the various views which are put forward are often mixtures of metaphysical and logical components. Hence the findings of the Logical Analysis of Science in our circle often exhibit some similarity to definite philosophic positions, especially when these are negative. Thus, e.g., our position is related to that of Positivism which, like ourselves, rejects Metaphysics and requires that every scientific statement should be based on and reducible to statements of empirical observations. On this account many (and we ourselves at times) have given our position the name of Positivism (or New Positivism or Logical Positivism). The term may be employed, provided it is understood that we agree with Positivism only in its logical components, but make no assertions as to whether the Given is real and the Physical World appearance, or vice versa; for Logical Analysis shows that such assertions belong to the class of unverifiable pseudo-statements. Our
views are related, in similar fashion, to those of Empiricism, since we follow that theory so far as to reject a priori judgments; Logical Analysis shows that every statement is either empirically verifiable (i.e. on the basis of protocol statements), analytic, or self contradictory. On this account, we have at times been classified, both by ourselves and by others, as Empiricists.

The following article is an example of the application of Logical Analysis to investigating the logical relations between the statements of Physics and those of Science in general. If its arguments are correct, all statements in Science can be translated into physical language. This thesis (termed 'Physicalism' by Neurath) is allied to that of Materialism, which respectable philosophers (at least in Germany, whether in other countries also I do not know) usually regard with abhorrence. Here again it is necessary to understand that the agreement extends only as far as the logical components of Materialism; the metaphysical components, concerned with the question of whether the essence of the world is material or spiritual, are completely excluded
from our consideration. In the final section of the article it is shown that methodical Materialism and methodical Positivism are not incompatible; in the terminology which I have been using here, this is as much as to say: the logical components of Positivism and Materialism are mutually compatible. This same example shows how great is the need for caution in classifying the opinions of the Viennese Circle under any of the old -isms. Between our view and any such traditional view there cannot be identity—but at most agreement with the logical components. For we pursue Logical Analysis, but no Philosophy.

Prague, January 1934. R. C.