

In the years preceding the Second World War, European philosophy was at the high point of its intellectual vitality. Everywhere philosophical societies promoted a dense network of connections among scholars, with international meetings and strong links among individuals and associations. In this context, the Vienna Circle emerges as one of the many, also if probably the most well-known, centres of diffusion of a new style of philosophy, closely linked to the new logic and with a strongly empiricist attitude. At the same time, empiricism, formal logic and psychology constituted (and still constitute) the common background of most of the Nordic philosophers, a background which permitted them to develop connections with Vienna's cultural environment (well known also for the work of psychologists such as Sigmund Freud, but also Charlotte and Karl Bühler). This piece of history, although limited to the connection between Nordic philosophy and Vienna Circle, helps to clarify the history of European philosophy, and the sharp difference of Nordic philosophy in respect of the development of philosophy in Southern and Central Europe in the half a century following the Second World War. The editors say in the introduction:

. . . one of the least known networks of the Vienna Circle is the "Nordic connection". This connection had a continuing influence for many of the coming decades, beginning with the earliest phase of the Vienna Circle and continuing with a number of adaptations and innovations well into contemporary times. Some of the individual members of this network are remembered, such as Georg Henrik von Wright. But little attention is now given to the fact that these individual members communicated intensively with each other as well as with the Vienna Circle and its international continuation in the Unity of Science movement.

The volume here reviewed, dedicated to Arne Naess, is intended to fill the historical gaps and provide a more complete picture of this rich network, which even the Second World War was unable to destroy. In what follows, I will not discuss the second part of the volume, which contains a paper on the unit and disunity of science by Gerard Holton and a series of reviews of relevant books on different topics related to the Vienna Circle. I will instead offer some remarks concerning the main characters of our story, that is: Eino Kaila (1890-1958), Arne Naess (1912-2009), Jørgen Jørgensen (1894-1969) and Åke Petzäll (1901-1957), who founded the Swedish Journal *Theoria*. However, instead of following the order of the individual articles, I will reconstruct the content of the volume dealing with individual countries, to see their relative contribution to the continuity of the philosophical network in the Nordic Countries.

## **From Norway to Denmark**

I begin with NORWAY, not least because the volume is dedicated to Arne Naess. Arne Naess is

a typical example of a European Intellectual of pre-war times: he studied in Paris and Oslo and went to Vienna in 1934-36 to write his dissertation on Knowledge and Scientific Behavior (published in Oslo 1936). Then he participated in the third Conference on the Unity of Science in Paris, discussing with Rudolf Carnap (1891-1970) and Otto Neurath (1882-1945) about truth. He then went on to Berkeley and returned to Oslo, where he was active in the anti-Nazi movement, and he continued to work there after the war, both as a professor and a political activist; he became a UNESCO representative in the East-West conflict, and was a promoter of the international peace movement and later of the ecological movement. Meanwhile he published frequently in *Theoria*, worked as editor of *Synthese* and founded and edited *Inquiry*. Although primarily thought of as a founding father of Norwegian philosophy, Arne Naess may be also considered as central in the development of the Social Sciences in Norway. As Fredrik W. Thue remarks in "Empiricism, Pragmatism, Behaviorism", shortly after the German invasion, Arne Naess gathered an interdisciplinary group of students to work on foundations, and, after the war, the agenda of the group changed from philosophy towards social research: Naess' epistemological program, and the experience of resistance against Fascism brought about a strong interest in the practical and normative challenges to postwar society, and an abandonment of his links with Logical Empiricism. Thue analyses Naess' influence on the organization of studies (with psychology, logic and the history of philosophy as mandatory for all university students in Norway) and his naturalistic behavioral epistemology, nearer to American sociology and antagonistic to Popper's "principles" of the Open Society. According to Naess, "Spontaneous reactions of empathy between humans presented deeper and more universal moral wellsprings than philosophical dogmas" (p.222). The paper tries to show the strong connections on the one hand between Naess and his pupils – where much space is given to Stein Rokkan (1921-1979) and his criticism of Karl Popper (1902-1994) – and on the other hand between his group and the American liberal-progressive tradition, following the path of John Dewey (1859-1952). From this connection a new attention to sociology and social reform arose.

Thue devotes too little space to exploring the links between the intellectual environment around Arne Naess and the optimistic faith that society could be improved by means of an interplay between economic growth, social welfare and political democracy. Hints about the "liberal innocence" of Naess are unfortunately not adequately explained. In any case, an anthology is unlikely to give a coherent account of the career of a complex philosopher. The idea of Naess' progressive abandonment of Logical Empiricism is rejected by another paper of the anthology, by Friedrich Stadler: "Arne Naess – Dogmas and Problems of Empiricism". According to Stadler, although Naess apparently stopped working inside the frameworks of traditional Logical Empiricism and the Unity of Science program after World War II – mainly on account of his interest in the social sciences and the ecological movement – he had kept in

continuous touch with his Logical Empiricist roots, for instance in his correspondence with Neurath (up to 1945) and with Carnap (up to 1969) and in his many papers on A. J. Ayer (1910-1989) and Paul Feyerabend (1924-1994). Although his criticism of Logical Empiricism anticipates the famous critique of Quine (1908-2000) in "Two Dogmas of Empiricism", Stadler shows how Arne Naess never abandoned Logical Empiricism as a style of thinking and, especially in his later years, returned to his former ideas. A discussion of the 10 volumes of Naess' selected works confirms the complexity of his overall philosophy. Besides, although Naess taught in Oslo, we cannot forget the relevance of the studies on Wittgenstein at the University of Bergen, which later hosted the Wittgenstein Archives.

While philosophy in Norway tended to be also closely linked to sociological studies, the role of FINLAND in the development of philosophy seems to be the most "foundational" of all other countries. Long before Arne Naess gave Norway a steady logical and empiricist foundation in philosophy, Eino Kaila was building a steady ground for cultivating analytic philosophy and logic in Finland as in Sweden and Norway. As Juha Manninen writes in the paper, "Between the Vienna Circle and Ludwig Wittgenstein. The philosophical Teachers of Georg Henrik von Wright", the logic textbook used by Kaila for many years was the *Abriss der Logistik* by Rudolf Carnap, and many books by Carnap were recommended to the students, including Henrik Von Wright (1916-2003). The curriculum included the study of Wittgenstein (1989-1951), mainly the *Tractatus*. Besides chairing a logic club with advanced students, including von Wright himself and Erik Stenius (1911-1990), Kaila influenced Swedish philosophers, criticizing their psychologism in a strong address given at the University of Uppsala. Together with Jørgen Jørgensen, he convinced the appointments committee in Oslo to give the chair of philosophy to the young Arne Naess in 1939. Actually Kaila's philosophical career began when he wrote to Hans Reichenbach (1891-1953), who suggested that he contact Moritz Schlick (1882-1936). Kaila had some correspondence with Schlick, who then asked him to come to Vienna in 1929. Kaila had already written on Schlick, Einstein and Carnap's *Aufbau*. Carnap found Kaila's criticism surprising and interesting, and over a long period the two philosophers met several times. Kaila insisted on the importance of inductive inference and probability, while Carnap was – at the time – very distant from this topic that was to become a primary concern during his last period. Perhaps it was Kaila who moved Carnap in that direction. Kaila's attention to induction culminated in his Finnish translation of Hume's *Inquiry Concerning the Human Understanding*. His critical book on Carnap's *Aufbau* was discussed in Berlin by Reichenbach and by the young Carl Hempel (1905-1997), and later in Vienna by Hans Hahn (1879-1934), Felix Kaufmann (1895-1949), Kurt Gödel (1906-1978) and Rudolf Carnap, who reviewed the book in *Erkenntnis*. Kaila went many times to Vienna and collaborated with Charlotte and Karl Bühler, defining what it is now called "the Kaila effect" – the attention area of the two eyes of a moving person from a child, who

typically did not use that area if one eye was covered. (p.58). Between psychology and logic, working on intentionality, Kaila was always critical of Carnap, since his review of Carnap's Logical Syntax; he did not completely accept physicalism and always asked for a space for a phenomenological language dealing with subjective experience.

As an historical influence, Kaila was also important for the development of the Swedish journal *Theoria*, founded in 1935. Kaila suggested that *Theoria* could take the place of *Erkenntnis*, which was in difficulty for political reasons. In fact, *Erkenntnis* lasted two more years before being provisionally closed; its contributors went mostly to the US, where they contributed to new journals, such as *Philosophy of Science* (founded in 1934) and the *Journal of Symbolic Logic* (founded in 1936). We will come back later to the history of *Theoria*.

Kaila's influence in philosophy in Finland was wide; in the book we find reference to two main figures among his students, Oiva Toivo Ketonen (1913-2000) and Georg Henrik Von Wright. Ketonen was more devoted to logic than philosophy and went in 1938 to Göttingen, where he met Heinrich Sholtz (1884-1987). In Göttingen he studied under Gerhard Gentzen (1909-1945), and then received his PhD in logic during the 1944 bombing of Helsinki. In the paper "Young Ketonen and His Supreme Logical Discover", Michael von Boguslawski suggests that the impact of the war was a reason for Ketonen to pay more attention to ethics than to philosophy of science. However his early logical work was well received: Haskell Curry (1900-1982) said that Ketonen's work, extending Gentzen's calculus, was the best thing in proof theory since Gentzen. Paul Bernays (1888-1977) and Arend Heyting (1898-1980) also appreciated his work. Ketonen remained in contact with Kaila, working on topics such as the problem of analytic and a priori knowledge.

However, the influence of Kaila was much more relevant to Georg Henrik von Wright especially at the beginning of von Wright's career, when Kaila compelled the young student to study logic and gave him English texts to read. Certainly he was also influential in von Wright's interest in induction and probability. In 1939, the year of the Russian invasion of Finland, Kaila (then in Helsinki after having taught in Turku) published his introduction to logical empiricism, *Human Knowledge*, translated into Swedish by von Wright. Despite the invasion, Finland survived as an independent democracy and was able to keep its leading scholars linked together, including a new arrival from the US, Jaakko Hintikka (1929-), described by von Wright (who had met Hintikka in Cambridge) as a "a very gifted young man". In short, as Manninen says in his paper, "there is an unbroken lineage from Kaila and the Vienna circle to present day philosophy in Finland".

More on Kaila's philosophy can be found in the papers by Ilkka Niiniluoto, "Kaila's Critique of

Vitalism”, and by Arto Siitonen, “Kaila and Reichenbach as Protagonists Of Naturphilosophie”. Hintikka, without whom it is almost impossible to speak of Finnish philosophy, gives a rather personal account of the connections between himself and Kaila in an interview in *The Philosophy of Jaakko Hintikka* (in the Library of Living Philosophers collection). Hintikka identifies Kaila as his original inspiration, discusses his connection with von Wright, and makes some remarks on Vienna Circle’s influence coming to an end (referring obviously to the original Vienna Circle project). His interviewer, Simo Knuuttila, is able to put provocative questions that evoke interesting responses on a variety of topics, including reflections on Carnap, Wittgenstein and Quine.

SWEDEN must be considered not only for those Universities — in particular Uppsala, Gotheburg and Lund — that established strong links with logical empiricism, but also as the country that produced the first Nordic philosophical journal in the analytic style: *Theoria*. The history of *Theoria* and its founder, Åke Petzäll, is well told by Johan Strang in the paper, “Between the National and the International – *Theoria* and the Logical Empiricists”. Over a long period, *Theoria* could have been described as a “journal of one man alone”; and Petzäll himself heavily influenced the general orientation of Swedish philosophy, based on a style of philosophy in the old tradition of the University of Lund – the so-called “Oxford of Sweden”.

Petzäll visited Vienna in 1932 and wrote a small book reflecting upon his conversations with Viennese philosophers, especially Friedrich Weismann. *Theoria* was launched just three years later, in 1935, becoming an important forum for the exchange of ideas and criticism between the networks of Logical Empiricism and the philosophers of the Nordic countries. By the end of the thirties *Theoria* had become closely linked with Logical Empiricism. Works by Carnap, Ayer, Hempel and Oppenheim, Popper and Tarski were typically reviewed in the journal, and many logical empiricists, like Neurath and Hempel published in it. A curiosity: the first publication of Hempel’s paradox of confirmation was in French at the request of Petzäll who wanted to promote the journal at the 9th International Congress in Philosophy in Paris (1937). Also Victor Kraft (1880-1975), a member of the Vienna Circle who was to become later the supervisor of Paul Federated (1924-1994), published on *Theoria* during a period when Petzäll sent monthly packages of food to Vienna. Unlike *Erkenntnis*, which was the official journal of Logical Empiricism, *Theoria* continued to publish papers reflecting different philosophical trends and hosted a debate between Uppsala Philosophy vs. Logical Empiricism, both of which emphasized the importance of logical analysis. Neurath had been contacted by the Danish philosopher Alf Ross (1899-1979), who had studied with Axel Hägerström (1868-1939), one of the chief representatives of the Uppsala school and influenced by neo-Kantianism. Neurath subsequently promoted the diffusion of the Uppsala antimetaphysical position. In a detailed report (pp.78-88), it is shown the development of Uppsala School: at



the beginning, one of the most relevant representatives of Uppsala School, Einar Tegen (1884-1965), presented a very antagonist stance towards Logical Empiricism, but later other scholars like Ingemar Hedenius (1908-1982), a pupil of Adolf Phalén (1884-1931), developed a more sympathetic attitude.

Traditionally Sweden had an anti-metaphysical tradition, centered mainly in the University in Uppsala; but this tradition was not intrinsically connected with the development of modern logic. Although it is normally accepted that Swedish analytic tradition was originated by Alex Hägerström, the paper of Johan Strang shows the relevance of other influences and the important role of Åke Petzäll and his efforts in the diffusion of new ideas through *Theoria*. Petzäll may also have had an indirect role in the development of formal logic, which was missing in Uppsala. But Petzäll was not only the founder of *Theoria*. A relevant part of the history of the role of Petzäll within Logical Empiricism is told by Thomas Umbel, in "The Nature and Status of Scientific Metatheory. The Debate between Otto Neurath and Åke Petzäll". In 1936 *Theoria* published a debate between Petzäll and Neurath – who wrote a review of Petzäll's *Zum Methodenproblem der Erkenntnisforschung* (1935), where the author had given a strong criticism of both the physicalistic and naturalistic trends within the Vienna Circle. One of the main worries of Petzäll was the difficulty of keeping genetic or causal and normative issues sharply distinct; their purported distinctiveness was for him a myth, just like the distinction between analytic and synthetic. Empirical and logical considerations need to find some space within which they connect or at least work together; Neurath, in his replies, eventually reached the idea of the distinction between two types of metatheory, making this debate a direct contribution to the overall debate within logical empiricism.

Another influence came from Ernst Cassirer (1874-1945), who was a refugee in Sweden, and a friend of Petzäll, and was thus "able to continue his unique neo-Kantian career and dialogue with the logical empiricists". Cassirer settled down for a time in Uppsala and, later, the University of Gothenburg created a chair for him. However, with the possibility of a German invasion of Sweden, he left for the US, where he taught until 1945. In this connection, Thomas Mormann discusses the debate in the theory of concepts between Cassirer, Schlick and the Swedish Philosopher Konrad Marc-Wogau (1902-1991), who was Professor of philosophy in Uppsala from 1946 to 1968. The debate between Cassirer, Schlick and Mar-Wogau took place mainly in *Theoria* with many papers published between 1936 and 1940. Mormann's article explores the details of this debate, explaining the criticism Marc Wogau devoted to Cassirer's theory of the formation of concepts, and defending, in the end, Cassirer's theory. The discussion supports the claim that "Begriffstheorie was a topic where philosophers of quite different orientations met. It exemplifies that once upon a time philosophers, who today are classified as belonging to allegedly quite different traditions,

were engaged in discussing similar problems.” (p.179).

DENMARK played a foundational role for Logical Empiricism in the Nordic Countries mainly through the work of Jørgen Jørgensen, who started his philosophical career with a break from neo-Kantianism that would have been critically received in Sweden. Jørgensen was important in the diffusion of the style of analytic philosophy and the strict interest in the analysis of scientific languages. He also had a promotional role in organizing the Second Congress for the Unity of Science in Copenhagen in 1936. In the paper, “Jørgen Jørgensen and Logical Positivism” Carl Henrik Koch offers a wide analysis of the work of Jørgensen, showing also the relevant connections between Jørgensen and the members of the Vienna Circle, met in 1930 at the 7th international congress of Philosophy in Oxford. After having been invited by Reichenbach in Berlin to give a lecture, Jørgensen arranged for both Carnap and Neurath to give lectures in Copenhagen. He suggested to Carnap the title of *Die Logische Syntax der Sprache*, a book that Jørgensen reviewed in *Erkenntnis*.

In the thirties Jørgensen was a full a member of the neopositivistic movement, participating to the organizing committee of the International Encyclopedia of Unified Science and being an associate editor of the Library of Unified Science (with Carnap, Frank and Morris). He had already done a profound work of reformation of the teaching of philosophy at the University of Copenhagen, where wide space was given to the science, including formal tools of logic and mathematics. He opposed Dilthey’s emphatic distinction between natural sciences and human sciences, stressing the similarity of method in both of them: the unity of science is methodological. Given these attitudes, it is easy to understand how Jørgensen’s ideas were welcomed by Neurath, who in 1938 wrote that “Jørgensen emphasises that all the complicated and most important scientific theorizing starts with the experience and language of our daily life, that we also have to test all the theoretical results of all the sciences by means of the same aids. Jørgensen gives in his lectures not only a program of the Unity of Science but also shows this Unity as an actuality”. (p.166)

## **The Netherlands and Iceland**

The Nordic countries are closely linked by history and, for all of them except Finland also by linguistic connections (and Finland even has a Swedish speaking minority). In addition, some other countries bear important similarities to the Nordic countries. The NETHERLANDS, for example, exhibits some similarities in philosophical culture, whose explanation might be of interest. Therefore, also if the anthology of northern countries does not have a space for it, some remarks may complete the landscape. It is reasonable then to devote some attention to

the development of the Signific group, one of the main factors that helped to provide some kind of common core with the Nordic countries. A discussion can be found in a paper by Ahti-Veikko Pietarinen ("Significs and the Origin of Analytic Philosophy", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 70, 2009), on which I rely in what follows.

Significs was a circle founded in 1922 by Frederick van Eeden (1860-1932), Jan Brouwer (1881-1966), Gerrit Mannoury (1867-1956) and Jacques van Ginneken (1877-1945). It was composed mainly of mathematicians with strong political interests (in socialist or communist ideas) and philosophical interests in natural language and in psychology. This last aspect is mainly due to the founder Van Eeden, who had contact with William James (1842-1910) and Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). Among those who participated in the Signific group we may mention the mathematician David Van Dantzig (1900-1959) and the journalist Jacob Israël de Haan (1881-1924), a Jewish communist who was assassinated probably for his anti-zionist stance. The connection between the Signific and the Vienna Circles were mainly through Brouwer's teacher, Gerrit Mannoury, who was in close contact with Neurath and contributed to the forums associated with the Vienna Circle and the Unity of Science movement. Although Mannoury and Brouwer had strong theoretical differences in the philosophy of mathematics, Mannoury accepted Brouwer's claim of the supremacy of intuitionistic logic in the analysis of natural language, as compared with classical logic (Frege-Peano-Russell). Brouwer himself, as is well known, gave a talk in Vienna that strongly influenced the transition to a new phase of Wittgenstein's thought. Another link was through Fredrik Waismann (1896-1959), who, together with Otto Neurath, was members of the International Group for the Study of Significs from the 1930s.

Notwithstanding the persecution of communists, most of these authors did not leave the Netherlands and represented an element of continuity in the kind of philosophical culture – with its links with the analysis of language and logic – that is still typically found in Dutch departments of philosophy and in centers like the Association for Logic, Language and Information (FOLLI). Therefore, although not, strictly speaking, "part" of the Nordic countries, the Netherlands evidently represent a historical continuity with the past of Northern Europe, continuity which – as mentioned earlier – was broken in Germany, Poland and southern Europe.

But there is still a gap in the analysis of Nordic Countries presented in the volume here discussed: what about Iceland? It is true, as Manninen and Stadler evidently assume, that there does not appear to have been any very direct or robust connection between Icelandic philosophers and the Vienna Circle. Research reveals mostly negatives, but with some relevant positives, not reported in Manninen and Stadler's volume.



The University of Iceland was founded in 1911, at which time few Icelandic scholars had philosophical training, although Guðmundur Finnbogason (1873-1944) and Ágúst H. Bjarnason (1875-1952) studied philosophy and psychology at the University of Copenhagen.

Wittgenstein visited Iceland in 1912 with his friend David Pinsent and spent much of the time instructing Pinsent in aspects of what was to become an important part of the Vienna Circle's philosophy. However, Wittgenstein did not interact with any Icelandic philosophers during his visit, or later, as far as we know.

Philosophy was not taught as a degree subject in Iceland until 1972. Prior to that, philosophy professors – the first of them being Ágúst H. Bjarnason – were, for most of the time, in charge of a course in philosophical propaedeutics, following a Norwegian model and therefore with a link to the tradition fostered by Arne Naess.

After the establishment of a B.A. degree program in philosophy at the University of Iceland in 1972 and the assumption of the professorship by the Belgian-educated Páll Skúlason (1945- ) in 1975, the Philosophy Department of the University of Iceland has grown to eight members, with interests and specializations in both Analytic and Continental philosophy, and in the history of philosophy, in a friendly mixture.

Þorsteinn Gylfason (1942-2005), who from 1972 until his death taught philosophy at the University of Iceland, was an undergraduate at Harvard and later a student of Gilbert Ryle (1900-1976) at Oxford. He was personally and philosophically acquainted with Peter Geach (1916-) and Elizabeth Anscombe (1919-2001)—both students of Wittgenstein—and with Willard van Orman Quine (1908-2000), whose thought was, as is well known, directly influenced by that of Wittgenstein. All of these philosophers paid philosophical visits to Iceland at Þorsteinn's behest and interacted with Icelandic philosophers. Þorsteinn himself taught and wrote robustly about Wittgenstein.

Mikael M. Karlsson (1943- ), who is Professor Emeritus at the University of Iceland, where he has taught for nearly 40 years was, from early in his career, an admirer of the late Wesley Salmon (1925-2001) and was Salmon's informal colleague at the University of Pittsburgh. Karlsson has taught and written about certain of Salmon's ideas. Salmon wrote his doctoral dissertation at the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1950 under Hans Reichenbach, who had founded the so-called Berlin Circle, a philosophical group whose orientation was similar to that of its Austrian counterpart; and, in many respects, Salmon continued and developed the work of Reichenbach. This is perhaps a weak, and rather indirect, link with the

Vienna Circle, but is not entirely negligible. Mikael M. Karlsson has also been heavily influenced by Quine, both through Quine's writings and through personal interaction; and he was likewise an advisee of Stephen Toulmin (1922-2009), who was influenced significantly by Wittgenstein while at Cambridge.

With these indirect links, Icelandic philosophy, too, can claim some connection with the philosophers of the Vienna Circle. The particular geographical position of Iceland, between US and Europe, is another element of the connection with analytic philosophy, although the term is not so relevant in countries where there is a continuity of philosophical tradition from the pre-war environment. The term "analytic philosophy" is not a sound category and is typically avoided in the Nordic countries and in the US, where the tradition stemming from the Vienna Circle has a strong grounding, although—as Hillary Putnam has remarked—the term may be useful in southern countries or in Central and Eastern Europe, where connections with the tradition were severed after the Second World War. These last remarks bring us to the general background behind the publication of this volume.

### **The Analytic tradition and the Continental Break**

It is well known that World War II had a disastrous impact upon the development European philosophy during the second half of the twentieth century, an impact that has lasted until today. The war destroyed the wonderful net of connections among philosophers and among other academics: the Vienna Circle, the Berlin Circle, Significs, the Peano School, and the Warsaw School interacting on the European Continent, with strong ties also to Great Britain. With these connections largely destroyed by the war, the great debates in the philosophy of logic, language and science were abandoned, and Continental philosophy became heavily pervaded by hermeneutics under the influence of Heidegger, amalgamated with remnants of Marxism and phenomenology.

Many of the best philosophers from Austria, Poland and Germany left Europe during the Nazi period and developed their careers in the United States, where their contribution to the development of American philosophy was enormous (just think of Rudolf Carnap, Kurt Gödel, Carl Hempel, Hans Reichenbach and Alfred Tarski), or alternatively in Great Britain (think of Wittgenstein, Waismann and Popper).

There was a mainstream of European philosophy that was stimulated by the discovery of the new logic and was greatly interested in the development of science. Why did the Nordic countries — in contrast to the southern countries and Central Europe — resist what may be

called “deviation” from the mainstream of European philosophy? Why was the analytic tradition that began, bloomed and expanded in pre-war Europe preserved after the war only in the Nordic countries?

The continuity with the analytic tradition in philosophical research and teaching in the Nordic countries is no longer a mystery, given the detailed history of the influential philosophical figures in Norway, Finland, Sweden, Denmark in the post-war period presented in this anthology. Part of the reason for the continuity and robustness of the “Nordic circle” of philosophy is simply the fact that Nordic philosophers did not abandon Europe and kept the links among themselves alive within the Nordic sphere, while central and Southern Europe, deprived of many of their best philosophers, abandoned the neopositivist tradition, and the analytic style connected with it, and probably threw out the baby with the bath water.

The concentration of the present book on the specific relations of the Nordic countries with the Vienna Circle runs the risk of lapsing into an historical survey of old theories and missing the general framework which developed from the lively connections among European philosophical centers. I think there is a way of reading this book not only for the purpose of registering the links with the Vienna Circle, but to better understand the uniqueness of the contemporary Nordic tradition in philosophy as compared with other parts of Europe. The close and direct connections between Vienna Circle and some of the founders of philosophy in the Nordic countries help us to better understand the reasons for the continuity of philosophical tradition that came to link the Nordic countries more closely to American philosophy than to Continental philosophy so-called, although in fact there is nothing more “Continental” than analytic philosophy. The book reveals hidden connections, is full of details and quotations from personal communications and theoretical debates and helps us to understand the absolutely unique situation of philosophy in the Nordic countries after the Second World War, as compared with other parts of Europe. The anthology therefore represent part of a wider history of philosophy in Europe and gives Nordic countries a primacy of continuity of the European philosophical tradition in contrast to the “deviation” of the Continental philosophy (I refer to the thesis of Tugendhat, according to whom analytic philosophy is the proper heir of the great tradition of philosophy since Aristotle). But, due also to the return of the old traditions implanted in the US, the analytic style of philosophy is now coming back to its original home; and it is reassuring to see that not only central Europe and Eastern Europe, but also Southern countries, under the initiative of European Society for Analytic Philosophy, are beginning to recover their connections with the great European tradition, through a series of meetings devoted to fostering analytic philosophy – These are called “Latin Meetings in Analytic Philosophy”. This “Southern circle” recalls the tradition of meetings within the Nordic sphere that played an important role in the past and that have

continued, and developed, up to the present day.

It looks as if “Mediterranean” Europe is “recovering” from a long period of philosophical turmoil and is ready to re-build and reinforce its broken connections with the past, following the example of the Nordic countries.