Geltung
Revista de Estudos das Origens da Filosofia Contemporânea

Revista de Estudos das Origens da Filosofia Contemporânea
Journal of Studies on the Origins of Contemporary Philosophy

Geltung, vol. 2, n. 2, 2022, p. 1-40 | e66032
ISNN: 2764-0892

https://doi.org/10.23925/2764-0892.2024.v2.n2.e66032

ANOTHER WAY OF PARTING: HORKHEIMER, SCHLICK, BERGSON

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ABSTRACT

Despite its formative influence on the subsequent emergence of a supposed 'divide' between 'analytic' and 'continental' philosophy, the clash between the phenomenological tradition and early analytic philosophy is only a small part of a much broader, complex, and multi-faceted 'parting of the ways' between various strands of interwar Germanophone philosophy. It was certainly more than two parties that parted their ways. As Friedman (2000) rightly saw, this 'parting' was indeed largely an outcome of the post-war context of Neo-Kantianism's 'decline'. The ensuing power vacuum generated clashes between multiple philosophical tendencies vying for the institutionally dominant position previously occupied by the Neo-Kantian schools. This power-struggle included, apart from Cassirer's last stance in defence of Neo-Kantianism, not only the Logical Empiricists and the various offshoots of the Phenomenological tradition, but also *Lebensphilosophie*, Philosophical Anthropology, and the Frankfurt School. This paper will trace a path through some of the tendencies involved in the abovementioned 'parting of the ways', in an effort to bring some of them back into dialogue. I will focus on exploring one specific facet of Horkheimer's account of the 'parting of the ways', namely his critique of the notion of givenness. The overall goal of the paper will be to set up a dialogue between three parting ways towards givenness: Horkheimer's polemic against the Logical Empiricist myth of the given, Schlick's polemic against the Bergsonian myth of the given, and the Bergsonian methodology of intuition.

KEYWORDS

LOGICAL EMPIRICISM. CRITICAL THEORY. LEBENSPHILOSOPHIE. HENRI BERGSON. MAX HORKHEIMER. MORITZ SCHLICK

INTRODUCTION[1]

The image of a "parting of the ways" has been conjured on multiple occasions in different attempts to characterise some purported state of division within twentieth-century philosophy. As early as 1915, Bertrand Russell had talked of a divide between the "analytic" type of philosophy practiced by G. E. Moore and himself, and a "synthetic" mode of philosophising he proclaims to be characteristic of continental figures like Henri Bergson and Karin Costelloe-Stephen.[2] This long predates Georges Bataille's 1951 proclamation, in response to his discussion with A.J. Ayer and Merleau-Ponty, that an "abyss" ([1951] 1986, p. 80) separates Anglophone analytic philosophy from its French and German counterparts (VRAHIMIS, 2013a, p. 87-88; 2013b, p. 1-2, 11-13).

Michael Dummett (1993) made one of the earliest scholarly efforts to directly challenge the veracity of this image by pointing to the common origins of "continental" and "analytic" philosophy. Instead of a wide gulf, Dummett depicted a gradual separation proceeding from a historical position of proximity. Like "the Rhine and the Danube" (1993, p. 26), two currents start off "quite close to one another […] only to diverge in utterly different directions and flow into different seas" (1993, p. 26). Focusing on the similarities between Frege and Husserl, Dummett thus saw the purported analytic-continental divide through the lens of a narrower gradual divergence between early analytic philosophy and the phenomenological tradition.

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[1]This paper was first presented at a conference titled 'Teilung der Wege?: Gründungskonstellationen von Kritischer Theorie, Philosophischer Anthropologie und Logischem Empirismus im Kontext der 1920er und 1930er Jahre', held at the University of Jena on March 21, 2021. I am very grateful to the organisers, and to all those who contributed to the discussion after the presentation, especially Thomas Uebel, Hans-Joachim Dahms, and Christian Damböck. I am furthermore grateful to Carl Sachs for his comments on an early draft of the paper. A German translation of the paper is to be published alongside the conference's proceedings in Christoph Demmerling, Christian Damböck, Max Beck, Nicholas Coomann (Eds), *Kritische Theorie, Philosophische Anthropologie, Logischer Empirismus: Philosophische Innovationen im Ausgang der 1920er Jahre*, Basel: Schwabe Verlag 2024.

[2] Russell's 1915 verbal declaration of this view in response to Costelloe-Stephen is recorded in Anonymous (1915, p. 419), and later developed in writing in Russell ([1922] 1988, p. 406); see Vrahimis (2020a, 839-842; 2022a, p. 185-189).

Historical examination of what lies between these poles has further nuanced Dummett's image. In Michael Friedman's (2000) account, Neo-Kantianism is shown to have occupied the middle ground between analytic philosophy and phenomenology at around the time their divergence began to widen. Contrary to Dummett's diagnosis, it is not Frege and Husserl's eventual differences concerning the linguistic turn that is identified as the root cause of division. Instead, Friedman presents the ensuing "parting of the ways" in light of the decline of Neo-Kantianism from its dominant position within Germanophone academic philosophy, with rival approaches struggling to replace it. Friedman presents two main rival claimants to Neo-Kantianism's throne: Heidegger's existential phenomenology on one side and the Vienna Circle's logical empiricism on the other. Despite his expansion of Dummett's opposition between two traditions only, Friedman thus still ends up with an image of the "parting of the ways" as an event that primarily concerns a dispute between analytic philosophers and phenomenologists.

Despite its formative influence on the subsequent emergence of a supposed "divide" between "analytic" and "continental" philosophy, this squabble between the phenomenological tradition and a faction within early analytic philosophy (if, indeed, one chooses to view Germanophone Logical Empiricism thus) is only a small part of a much broader, complex, and multi-faceted "parting of the ways" between various strands of interwar Germanophone philosophy. It was certainly more than two parties that parted their ways. As Friedman rightly saw, this "parting" was indeed largely an outcome of the post-war context of Neo-Kantianism's "decline". Even if Neo-Kantianism was not exactly a uniform movement, its various representatives held the reigns in Wilhelmine academic philosophy. The ensuing power vacuum generated clashes between multiple philosophical tendencies vying for the institutionally dominant position previously occupied by the Neo-Kantian schools. Friedman only accounts for part of the relevant philosophical controversy in his reconstruction of the relations between Cassirer, Heidegger,

and Carnap. The larger picture of this power-struggle would include, apart from Cassirer's last stance in defence of Neo-Kantianism, not only the Logical Empiricists (represented in Friedman's account by Carnap) and the various offshoots of the Phenomenological tradition (including Heidegger's peculiar synthesis of this tradition with some of its rivals), but also *Lebensphilosophie* and the connected tradition of Philosophical Anthropology, as well as the Frankfurt School.

It is notable that, while playing a part in these philosophical controversies, the Frankfurt School was also active in generating the abovementioned image of Germanophone interwar philosophy. In fact, the story of a controversy between multiple contenders for the power-gap left by the demise of Neo-Kantianism is recounted in some of the founding documents for the Frankfurt School's Critical Theory. In Adorno's 1931 inaugural address at the University of Frankfurt, he sets out an outline of his contemporary philosophy as a response to the "crisis of idealism" (1977, p. 120) that led to the "disintegration of idealist systems" (p. 121). The schools responding to Neo-Kantianism's demise, in Adorno's view, are *Lebensphilosophie* (p. 121), various strands of Phenomenology (p. 121-124), Logical Empiricism, and the Frankfurt School. A variant of this story is repeated in various writings by Max Horkheimer, chief among them his 1937 polemic against Logical Empiricism, titled "The Latest Attack on Metaphysics". Horkheimer there depicts "postwar" (p. 139) Germanophone philosophy as divided between metaphysical schools, including the "antiscientific view[s of …] romantic spiritualism, *Lebensphilosophie*, and material and existential phenomenology" (1972a, p. 136), on the one hand, and the purportedly anti-metaphysical "*Szientivismus*" of the Logical Empiricists. Horkheimer's diagnosis of the division was itself also an extension of his own refusal to proceed with the projected collaboration between the Frankfurt School and the Vienna Circle. In the Frankfurt School's conjuring of an image of a "parting of the ways" between multiple traditions,

the image itself thus became part of the polemical discourse through which the division it aims to describe was enacted.

This paper will trace a path through some of the tendencies involved in the abovementioned "parting of the ways", in an effort to bring some of them back into dialogue. I will focus on exploring one specific facet of Horkheimer's account of the "parting of the ways", namely his critique of the notion of givenness. Examining Horkheimer's problematic objection against what he presents as a naïve conception of givenness at work in Logical Empiricism requires that we navigate multiple traditions parting ways during the interwar period. I will therefore venture to set up counterpoints between Horkheimer's general attack against the Vienna Circle, and Moritz Schlick's earlier critique of Henri Bergson's method of intuition and its accompanying account of the philosophical significance of the given (or more specifically, in Bergson's well-known verbiage, the "données immédiates de la conscience"). As we shall see, Bergson was not only a common reference point for both Schlick's attack against intuition and Horkheimer's attack against givenness, but also a formative influence on the traditions of Lebensphilosophie and Philosophical Anthropology. Thus the overall goal of the paper will be to set up a dialogue between three parting ways towards givenness: Horkheimer's polemic against the Logical Empiricist myth of the given, Schlick's polemic against the Bergsonian myth of the given, and the Bergsonian methodology of intuition (a central influence on Lebensphilosophie and Philosophical Anthropology).

There already exists a significant scholarly output examining the failed attempt at collaboration between the Frankfurt School and the Vienna Circle, which constitutes the backdrop against which Horkheimer's polemic opposing Logical Empiricism was produced. The relevant scholarship has argued that Horkheimer's polemic clearly missed the mark when it comes to some of the views developed within the so-called "left-wing" of the Vienna Circle. Dahms (1994, p. 69-96) has shown that it was Otto Neurath who headed the Vienna Circle's effort to collaborate with the Frankfurt School, an effort which resulted

in Horkheimer's polemic. Neurath even wrote a conciliatory response to Horkheimer, though this has until recently remained unpublished (partly due to Horkheimer's refusal to publish it in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*).[3] As O'Neill and Uebel (2004) have demonstrated, Neurath had been in a particularly good position to establish a dialogue between Critical Theory and the Vienna Circle's so-called "left wing".

Moritz Schlick, chairman of the *Verein Ernst Mach*, was perhaps the leading representative of the Circle's "right-wing". He notoriously refused to officially implicate the society in a political agenda. Vainly protesting against Dollfuss' 1934 ban of the *Verein*, Schlick downplayed its association with Otto Bauer's Social Democratic Party, emphasising its purely scientific and "absolutely unpolitical" (STADLER, 1992, p. 376) status (STADLER, 1992, p. 375-377). This may appear to justify, at least in part, some of Horkheimer's polemical assertions concerning the complicity of "positivism" with authoritarianism. Of course, Horkheimer was unfair in directing this criticism against the Vienna Circle's "left-wing", who neither approved Schlick's effort to appease the Austrofascists (which Neurath decried as a betrayal, siding "with Dollfuss and against the Unity of Science" (quoted in STADLER, 1992, p. 376)), nor shared his apolitical vision for the Circle (STADLER, 1992, p. 376-377).

The relation between the Frankfurt School and the Vienna Circle's "left-wing" has been adequately discussed in the scholarly literature (DAHMS, 1994; BOWIE, 2000; O'NEILL and UEBEL, 2004; WHEATLAND, 2009, p. 115-121; REYNOLDS and CHASE, 2010, p. 31-34; SAMIOS, 2012; TURNER and FACTOR, 2014, p. 224-225); JOSEPHSON-STORM, 2017, p. 241-245; ALBRECHT, 2023); I will not here endeavour to again go into further detail on this specific matter.[4] What I will investigate, instead, is one possibly unintended side-effect of this scholarly discussion, namely the implication that Horkheimer's overall critique of givenness is nonetheless more aptly applicable

[3] In 2011, the reply was published in English (NEURATH, 2011a) and Greek (NEURATH, 2011b) translations. In 2023, the original was published in Albrecht (2023, p. 265-283).
[4] I discuss this topic at greater length in Vrahimis (2020b; 2022b).

to the Vienna Circle's "right-wing", and particularly to Schlick. In what follows, I endeavour to question this hypothesis by turning to an early episode in the development of the Vienna Circle's critique of metaphysics, namely Schlick's objections against granting intuition the status of theoretical knowledge. As I will proceed to demonstrate, Horkheimer's criticism of their common appeal to givenness explicitly equates "positivism" with precisely the Bergsonian metaphysics of intuition targeted at first by Schlick's attack, and later by multiple Logical Empiricists. Even if Schlick did indeed uphold a variant of the value-free idea of scientific knowledge, Horkheimer's criticism is thus misdirected when it connects value-freedom with a notion of givenness that Schlick vehemently rejected.

Schlick's attack against Henri Bergson's account of intuition began in early writings from the 1910s, at a time when Bergson was a kind of international celebrity not just in the academic world, but also in the public sphere. Turning back to Schlick's early criticisms of Bergsonian intuition allows us to trace the beginnings of the parting of the ways between multiple currents within Germanophone philosophy, involving not only the eventual clash between Logical Empiricism and Critical Theory, but also various other traditions that were centrally influenced by Bergsonian accounts of intuition, including Philosophical Anthropology and its origins within Lebensphilosophie.

2. SCHELER ON BERGSON AND *LEBENSPHILOSOPHIE*

That Bergson's work became a seminal influence on both Germanophone *Lebensphilosophie*, and on the overlapping tradition of Philosophical Anthropology, is a relatively uncontroversial claim that I will not here elaborately attempt to substantiate.[5] To illustrate Bergson's influence, I will instead briefly mention an important work by Max Scheler, a figure centrally involved in the founding of both *Lebensphilosophie* and Philosophical

[5] Recently, Zanfi (2023) has traced the significance of Bergson's instrumentalism for later discussions within Philosophical Anthropology.

Anthropology. Scheler's (1913) article "Versuche einer Philosophie des Lebens" presented Bergson not only as heralding the call for a new *Lebensphilosophie* (alongside Dilthey and Nietzsche), but also as a vehement critic of certain tendencies which he describes under the banner of "positivism" (VRAHIMIS, (2022a, p. 233-237). Scheler's Bergson is not only an overall opponent of positivism, but also a critic of certain scientific doctrines, such as mechanistic explanations, or associationist psychology and its application to sociology. Scheler's paper thus contributed to generating a Germanophone caricature of Bergson that would be largely responsible for the selective assimilation of his views into some of the irrationalist discourse that subsequently went under the banner of *Lebensphilosophie* (MIDGLEY, 2012; ZANFI, 2013).

The Schelerian interpretation of Bergson as a *Lebensphilosoph* hostile to the Scientific World-Conception would motivate the Logical Empiricists' multiple attacks against his account of intuition (VRAHIMIS, 2022a, p. 238-239). In 1913, the same year as Scheler's paper was published, Schlick produced the first in a series of criticisms of Bergson's conception of intuition. As we shall see in section 4.1., in Schlick's critique we find a portrayal of Bergson that is akin to Scheler's: Bergson is an anti-positivist, critical of his contemporaries' efforts for a rapprochement between science and philosophy. After Schlick's early criticisms, Bergson continued to be a central target of more generalised attacks against metaphysics by the Vienna Circle. These attacks escalate during the 1920s, near the time when Bergson engaged in his infamous and oft-misunderstood clash with Einstein.[6] Bergson's name was directly cited, usually as that of an exemplary misguided metaphysician, by several key Vienna Circle publications (SCHLICK, [1926] 1979; 1938, p. 191-197; 1987, p. 71, 73-74; CARNAP, [1928] 2003, p. 295; [1931] 1959, p. 80; 1935, p. 16; FRANK, [1932] 1988, e.g. 93-94, 117; 2021, p. 110-114; WAISMANN, [1939] 1977, p. 92-93; FEIGL, 1981, p. 349, 359), where he is most constantly attacked for upholding a

[6] For an overview of the multiple sides involved in this clash, see Canales (2015).

confused account of intuitive knowledge.[7] Metaphysical doctrines like Bergson's method of intuition are said to remain in "the area of the nonrational" (CARNAP [1929] 2003, p. 295), and are at best "to be valued, not as truths, but as works of art" (SCHLICK [1926] 1979, p. 111). This targeting of Bergson remains centre-stage until the early 1930s, when Carnap ([1931] 1959) famously switches to Heidegger as a preferable, and perhaps more apt, target of the onslaught against metaphysics.

This is precisely the point where our account of a different "parting of the ways" intersects with Friedman's (2000). Long before the dispute between Cassirer and Heidegger at Davos, Bergson's method of intuition was attacked by the Logical Empiricists as metaphysical nonsense. Onward from Friedman's cut-off point, Horkheimer's attack against Logical Empiricism was largely a response to Carnap's attack against Heidegger (though, at Adorno's instigation, Horkheimer refuses to explicitly refer to the name "Heidegger") (DAHMS, 1994, p. 95).

As we shall see in what follows, Horkheimer appears to be unaware of the fact that Heidegger's name had replaced Bergson's in being targeted by the Logical Empiricist attempt to overcome metaphysics. Even if apparently unaware of the explicit attacks against Bergson, Horkheimer does acknowledge that Logical Empiricism and Bergsonian *Lebensphilosophie* stand on opposite poles of interwar Germanophone philosophy. In this, Scheler's account of Bergson as a *Lebensphilosoph* seems to have at least partly influenced Horkheimer (e.g. 1993a, p. 202; 1993b, p. 224). This is evidenced e.g. by Horkheimer's (1993b, p. 221) later discussion of Scheler's 1913 triumvirate of Nietzsche, Dilthey, and Bergson as progenitors of *Lebensphilosophie*. Horkheimer also adds Scheler to this list. He does so in accusing all the aforementioned Lebensphilosophen of upholding similar forms of irrationalism.[8]

[7] The Vienna Circle's manifesto attacks metaphysical appeals to intuition (Carnap, Hahn, NEURATH [1929] 1973, p. 308-309) without directly naming Bergson as a culprit.

[8] Horkheimer (1993b, p. 221) nonetheless distinguishes these progenitors from subsequent, more reactionary, forms of irrationalism. Horkheimer (1972b, p. 255) also critically highlights

Even if Horkheimer sees Bergson's metaphysical irrationalism as dialectically opposed to "positivism", he also asserts that some fundamental similarities underlie their purported enmity. Thus he indirectly contests Scheler's account by detecting affinities between Bergson and "positivism". In this, Horkheimer may have been somewhat fairer to Bergson than Scheler was. As Bergson himself highlights, he began his career as a disciple of Herbert Spencer,[9] and was heavily influenced by Ravaisson's call for a "spiritualist positivism", itself indebted to the later Comte's vitalistic approach to biology.[10] In Horkheimer's view, "if Bergson had not taken over the pragmatically restricted concept of science from Comte, it would be impossible to understand the need for a separate, supplementary, vitalistic metaphysics" (1993a, p. 196).

Thus Horkheimer sees Bergson as attempting to delimit the relativistic consequences of a pragmatic, instrumentalist account of science by supplementing it with a non-relativistic, disinterested metaphysics of intuition.[11] While so far Horkheimer's diagnosis is roughly correct, he may exaggerate the separability between science and Bergsonian metaphysics. Contrary to various popular caricatures of his views, Bergson's philosophical outlook is best understood as a type of "biological epistemology" drawing heavily from and responding to various contemporary scientific developments (ČAPEK, 1971). Indeed, while Bergson often appears to promulgate the strict methodological division of philosophy from science, he also explicitly emphasises a view of the continuity between philosophy and science, the

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Bergson's and Scheler's common emphasis on the method of intuition (despite the latter's criticisms of Bergson's variant of this method as psychologistic). Stirk (1992, p. 43-44) further points out parallels between Horkheimer's arguments against Bergson's and Scheler's accounts of temporality in relation to history.

Adorno mirrors Horkheimer in seeing 'irrationalism' as dialectically opposed to 'positivism'; see Foster (2007, p. 28).

[9] Horkheimer (2005, p. 10) acknowledges this.

[10] See Čapek (1971, p. 30-39); Sinclair (2019, p. 9-12, 202-204). Before the term had been applied to the Vienna Circle, one of Bergson's very few disciples, Édouard Le Roy, even named his outlook 'neo-positivism'.

[11] A similar account was later defended by Čapek (1971).

former presupposing the results of the latter.[12] Thus, at least *prima facie*, Horkheimer had some justification for taking the metaphysics of intuition found in Bergson to be in some of its essential features in agreement with "positivism".

3. HORKHEIMER ON BERGSON AND POSITIVISM

3.1. MYSTICISM

Many of the problems faced by Horkheimer's account result from his unhelpfully broad, and perhaps even vague, use of the term "positivism" to cover a variety of diverse positions. The 1937 paper is a continuation of a series of earlier criticisms of what Horkheimer calls "positivism", a term which he employs in criticising the work of Comte, Mill, Mach, Russell, Wittgenstein, and the Vienna Circle (STIRK, 1992, p. 51-57). After the 1930s, he and other Frankfurt School members continued to apply the term to other strands of analytic philosophy, and also to Pragmatism (DAHMS, 1994). In broadening the scope of attacks against "positivism", Horkheimer and Adorno ([1947] 1972) notoriously end up identifying "positivism" with roughly everything they think to be objectionable about the Enlightenment. These developments ultimately shaped the "Positivismusstreit" between the Critical Theorists and Popperians in the 1960s (DAHMS, 1994). The more the Critical Theorists' accusations against "positivism" become generalised, the more difficult it becomes to make out the accused. What remains relatively stable throughout Horkheimer's various vague uses of the term "positivism" is its rough equivalence with an Enlightened championing of science's propensity to disenchant that unwittingly goes awry. During the 1930s, the culprits for this error have a name: the Vienna Circle. Horkheimer accuses the Vienna Circle of closely resembling one of their most prominent opponents, i.e. Bergson.

[12] Horkheimer (2005, p. 15) notes Bergson's later concessions to natural science, but argues that they sit uneasily with his earlier more critical attitudes.

As already noted, Horkheimer's 1937 depiction of the state of interwar Germanophone philosophy sets up a dialectical opposition between "antiscientific" (p. 136) metaphysics and scientistic "positivism". According to Horkheimer, interwar metaphysical currents were "an outgrowth of religion" (1972a, p. 136-137), and should be understood as reactionary forms of resistance against the disenchantment of the world effected by scientific advances. "Positivism", by contrast, purports to *champion* this disenchantment. Part of Horkheimer's strategy against "positivism" will involve accusing its proponents of buying into even more extreme variants of superstition than the metaphysicians.

Horkheimer takes it to be uncontroversial that the raison d'être for modern metaphysics (from Descartes onwards) is to maintain superstitions in the face of scientific disenchantment. As evidence for his view, he cites the defence of occult phenomena, such as telepathy (HORKHEIMER, 1972c, p. 41), which one finds in the writings of Bergson and Hans Driesch. Both Bergson and Driesch could at the time have plausibly appeared as polar opposites to the Vienna Circle's Enlightened, anti-metaphysical, "Scientific World-Conception". As already noted, Bergson had been a central target of the Vienna Circle's attack against metaphysics during the 1920s. In Germanophone debates, Driesch was commonly misrepresented as a disciple of Bergson (HERRING, 2022, p. 321, 326; ZANFI, 2013, p. 141-147; 2022, p. 310), and his vitalism and holism were subsequently attacked by the Vienna Circle (HARRINGTON, 1996, p. 191-192; CHEN, 2019; VAN STRIEN, 2022, e.g. 376-377).

One might thus expect these figures to stand opposed to the "positivistic" championing of disenchantment. Yet, surprisingly, Horkheimer purports to detect similar tendencies in the "positivist" opponents of metaphysics. Horkheimer (p. 41-42) compares Bergsonian mysticism with what he takes to be an equally superstitious reverence for "the mystical" that he discovers in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* – which he insists is "otherwise first-rate"

(p. 41).[13] Horkheimer here appears to have been completely unaware that Wittgenstein's attitude towards "the mystical" was something that separated him from the Vienna Circle, and that set Wittgenstein clearly apart from the "positivistic" tendencies that Horkheimer sought to criticise.[14] Writing in 1933, and with apparently little familiarity with the tradition that he is criticising, Horkheimer may perhaps be excusable for having misidentified Wittgenstein's position with the views developed by "the disciples of Comte, especially the empirico-criticists and the logical positivists" (p. 41).[15] It is, however, largely due to his inadequate distinction between Comtean positivism, Machean empiriocriticism, Wittgenstein, and Logical Empiricism, that Horkheimer's attack against an unrecognisable "positivist" strawman, purportedly upholding a myth of the given, is ultimately not compelling.

3.2. GIVENNESS, PSEUDO-PROBLEMS, AND THE DEPRECIATION OF THEORY

In Horkheimer's view, both Bergson and "positivism" naïvely assume that it is possible to attain absolute knowledge of facts given in sensation.[16] Horkheimer's 1937 attack against the Vienna Circle's variant of the myth of the given is well-rehearsed in the relevant literature, and I will only summarily

[13] Horkheimer here conveniently ignores the multiple analytic criticisms (e.g. by Russell and Stebbing) directed specifically against Bergson's mysticism; see Vrahimis (2022a).

[14] The breakdown of Wittgenstein's relations with Carnap and others in the Vienna Circle was partly due to his disapproval of their interest in parapsychological research; see Josephson-Storm (2017, p. 261-267). Even if the Vienna Circle's interest in parapsychology was primarily directed towards debunking claims about supernatural phenomena, taking a scientific stance towards the cases they examined entailed that they remained open to the possibility that some claims were authentic. Horkheimer could therefore have cited *both* the Vienna Circle members' interest in parapsychology, and Wittgenstein's decrying thereof, as evidence for his thesis that in both cases some form of superstition is maintained.

[15] Adorno's (e.g. 1993, p. 101-102; cf. [1966] 1973, p. 9, 403; see also Foster (2007, p. 31-56); Josephson-Storm (2017, p. 243-244)) later insistence on interpreting Wittgenstein as a positivist is clearly less excusable.

[16] The same position is maintained much later by Adorno, who claims that 'Bergson's bearings, like those of his positivistic arch-enemies, came from the *données immédiates de la conscience*' ([1966] 1973, p. 9), characterising Bergson's viewpoint as a failed 'attempt to break out of idealism' (p. 9).

present it here.[17] He takes "positivism" to task for failing to comprehend that the given is necessarily constituted and conditioned by social praxis. "Positivism" thus fails to acknowledge the value-laden, and furthermore historically situated, nature of the given. On these grounds, Horkheimer dismisses as naïve the view that givenness can play the role of a value-free foundation for all subsequent theoretical knowledge. The task of Critical Theory, instead, is to investigate the social praxis that conditions givenness. This task appears to require of the critical theorist that they transgress the Logical Empiricists' strictures concerning the limits of theoretical knowledge, so as to somehow probe *beyond* the given in order to understand what conditions it. In Horkheimer's view, the Logical Empiricists do not permit this move, as they restrict all knowledge only to what is ultimately reducible to empirically given data.[18] He expressly admits that this empiricist stricture was utilised as a tool in a struggle against those metaphysical tendencies that during the interwar had been aligned with authoritarian politics, and thus "the neopositivist mode of thought attracts wide circles opposed to fascism" (HORKHEIMER, 1972a, p. 139). Nonetheless, Horkheimer polemically counterpoises that positivist strictures also undercut other, more efficient, struggles against such authoritarian tendencies: "Hopelessly confusing the fronts, they stigmatize everyone as metaphysician or poet, no matter whether he turns things into their opposites or calls a spade a spade" (HORKHEIMER, p. 186).

His central relevant example is the Frankfurt School's own anti-authoritarian activities. Horkheimer even polemically asserts that a naïve adherence to the myth of a value-free given is itself a form of collusion with

[17] For more extended discussions, see e.g. Dahms (1994), O'Neill and Uebel (2004), Samios (2012); Vrahimis (2020b).

[18] In reply, Neurath (2011a) will contest Horkheimer's position, acknowledging that there is a place for a kind of reflective critical theory within the bounds set up by Logical Empiricism and its aspiration towards a Unified Science.

authoritarianism, especially insofar as it prohibits the emergence of a Critical Theory that seeks to go beyond positivist strictures.

Horkheimer directs a similar line of criticism against Bergson. He explicitly links the two targets of his attack when he understands Bergson's emphasis on the immediate givenness of knowledge acquired through intuition to be "a result of positivist philosophy" (HORKHEIMER, 1972c, p. 39). Horkheimer's claims about Bergson's alignment with "positivism" seem to be intended as a form of critical accusation, or a supposedly surprising unveiling of the similar bourgeois sensibilities and superstitions at work behind both these attitudes, commonly assumed to be in conflict. As already noted, despite the Logical Empiricists' attacks against Bergson, Horkheimer is certainly justified in detecting an affinity between certain historical variants of positivism and the development of Bergson's "biological realism" (as Horkheimer (2005, p. 15) elsewhere characterises it).

Nonetheless, while Horkheimer may have been correct in drawing broad parallels between Bergson and what he calls "positivism", the details of Horkheimer's criticism completely miss the mark. Horkheimer argues that "positivism" (a term he again employs here without qualification) is in some respects indistinguishable from "a metaphysics of intuition" (1972c, p. 39). According to Horkheimer, the two doctrines are indistinguishable insofar as they adhere to "the doctrine of an immediate datum which is verified by intuition" (p. 40).[19] As Horkheimer explains, both "positivism" and Bergson's "intuitionism" uphold "the subjectivist claim that immediate primary data, unaffected by any theory, are true reality" (p. 40).[20] As we shall see in what follows, while such a charge of subjectivism may be applicable to the Bergsonian method of intuition (and, as I have shown elsewhere, was indeed

[19] Horkheimer (1972c, p. 40; cf. STIRK (1992, p. 55)) also notes that this doctrine is generally adhered to by *Lebensphilosophie* (though the term is misleadingly translated into English as 'vitalism' (HORKHEIMER, 1972c, 40)).

[20] Adorno too will later accuse Bergson, alongside Husserl, of remaining 'within the range of immanent subjectivity' ([1966] 1973, p. 9).

applied against it by several analytic philosophers), it would be clearly erroneous to also generally apply it to Logical Empiricism.

Horkheimer's joint attack against Bergson and "positivism" further addresses an attitude, connected to upholding the myth of the given, which he characterises as "the depreciation of theoretical thinking" (1972c, p. 39). He argues that both "positivism" and metaphysical "intuitionism" impose restrictions on theoretical speculation by appealing to the given.[21] In the case of the Vienna Circle, this clearly refers to their overt attempt to limit the scope of theoretical debate in philosophy, rejecting a range of statements as meaningless and thereby giving rise to pseudo-problems. While Horkheimer does not adequately clarify this, a similar, though less widely known, stance is also found in the work of Bergson.[22] Like the Logical Empiricists, Bergson places great emphasis on the rejection of several philosophical problems as "pseudo-problems". In Bergson's account, pseudo-problems arise from a mismatch between our concepts and the given contents of our experience. At first glance, this thesis may appear to resemble a variant of the usual caricature of Logical Empiricism's verificationism, since in both cases theoretical speculation is restricted by appeal to the given. Even in their choice of exemplary metaphysical "pseudo-problems", Bergson appears to be in agreement with Carnap: both direct their objections against the metaphysical notion of nothingness. Bergson famously rejects "nothingness" as a "pseudo-idea" that does not correspond to any possible experience. Similarly, Carnap ([1931] 1959) famously argues that Heidegger's utterances about "the nothing" are meaningless pseudo-statements. Despite the similarities that appear at first glance, however, Bergson's critique of pseudo-problems is less restrictive than subsequent Logical Empiricist attacks against metaphysics. Indeed, by contrast

[21] Horkheimer's example of the common deprecation of theoretical reflection by both Bergson and 'positivism' is that of their attempt 'to limit any theory of rational prevision' (1972c, p. 40); he does not further clarify this point.

[22] This approach to the critique of pseudo-problems was further developed by Karin Costelloe-Stephen (STEPHEN, 1922, p. 72-73).

to the Logical Empiricists, Bergson rejects particular pseudo-problems primarily in defending his own *metaphysical* system, and has no aspiration towards an overall overcoming of metaphysics. Thus, though Horkheimer is right in seeing that Bergson and Logical Empiricism share the common feature of appealing to the given in rejecting pseudo-problems, the directions towards which this strategy leads are very different in either case.

3.3. CONTINUITY AND DISCRETENESS

We have hitherto examined problems that emerge from Horkheimer's over-eagerness to identify the two *prima facie* opposed currents of Bergsonism and Logical Empiricism. A further problematic feature of Horkheimer's comparison concerns the differences it sets up between the two positions. Horkheimer concedes that Bergson and the "positivists" fundamentally differ when it comes to their account of the nature of the datum with which we are immediately acquainted. In Horkheimer's account, the "positivists" hold that what is given to intuition is "made up of discrete and detached elements" (HORKHEIMER, 1972c, p. 40). By contrast, Bergson argues that the "données immédiates de la conscience" arrived at by intuition are a qualitative multiplicity, i.e. a continuous flux consisting of interpenetrated qualities.

The above distinction gives rise to another problem resulting from Horkheimer's vague use of the term "positivism": it remains unclear who the "positivists" upholding this doctrine of the nature of sense-data are supposed to be. Horkheimer's text (p. 39-43) initially mentions Comte but, as already noted, soon proceeds to direct its polemic against Mach, Wittgenstein, and Logical Empiricism, all of whom are dubbed "positivists". Horkheimer's proposed opposition between two types of immediately known data – continuous and discrete – may indeed be applicable to some historical variants of what he calls "positivist" philosophy. However, as I will proceed to

demonstrate, it directly contradicts some of the central tenets upheld by the key proponents of Logical Empiricism, especially in their attacks against Bergson.

Horkheimer's distinction perhaps most aptly characterises the opposition between Russell and Bergson. As demonstrated, for example, in the work of Karin Costelloe-Stephen (COSTELLOE, 1914), Russell and Bergson can both be understood as advocates of immediate knowledge by acquaintance who disagree precisely as to the nature (continuous or not) of the data provided by acquaintance (VRAHIMIS, 2020a). By contrast, despite their high esteem for Russell, the leading members of the Vienna Circle centrally rejected his view that there can be such a thing as knowledge by acquaintance (CREATH, 1992). Indeed, though Bergson was the initial target of Schlick's onslaught against "intuitive knowledge", in some of his later writings Schlick (e.g. 1938, p. 190) explicitly admits that his criticisms must also apply against Russell. Contrary to Horkheimer's claim, the disagreement between Bergson and the "positivists" in question is not one concerning the qualitative or quantitative nature of the given, but whether the given can ever be directly *known*. Schlick's answer was a resounding "no".

4. SCHLICK AGAINST INTUITIVE KNOWLEDGE

4.1. SCHLICK AND SCHELER'S ANTI-POSITIVISTIC INTERPRETATION OF BERGSON

Horkheimer makes no mention (and was possibly unaware) of the multiple aforementioned attacks, initially by Schlick ([1913] 1979), and later by other Vienna Circle members, against the Bergsonian metaphysics of intuition. This is among the most crucial blind-spots in Horkheimer's critique of the myth of the given, rendering his target into a strawman that little resembles Logical Empiricism (though it does indeed resemble earlier forms of nineteenth-century positivism). As early as 1913, Schlick's "Is there Intuitive Knowledge?" directed

its criticism specifically against Bergson's account of a metaphysical method of intuition that leads to an immediate knowledge of the given.

Schlick's framing of his attack notably parallels Scheler's heralding of Bergson's influence on *Lebensphilosophie*, published in the same year. Schlick and Scheler alike stand in sharp contrast to Horkheimer's later acknowledgement that Bergson's method of intuition is somehow an outgrowth of "positivism". On the contrary, Schlick understood the emphasis on intuition found in Bergson (alongside William James and Edmund Husserl) to be characteristic of the resurgence of an early nineteenth-century tendency to split apart philosophy and science. In this, Schlick was clearly influenced by Bergson's Germanophone reception as a Lebensphilosoph (especially around the circle of Rudolf Eucken, to which Scheler belonged) (MIDGLEY, 2012; ZANFI, 2013; 2022). It is possible that this influence came directly from Scheler's 1913 article (though I am unable here to provide the requisite evidence). As already noted, in Scheler's portrayal Bergson is set alongside Nietzsche and Dilthey as critics of positivism and thus precursors of *Lebensphilosophie*. I have argued elsewhere that Schlick vehemently rejected this portrayal of Nietzsche, insisting instead on interpreting him as a positivist critic of metaphysics (VRAHIMIS, 2020c; 2022c). Nevertheless, when it came to Bergson, Schlick, by contrast to Horkheimer, bought into the Schelerian anti-positivistic interpretation of his outlook.

In 1913, Schlick claims that Bergson was a metaphysician characteristically opposed to a contemporary attempt at a "rapprochement between philosophy and science" (1913/1979, p. 141). Schlick characterises this project as follows:

> In solving their own problems, the scientists were moving into epistemological and thus into philosophical territory, and the philosophers were recognising the fruitlessness of all pure speculation that did not rest wholly and solely on the findings and methods of positive science. (p. 141)

In the above dichotomy, Schlick explicitly sides with those who seek to bring philosophy even closer to scientific territory, and attacks Bergson for opposing this tendency.

However, as briefly noted already, Bergson's overall "biological realism" could more correctly be understood as a step towards the same general direction that Schlick applauded and sided with. Bergson explicitly acknowledged the reliance of his philosophical views on scientific advances in evolutionary biology. In this, interestingly, Bergson quite closely resembles Schlick's outlook, especially in his 1908 book *Lebensweisheit*, which develops an evolutionary biological account of epistemology, ethics, and aesthetics. In sharp contrast to Horkheimer (2005, p. 10), who does explicitly acknowledge that Bergson made significant contributions to biology and psychology, Schlick fails to mention Bergson's own espousal of the project of bringing philosophy and science into close dialogue.

Even so, Scheler's influential portrayal of Bergson as an anti-positivist *Lebensphilosoph* approximates Schlick's view of Bergson (and also James and Husserl) as re-forging the 19th century rift between philosophy and science. While Schlick's verdict against Bergson's deprecation of scientific knowledge may be questionable, it is indeed apt if applied against some of Bergson's *Lebensphilosophisch* followers in the Germanophone world. Even if the blame may not be fairly attributed to Bergson, what Schlick could already clearly see in 1913 was a parting of the ways between those who sought to bring philosophy closer to science and those who sought to set the two apart.

4.2. THE GIVEN AS HERACLITEAN FLUX

Schlick's failure to address the affinity between Bergson's philosophy and contemporary developments in biology is also partly explainable, and perhaps excusable, as a by-product of the very narrow aim of Schlick's criticism. His emphasis on one specific doctrine advocated, among others, by

Bergson helps to deflect attention from other affinities between the two philosophers and their similar responses to evolutionary biology.

The single aspect of Bergson's philosophical methodology that Schlick focuses his criticism onto is the claim that intuition is a type of knowledge. Beginning in 1913 and continuing throughout his subsequent work, Schlick categorically denies that intuition is a type of knowledge. In Schlick's view, the very idea of "intuitive knowledge" is a *contradictio in adjecto*. From this contradiction stem numerous forms of "great errors" committed by multiple philosophers. The quintessential exemplar of this type of error is exhibited, Schlick asserts, in Bergson's method of intuition as a form of direct knowledge of the given.

In 1913, the main question Schlick answers (in the negative) is whether any type of direct epistemic access to the given is possible. Schlick understands Bergson as proposing that intuition is a method that grants the philosopher direct *knowledge* of the given. He acknowledges that Bergson understands the given, i.e. what we come to be acquainted with *via* intuition, as a kind of Heraclitean flux, and more specifically as a continuous qualitative stream of "Erlebnisse" (SCHLICK, [1913] 1979, p. 143). Insofar as the continuous and qualitative nature of the given is concerned, Schlick is in direct agreement with Bergson: the Heraclitean flux is "most indubitably real" (SCHLICK, p. 143).

The early (pre-positivist) Schlick's position here already constitutes an overt counter-example to Horkheimer's aforementioned depiction of the disagreement between "positivism" and Bergson's "intuitionism". As we saw, Horkheimer had claimed that the main difference between "positivism" in general and Bergsonian intuition concerns their conceptions of givenness as quantitative and discrete, in the former case, and qualitative and continuous, in the latter. Contrary to Horkheimer's suggestion, the early Schlick explicitly defended a more or less Bergsonian view of what is given in lived experience, which he characterised as a Heraclitean flux, a continuous fleeting stream of qualities.

While in 1913 Schlick does not mention his agreement with Bergson concerning the qualitative nature of the stream of lived experience, his position is manifestly clear in the psychological analyses later presented in *General Theory of Knowledge*. It is precisely this upholding of the qualitative nature of lived experience that provides one of Schlick's main reasons for discounting the epistemic status of intuition (CRAWFORD, 2021). Schlick ([1918/1925] 1974) argues that there can be no firm *knowledge* of the ever-changing qualities given in lived experience. As we shall see, he argues that knowledge is a term inapplicable to the qualitative flux of experience, since it can only concern quantities and their relations. Proper epistemic status is thus, in Schlick's view, strictly speaking only attributable to quantitative conceptual knowledge.

Of common concern to Bergson and Schlick is the question whether it is possible to employ discrete, quantitative concepts in order to describe a flux that is qualitative and therefore "does not admit of absolutely sharp boundaries" (SCHLICK, [1918/1925] 1974, p. 144). The two have somewhat conflicting answers to the question. Bergson criticises the applicability of concepts to lived experience, employing his well-known arguments against any possible spatialisation of the wholly temporal *durée* that constitutes the given (SINCLAIR, 2019, p. 40-57). In Bergson's view, the human intellect is a practical tool, and a product of evolutionary processes (SINCLAIR, 2019, p. 116-117, 166-171). Though practically expedient, the intellect's application of inherently spatialised concepts is no more than a distortion of the temporal reality that is given in experience. Thus, though Bergson allows that quantitative conceptual knowledge may be practically instrumental, he maintains that it is an insufficient guide to the ultimate nature of reality. Intellectual knowledge must, in Bergson's view, be supplemented by a type of direct grasping of the given, which goes by the name of intuition (SINCLAIR, 2019, p. 158-166). Bergson thus argues that appeals to intuition allow philosophers to avoid a variety of pseudo-problems and category mistakes that ensue from inadequately attending to the given.

Contrary to Bergson, Schlick offers a series of arguments against the idea that quantitative forms of conceptual knowledge are inevitably nothing more than *distortions* of the qualitative flux given in experience (CRAWFORD, 2021). In Schlick's view, once the two are adequately set apart, it is possible for discrete concepts to be applied onto "continuous structures" ([1918/1925] 1974, p. 145) without ensuing distortions. Numerical concepts, for example, are unproblematically applicable in the measurement of physical objects, which are continuous structures. In this case, Schlick proposes a distinction between the accuracy and the correctness of measurements that allows one to address the discrepancy between discreteness and continuity (FRIEDMAN, 1983, p. 505). Schlick concedes that the demand for absolute accuracy in discrete measurements of continua must be abandoned. So far, he agrees with Bergson: applying discrete concepts onto continuous structures will commonly result in inaccuracies. Insofar as it is discrete, the concept must selectively omit some element of the continuous structure. This claim must nonetheless be distinguished from the further claim that, because the concept is inaccurate, it must be false – a claim which Schlick rejects. The correctness or falseness of a measurement does not depend on its degree of accuracy or precision. For example, "it is absolutely correct to say that people have two ears or two legs; it is not simply inaccurate but utterly nonsensical to say that a person has 2.002 ears" (SCHLICK, [1918/1925] 1974, p. 146).

Thus, a measurement to a high degree of precision can be false. Analogously, a relatively imprecise measurement can nonetheless be correct. A measurement's degree of precision does not correspond to its falsity or correctness.

A case analogous to measurement is that of the relation between the continuous stream of consciousness and discrete mental states (CRAWFORD, 2021). Discrete mental states are always encountered within this continuous flux. As Schlick (p. 146-147) points out, the discrete states may be generated from the continuum, but this does not entail the *falsification* of every discrete

mental state. In fact, once abstracted from the processes in which they are given, the relations between discrete mental states can be considered completely independently from their source. Similarly to the case of measurement, discrete mental states are not *falsifications* of the stream of consciousness – a continuous process – from which they are cut off. In other words, Schlick takes it that appropriately differentiated discrete mental states can be detached from the continuous flux of lived experience, and put into logical relations with other discrete mental states. The "exact logic of thinking" (p. 146), which relies on discrete mental states, is therefore not tantamount to a mere distortion of the continuous stream of our consciousness. In Schlick's view, given our ability to cut off discrete mental states from continuous *Erlebnis*, we can move even further towards absolute detachment from the content of our experience by formulating conventionally defined discrete concepts that are completely cut off from any relation to intuition.[23]

In this way, Schlick combines an acknowledgement of the reality of what is given in the qualitative flux of lived experience with the assertion that the quantitative methods of mathematics and science can provide us with a stable form of knowledge. Schlick agrees with Bergson that this conceptual form of knowledge (which Bergson also characterises as "intellectual") fundamentally differs from the qualitative flux of *Erlebnis*, insofar as it is quantitative in character. Yet, in Schlick's view, conceptual knowledge need not be measured by its accuracy in relation to the continuous flux of our lived experience. Contra Bergson, Schlick argues that its inaccuracy as a complete description of the given would in no way *falsify* theoretical knowledge. Bergson commits the error of seeing conceptual knowledge as an unavoidably inaccurate, incomplete, distorted, and therefore falsified, by-product of the continuous stream of consciousness. But, as Schlick argues, these flaws (inaccuracy, incompleteness)

[23] If it is to have explanatory power, any scientific abstract conceptual scheme will ultimately have to be somehow co-ordinated with reality; see Ryckman (1991). Schlick's early form of realism generated a series of problems that eventually forced him to revise it; see e.g. Lewis (1990); Uebel (2007).

characterising the relation between our concepts and our lived experience do not necessarily entail that all our concepts amount to falsified experiences. Neither does the origin of conceptual thinking in a continuous stream entail its logical dependence upon it. On the contrary, our discrete concepts can be formulated in such a way as to become completely detached from the continuity with which we are acquainted.

Schlick takes Bergson to uphold the view that conceptual knowledge results from an effort to quantify the qualitative flux that inevitably distorts it by selectively ignoring some of its unquantifiable aspects. In Schlick's eyes, upholding this thesis is what renders Bergson an enemy of the aforementioned rapprochement between philosophy and science. Bergson, according to Schlick, implausibly claims "that quantitative, mathematical methods provide only a falsified knowledge" ([1913] 1979, p. 143). Schlick (p. 142-143) therefore portrays Bergson as reintroducing an unwarranted division between science, that deals with quantified, and thus falsified, abstractions, and philosophy, whose metaphysical method of intuition grants access to purportedly direct knowledge of the given without such distortions and falsifications. The resulting deprecation of quantitative scientific methods is, in Schlick's verdict, an indication that Bergson's approach is the wrong way to set up the relation between the qualitative character of lived experience and the quantitative methods of conceptual knowledge.

4.3. BERGSON'S GREAT ERROR

A greater error underlies Bergson's misconception of this relation. Schlick argues that Bergson's more fundamental mistake, like those committed by an array of other philosophers, lies in his mischaracterisation of acquaintance as a form of *knowledge*. According to Schlick, Bergson not only takes acquaintance's epistemic status for granted, but also appears to defend the further view that intuition provides us with a form of knowledge that is

somehow superior to and "more perfect" (SCHLICK, [1918/1925] 1974, p. 82) than "falsified" ([1913] 1979, p. 143), because quantitative, conceptual knowledge. Schlick thinks that the latter view hinges on the former. In order to deny the veracity of conceptual knowledge, Bergson must presume that there can somehow be a form of direct epistemic access to the qualitative Heraclitean flux that is the given. Direct knowledge of the given is thus presumed to be epistemically prior to all conceptual knowledge.[24]

In his characterisation of the form this epistemic access takes, Schlick ([1913] 1979) takes Bergson to have revived a medieval mystical idea: as far as direct knowledge of the given is concerned, the knower and the known must become one. In different publications, Schlick vacillates in his interpretation of Bergson's relation to the medieval mystics. In 1913 he simply asserts that Bergson and the mystics state the same thing. In later rearticulations, Schlick ([1918/1925] 1974, p. 81) differentiates between the complete identification of knower and known proclaimed by mysticism, and the Bergsonian view of intuition as "an exceptionally close relation between subject and object" (p. 81) in which "the known entity appears to move into the knowing consciousness" (p. 81). Among the array of philosophers who fall into this error, including Husserl (p. 82), Descartes (p. 85-86), Brentano (p. 86-88), and Kant (p. 88-89), Bergson nonetheless remains closest to the mystical desideratum of complete identification, insofar as his method of intuition involves a process in which the knower somehow enters into the known without the mediation of concepts.

While Schlick does not deny that there may be possible states of *acquaintance* in which the subject-object distinction breaks down, he vehemently opposes the possibility that such states can go by the name of "knowledge". From 1913 onwards, Schlick insists in drawing a sharp distinction between

[24] The weaker claim that intuition has epistemic primacy over the intellect is nonetheless perhaps more charitably attributable to Bergson than the stronger claim that conceptual knowledge is altogether falsified. This weaker claim is closer to Schlick's views, insofar as he admits that without intuition we could not have come to formulate concepts, yet all the while denying that intuition is a form of knowledge.

knowledge and acquaintance. He rejects the view that the qualitative flux given in lived experience can be meaningfully understood as something directly *known*, rather than something we are merely acquainted with.

> Intuition and conceptual knowledge do not at all strive for the same goal; rather, they move in opposite directions. In knowing there are always two terms: *something* that is known and *that as which* it is known. In the case of intuition, on the other hand, we do not put two objects into relation with one another; we confront just one object, the one intuited. Thus an essentially different process is involved; intuition has no similarity whatever to cognition. (SCHLICK, [1918/1925] 1974, p. 82)

Schlick's distinction between intuition and conceptual knowledge relies on his view that knowledge, as opposed to acquaintance, must necessarily involve concepts related in a judgement. Schlick argues that a judgement must relate at least two terms. In other words, there can be no such thing as a well-formed judgement involving any less than two terms in relation.[25] This entails that direct acquaintance, such as the fusion of the knower into the known posited by Bergson (as well as the multiple aforementioned views throughout the history of philosophy) is inexpressible in the form of a judgement.[26] Insofar as knowledge is necessarily conceptual, and can only take the form of a judgement, then it must involve relations between at least two terms. The minimum relation required for epistemic judgements would be one between the known term and "*that as which* it is known" (p. 82). To know any object *o* entails, in Schlick's account, to be able to formulate a judgement that puts *o* into a relation *R* with some already familiar object *f*.

There are clearly multiple different types of relation between knower and known permitted by Schlick's formula. Nevertheless, complete identification and direct acquaintance are excluded by it, insofar as they must eliminate any

[25] For example, Schlick ([1918/1925] 1974, p. 42-44) rejects Brentano's account of existential judgements as involving only a single term; see Textor (2021, p. 261-276, 315-317). As Textor (2021) shows, Schlick's move is a response to a long nineteenth-century debate about psychology in which Brentano played a prominent part.

[26] On the historical variety of views Schlick directs this sort of criticism against, see Textor (2018; 2021, p. 293-350).

difference between the two related terms. Schlick does concede that acquaintance grants us access to the given, which is a perpetually renewed continuous stream of lived experience of the type described by Bergson. Yet, crucially, by the criteria set out above, this type of access cannot be said to be properly speaking a form of *epistemic* access. At best, acquaintance can become relevant to epistemic judgements only insofar as part of its content can become the object *o* which the judgement relates to some other object *f*. Schlick argues that the ability to formulate knowledge claims in the form of judgements presupposes, at minimum, the ability to re-cognise [*Wiedererkennen*] (Schlick [1918/1925] 1974, p. 6-8) an object *o* – that is to say the ability to compare *o*, i.e. part of the unfamiliar fleeting contents of our lived experience, to some already familiar object *f*. In other words, the ability for recognition is the minimal presupposition for the aforementioned ability to relate a known term (*o*) to that as which it is known (*f*).

The basic capacity for recognition, relying on the function of memory, suffices for the purposes of everyday practical knowledge. Nonetheless, as Schlick maintains, it remains still too closely knit with lived experience to be a reliable guide for scientific knowledge properly so called. According to Schlick, scientific knowledge is purely theoretical, which means that it is disinterested in any practical concerns or outcomes, and rigorously detached from lived experience. Theoretical knowledge is thus identified by Schlick as conceptual in nature. The methodology of science, in Schlick's account, detaches knowledge from its qualitative origins in lived experience, dealing instead with a growing network of well-defined, rigorously regimented concepts. Science does not venture to know what is completely unfamiliar and hitherto unknown; instead, it is "for ever merely ordering, elaborating, establishing relations, which makes no effort to create anything new" (SCHLICK, [1913] 1979, p. 151).

Theoretical knowledge is thus mainly knowledge of precisely defined quantitative concepts in relations – not of the qualitative contents of lived experience.

From the above, it becomes clear that Horkheimer simply *misses* the centrality of Schlick's critique of intuition for the development of Logical Empiricism when he equates the "positivist" myth of the given with Bergsonian intuition.[27]

5. INSTRUMENTALISM AND ITS LIMITS

Schlick's effort to detach theoretical knowledge from both *Erlebnis* and the practical forms of knowledge that are closely intertwined with it was motivated by one particular type of worry which is also Bergson's. Schlick's account of the nature of theoretical knowledge responded to a number of previous philosophers, including the Pragmatists and the Machians, who had relied on evolutionary biology in arguing for the instrumental character of the human intellect (TEXTOR, 2021, p. 332-350; VRAHIMIS, 2022a, p. 253-262). Pragmatism, Machianism, and various other evolutionist tendencies sought to explain the biological evolution of the intellect and its capacity for scientific knowledge as a kind of tool that is expedient in the human species' struggle for survival (ČAPEK, 1971, p. 3-29). Both Bergson and Schlick had sought to counter this attitude, setting limits to the explanatory potential of evolutionary biology without altogether rejecting its findings.[28]

The two philosophers nonetheless set up the limit in radically different manners. Bergson remains closer to preceding evolutionists, insofar as he accepts that the human intellect is indeed a tool best adapted to practical expediency, and therefore unsuitable for the purely disinterested contemplation of reality. Since Bergson identifies scientific knowledge as a type of "intellectual" knowledge, he concludes that it cannot, in itself and without further ado, be understood to be a type of purely disinterested knowledge. At first glance, Bergson thus appears to be, like many of his evolutionist

[27] On the historical development of Logical Empiricism onwards from Schlick's early work, see Uebel (2007).
[28] On Bergson's 'biological epistemology' as a response to this tradition, see Čapek (1971, e.g. 3-39).

predecessors, an instrumentalist about science, identifying the sort of knowledge it produces with the practical aims it serves.[29] Nevertheless, Bergson sets a limit to the evolutionists' instrumentalism. He argues that the human species has indeed evolved a capacity to reflectively attend to the contents of lived experience in a disinterested manner. This capacity is precisely what Bergson calls intuition. His method of intuition thus purports to put the metaphysician in a position to enter into the given, and to reflect on it in a disinterested manner that is unavailable to the scientist. Bergson thus has much to say about the complementarity between metaphysical intuition and scientific intellectual knowledge. Perhaps a more charitable reading of his position would acknowledge that ultimately he is not the instrumentalist about scientific knowledge that he at first glance appears to be. Instead, Bergson is a peculiar sort of realist, insofar as he calls for an integration of (instrumental) science with (disinterested) metaphysics. Separated from metaphysics, science is a mere practical tool, but it overcomes its instrumentality only through its integration with philosophy. Bergson's own work may be understood as an example of such an integration, given that it explicitly takes scientific developments as its starting point (and it can be argued that it ultimately fails because of its reliance on now outdated science) (RIGGIO, 2016).

In either the instrumentalist or the realist reading, when it comes to scientific knowledge, Bergson nonetheless remains on the opposite side of the debate from Schlick– even if they, and their evolutionist predecessors, are largely in agreement when it comes to explaining other aspects of the human species' interaction with the world. For example, in his early work, Schlick ([1908] 2006; [1909] 1979) develops an evolutionary account of the biological origins of those evaluative attitudes involved in practical deliberation, aesthetic appreciation, and even social interaction guided by ethical emotions. Schlick strictly opposes such evaluative attitudes from the cognition of facts involved in

[29] Some of the pragmatic and instrumentalistic aspects of Bergson's work were influential in the formation of the tradition of Philosophical Anthropology; see Zanfi (2023).

disinterested theoretical knowledge (TEXTOR, 2018). In order to attain this disinterested attitude, the process of science must look to conceptual formations formally detached from lived experience:

> The essence of knowing absolutely requires that he who would practice it must betake himself far away from things and to a height far above them, from which he can then view their relations to all other things. Whoever comes close to things and participates in their ways and works, is engaged in living, not in knowing; to him, things display their value aspect, not their nature. (SCHLICK, [1918/1925] 1974, p. 80)[30]

It is precisely intuition's all-too-close proximity to lived experience that motivates Schlick's discounting of its epistemic status. Contrary to Bergson, who had looked to intuition for a disinterested way of accessing reality, Schlick turns away from *Erlebnis* in defending his ideal for a disinterested form of conceptual knowledge.

In his defence of the value-free ideal for science, Schlick was not only opposed to Bergson, but would also eventually come to clash on related matters with the Vienna Circle's "left wing". Schlick's insistence that theoretical knowledge must be purely disinterested underlies his commitment to an apolitical Vienna Circle. It led, for example, to his rejecting the programme laid out in the manifesto written by Carnap, Hahn, and Neurath ([1929] 1973), and to his overall opposition against associating the Circle with specific political projects.

The question of the value-free ideal and the opposition between instrumentalism and realism about scientific knowledge circles back to Horkheimer's 1937 attack against the Vienna Circle. Horkheimer's central contention is that the value-free ideal manifests itself in the "positivist" myth of the given, i.e. the belief that it is possible to directly know the value-free facts given in sensation. Horkheimer's rejection of this possibility is part of his broader critique of the reliance of "positivism" upon a value-free ideal (1972a,

[30] Cf. Schlick (1938, 184).

p. 162-167, 178). He argues that, despite its association with liberalism (p. 165), the very idea of value-freedom ultimately serves reactionary and authoritarian political purposes. It is precisely this purported commitment to value-freedom that leads Horkheimer to proclaim that, despite the Vienna Circle's anti-fascist credentials, its "positivism" is ultimately a form of collusion with authoritarianism.

In Horkheimer's view, the struggle against authoritarianism can only be effectively pursued by a Critical Theory, i.e. "a theory governed throughout by an interest" (p. 164). Such a theory, he believes, will be rejected by the positivists as "incompatible with objective science" (p. 164). In the case of Neurath (2011a), Horkheimer's estimation was manifestly false: in his reply to Horkheimer, he sketched a way in which a type of reflective critical theory can become part of the encyclopaedic project of Unified Science. In Schlick's case, however, matters are more complicated. Given Schlick's extensive arguments for distinguishing theoretical knowledge from acquaintance, Horkheimer's accusations concerning the myth of the given are utterly inapplicable to Schlick. Nonetheless, Schlick's detachment of theoretical knowledge from the given is indeed intended as a defence of the value-free ideal. Horkheimer would thus have been well-justified in attributing the value-free ideal to someone like Schlick. Yet, insofar as Horkheimer identifies the espousal of a value-free ideal with the espousal of a myth of the given, his argument is inapplicable to Schlick. A critique of Schlick's position from the perspective of Critical Theory would require an altogether different form of argument than the one Horkheimer develops in 1937.

6. CONCLUSION

Was Horkheimer completely mistaken in accusing "positivism" of espousing a naïvely ahistorical conception of the given? The answer to the question would depend on who the so-called "positivist" in question is, and already during the 1930s, Horkheimer's conception of "positivism" remains all

too vague. It confuses earlier with later manifestations of this broad philosophical tendency, failing to distinguish between their different errors. Within the Vienna Circle, it is clearer that Horkheimer's criticism is less aptly applicable to its so-called "left-wing" than it is to someone like Schlick, who strictly divided conceptual knowledge of facts from evaluative acquaintance. Yet our glance at Schlick's early development of his critique of intuition demonstrates that the details of Horkheimer's characterisations of the variant of the "myth of the given" that he attributes to "positivism" sit uneasily with the Logical Empiricists' attack on the Bergsonian metaphysics of intuition.

In the bigger picture, this paper has endeavoured to show that the history of the so-called "parting of the ways" within Germanophone philosophy can be traced backwards and forwards from the clash between Carnap, Cassirer and Heidegger that Friedman (2000) famously pinpoints. Looking backwards, we can see how the Germanophone reception of Bergsonism helped shape the beginnings of a dialogue between *Lebensphilosophie* and phenomenology that was inaugurated by Max Scheler. This Germanophone reception of Bergson also crucially informed the early critique of the metaphysics of intuition that eventually developed into Logical Empiricism's full-fledged attack against metaphysics. Looking forward from Friedman's account, we have glimpsed the eventual parting of the ways between the Frankfurt School and Logical Empiricism, two traditions which in the 1930s had both set out to struggle against the metaphysical tendencies that they saw as defenders of authoritarian politics. Horkheimer's 1937 commentary was, in some ways, the text that closed the dialogue, setting up a simplified image of its contemporary philosophy as split into three camps: metaphysics, "positivism", and Critical Theory. This paper has, instead, shown the image conjured by Horkheimer's polemical diatribes to have been oversimplified and distorted.

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[Received: March 28th 2024. Editorial decision: May 18th 2024]