The rhetoric of analytic philosophy

The making of the analytic hegemony in Swedish 20th century philosophy

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When Arne Næss in 1965 published his book *Moderne filosofer – Carnap, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Sartre* it was in Sweden received as something of a philosophical scandal (Bengtsson 1990, 220-225).[1] The reviewers failed to see any point in comparing the proper scientific analytic philosophy of Carnap and Wittgenstein with the unintelligible prose of Heidegger and Sartre. In the subsequent discussion in the Swedish cultural press, it remained a mystery how this sober Norwegian analytic philosopher could embark on such a dubitable venture.

The dominance of analytic philosophy was tremendous in Sweden, arguably much stronger than in the Anglo-American world or in the neighbouring Nordic countries. In this article I will examine the making of the analytic tradition in Swedish philosophy from a rhetorical-political perspective. I will show that the analytic hegemony in Sweden was the result of a series of rhetorical moves by which a group of younger Swedish philosophers succeeded in denouncing their opponents while simultaneously claiming the national philosophical heritage. While the rivalling philosophies were stigmatised as foreign (German)

1 Arne Næss' book was translated into English in 1968 as *Four Modern Philosophers – Carnap, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Sartre*.

and politically suspect, analytic philosophy was portrayed as proper scientific philosophy, and as a tradition with strong domestic roots in the Uppsala philosophy of Axel Hägerström (1868-1939).[2]

The politics of philosophy

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

There are, of course, some of us who believe that there are good reasons to take philosophical labels seriously and to examine them from a historical perspective. The most comprehensive effort towards a history of philosophical concepts is the ambitious 12 volume *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* (1970-2005), edited by Joachim Ritter, Karlfried Gründer and Gottfried Gabriel, which provides valuable information regarding the first mentions of different philosophical labels, as well as an overview of the different philosophical positions that have been denoted by them throughout the history of Western thought, from An-

2 This article is a development of an argument in my PhD-thesis (Strang 2010a) *History, Transfer, Politics – Five Studies on the Legacy of Uppsala Philosophy* [Philosophical Studies from the University of Helsinki 30], available from the author or at http://ethesis.helsinki.fi.

cient Greece to present.[3] It is certainly important to acknowledge the differences between the "idealism" of Plato and Hegel, between the "scepticism" of Sextus Empiricus and Hume, and between the "positivism" of Comte and Carnap. In this article, however, I will argue that there is much to gain from a perspective that focuses on the rhetorical struggles to name and define a philosophical position or movement at a particular historical moment.

During recent years there have emerged a number of studies that look for the historical roots of the analytic tradition and for the origins of the divide between the analytic and the continental in western philosophy. But it seems to me that even the most historically oriented of these studies fall short as they proceed from or end up with a normative attempt to define "analytic philosophy" as a set of theoretical family resemblances (e.g. Føllesdal 1997; Stroll 2000), as a genealogic tree of historical influences (e.g. Dummett 1993; Hacker 1996), or, perhaps, as a combination of the two (Sluga 1998; Glock 2008). These accounts may give us an idea of what we understand with "analytic philosophy" today, but as historical accounts they are seriously incomplete as they fail to discuss how analytic philosophy was produced as a movement. It is only by paying attention to the rhetorical moves that philosophers and intellectuals have made in labelling themselves and each other that we can study how they positioned themselves in relation to both historical and contemporaneous scholars and ideas, how they distinguished friends from enemies.

In showing how the Swedish analytic tradition was produced, I will draw on Quentin Skinner's (1996, 128-180; 1999; 2002, 115) proposal to study "rhetorical redescriptions", that is, the ways in which historical actors have altered the meaning of a particular term (the semasiological aspect) or the naming of a particular phenomenon (the onomasiological aspect). To be sure, Skinner's approach originates the field of political philosophy, and political struggles are often palpably rhetorical in the sense that they concern the definitions and usages of certain key concepts like "democracy", "liberalism" or "freedom". But contingen-

3 As the *Historisches Wörterbuch* does not operate with a *Sattelzeit* its temporal focus is wider than that of the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (eds. Brunner, Conze, Koselleck 1971-97).

cy and controversy are not features of political language alone, and, as recently exemplified by for example Kari Palonen (2008a; 2010) there are good reasons to examine the academic world from a rhetorical perspective.[4]

Academic labels are, precisely as political ones, continuously contested by scholars who use them with different implications, and, more often than not, conflicting accounts collide and evolve into open struggles for "the true meaning of", "the correct definition of", or the sole right to use a term; or conversely, into fierce discussions regarding the "correct", "proper", or "accurate" label or designation for a certain philosophical position or group of intellectuals. Scholarly labels can also have a mobilising function very similar to that of political labels. They can become catchwords used by every ambitious scholar who wants to be part of the movement, or they can be turned into invectives that are used in third person only ("positivism").[5] Moreover, precisely as political language, academic language is very much tied to (national) institutions and traditions. The meaning associated with a philosophical label in one cultural or linguistic context does not necessarily translate when the label is appropriated elsewhere, and thus the transfer agents redescribe and reinterpret both the labels and the theories in order for them to play a particular role in the domestic debates.[6] Finally, the academic game is also like politics very much a matter of playing with time, of referring positively or negatively to past traditions and ideas while simultaneously trying to direct the future by means of making, naming, and defining philosophical movements. Following Reinhart Koselleck it is possible to discern different *Zeitschichten* in the academic rhetoric; longer or shorter periods of time that give significance to the usage of

4 Palonen uses Max Weber's ideas on objectivity as fair play to discuss similarities between the political-parliamentary debates and the academic-scientific discussions from a rhetorical point of view. Here, I will focus on the special case of labelling.

5 Or conversely, they can be coined as invectives, but be neutralised by the proponents. See e.g. Leonhard 2004 for an account of how "liberalism" evolved from denoting something foreign and radical to an integrated part of the English political language

6 See Marjanen 2009; Palonen 2003b; Richter 2005; Stenius 2004 on the importance of translations in conceptual history.

a particular term, or a specific momentum or *Spielzeitraum* in which a particular rhetorical move is possible (Koselleck 2000; Palonen 2008b).

In paying attention to rhetorical redescriptions, to processes of mobilisation, translation and interpretation, as well as to questions of timing and temporalisation, this article argues that the history of philosophy has much to learn from recent rhetorical approaches to politics. This "politics of philosophy" provides a fruitful perspective and an empirically credible way of studying intellectual movements, how they are established, how they mobilise, how they transform, and how they fade away.[7]

Canonising a movement

The pivotal figure of Uppsala philosophy was Axel Hägerström (1868-1939) who revolted against the idealistic philosophical tradition of the 19th century which in Sweden was associated with Christopher Jacob Boström (1797-1866) and his pupils. Hägerström's philosophical position has been described as an original form of Neo-Kantianism that included elements from Austrian act psychology and *Wertphilosophie* as well as from the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl and the perspectivism of Friedrich Nietzsche.[8] Hägerström's most original contribution as a philosopher was his radical moral theory according to which moral or evaluative judgements are meaningless as they always include an emotive element that does not aim at presenting its object as existent in time and space. Hägerström's theory, which he launched in his inaugural lecture as Professor in Practical (i.e. moral and political) Philosophy in Uppsala 1910 (Hägerström 1910), was groundbreaking in many ways. It is often said to have been the first pronouncement of the

7 For a related, but slightly different use of the phrase "politics of philosophy", see Palonen 2003a, 138 and Pulkkinen 2003.

8 See Heidegren 2004 and 2010 or Mindus 2009 for an account of the early phases of Uppsala philosophy, and Nordin 1983 and Strang 2010a for accounts of its latter phases and the transformation to analytic philosophy. Hansson & Nordin 2006 (esp. pages 105-119) provides an overview of the Swedish philosophical scene in the 1930s in English. Hägerström's relation to Nietzsche is discussed in Ruin 2000.

so called non-cognitive or emotive theory in ethics, which later became fashionable among analytic philosophers in Great Britain and the United States (see e.g. Satris 1987, 5). In its original Swedish context, however, Hägerström's inaugural lecture signified a modern breakthrough in philosophy (Heidegren 2004, 317-377), with significant political and cultural underpinnings (Källström 1986). It was the belated introduction of the radical and progressive political and cultural ideas of the 1880s (*kulturradikalismen*) at the conservative department of philosophy in Uppsala, and, accordingly, Hägerström was celebrated among radicals and scorned by conservatives. The political connotations of Hägerström's value theory were certainly one of the main reasons for the central position of Uppsala philosophy in the political and cultural debates in Sweden during the 1920s and 30s.

Uppsala philosophy was consolidated as a group around Hägerström already at the turn of the century – they even nursed plans for launching a journal (Heidegren 2004, 348-352) – but it seems to have taken quite some time before the movement was given a name. It was only after Hägerström had claimed Boström's old chair in Practical Philosophy in 1910, and his disciple and colleague Adolf Phalén (1884-1931) the chair in Theoretical Philosophy in 1916, that the label "Uppsala philosophy" (*Uppsalafilosofien*) emerged. The term was, however, seldom employed by Hägerström or Phalén themselves. It was used, rather, by their disciples and critics, and often in more popular writings that in way or another compared and contrasted the ideas of Hägerström and Phalén with those of other movements or scholars.

One early example is the article "Hur en norsk filosof uppfattar svensk filosofi" (How a Norwegian philosopher perceives Swedish philosophy) which Einar Tegen (1884-1965) wrote as a reaction to Anathon Aall's book *Filosofien i Norden* (1919). Tegen was not only enraged of the disproportionally small space allocated to Swedish philosophy (52 pages) in comparison to Norwegian (147) and Danish (146) philosophy (Tegen 1920, 53).[9] He was particularly infuriated of Aall's treatment of "contemporary Uppsala philosophy" (*den nuvarande Uppsalafilosofien*). Aall had categorised Hägerström and Phalén, "the main men of the modern philosophical direction in Uppsala" (*den moderna filosofiska rik-*

9 Finnish philosophy was treated in 13 pages.

ningens i Upsala huvudmän), not as representatives of something new and unique, but as Boströmian philosophers, albeit of a "younger type". This was, according to Tegen, nothing short of grotesque as Hägerström's and Phalén's main incentives had, from the very beginning of their careers, been to refute Boströmianism (Tegen 1920, 54).

For Tegen, who was the same age as Phalén but somewhat less experienced as a scholar, it was both natural and important to use the label "Uppsala philosophy" as a rhetorical move by which he aimed at increasing the prominence of his own texts. In *Finsk Tidskrift*, as a comment on the book *Vetenskapliga vanföreställningar* (1920) by the Finnish philosopher Rolf Lagerborg, Tegen specified the similarities and differences between the phenomenalistic views (Mach, Avenarius) that Lagerborg was defending on the one side, and the views of Hägerström and Phalén on the other. The article was programmatically titled "'Fenomenalismen' och 'Upsalafilosofien'" (1921) and thus Tegen figured not merely as an individual philosopher, but as a spokesperson and representative of an established philosophical movement.

"Uppsala philosophy" as a contested label

Tegen was very much the coming man of Uppsala philosophy, but he struggled to find a permanent position at a university. There were only five chairs in philosophy in Sweden at the time (two in Uppsala, two in Lund, and one in Göteborg) and therefore every vacant chair was the object of intense struggles and the appointment processes were significant events, followed by the philosophical community as well as by the general public through the newspapers. The Swedish (and North-European) practice of employing a number of "independent" scholars as referees evaluating the competence of the applicants can be seen as a way of "politicising" or even "parliamentarising" the academic world (Palonen 2010, 54). The idea was that the referees serve as guardians against local sectarianism and as a balance between opposite schools and movements, and their statements are often written as arguments pro/contra not only the particular applicant, but the whole philosophical school or movement that he/she represents. Thus these statements,

and all the other material related to these appointment processes, form a fascinating source material as they quite explicitly, and frequently also in a rather ferocious tone, expose the dividing lines and major points of disagreement between different intellectual schools and movements.

In the livid and prolonged debates regarding the chair in practical philosophy in Lund 1927-29, which were conducted not only at different levels of the university bureaucracy, but also in the newspapers and even in the national parliament, Uppsala philosophy featured as a united philosophical front. Tegen's mentors Hägerström and Phalén supported him staunchly as appointed referees, while the three other referees supported the rival candidate Alf Nyman who eventually won the race. Both sides in the controversy had their allies both at the other departments in Lund, as well as in the media and among the politicians. There was clearly much at stake and one newspaper even referred to the process as a war between the philosophers in Uppsala and Lund (Nordin 1983, 73-91). Like any political debate, the discussion was often conducted by means of linguistic innovations and rhetorical struggles. The critics of the Uppsala philosophers invented a number of different tags which they used in order to defame Hägerström, Phalén and Tegen. Some talked about "positivism", "formalism" or "logicomania", others about "conceptual mystics", "sophism" or "Marxism".[10]

The term "Uppsala philosophy" was also often given a considerable negative weight in this discussion. A significant example was the pamphlet *Uppsalafilosofien och sanningen* (1929) which the philosopher John Landquist wrote when Hägerström and Phalén had deemed him unqualified for the chair. By Landquist the geographic name "Uppsala" was used pejoratively emphasising the narrow-mindedness and the sectarian tendencies of the Uppsala philosophers. In a very angry and dejected tone, Landquist argued that it was no surprise that Hägerström and Phalén were the only referees (out of five) who had disqualified him and who had prioritised Tegen. According or Landquist it was a sign of the parochial nature of Uppsala philosophy that it approved of no other philosophy than its own. "The Uppsala sect" was a self-satisfied, introvert and provincial movement that threatened to take over every philosophical chair in Sweden, thus "stifling the philosophical

10 See e.g. Landquist 1929; 1931; Vannérus 1930.

freedom of thought in the country" (Landquist 1929, 28-29).[11]

Landquist was neither the first nor the last to complain about the isolationism and doctrinarism that marked Uppsala philosophy – it was a recurring theme among the critics. The Uppsala philosophers themselves tried to counter these allegations by means of "paradiastolic redescriptions" in which the vices of being introvert, doctrinaire and provincial were turned into virtues like autonomy, originality and uniqueness.[12] For example, in 1920 Tegen stated that Uppsala philosophy did not allow itself to be seduced by contemporary trends in philosophy or intellectual life. In comparison with the Uppsala philosophers, Tegen argued, the Danish philosopher Harald Høffding was nothing but a shallow intellectual who preferred intimate connections to the life and pulse of contemporary life to deep probing philosophical speculation (Tegen 1920, 52).[13] Similarly in 1938, Gunnar Oxenstierna, one of Phaléns pupils, claimed that Uppsala philosophy was "the only independent and original effort in Swedish philosophy" (Oxenstierna 1938, 4).

Another strategy to counter the allegations of doctrinarism was to point at differences within the group of Uppsala philosophers. In an article in the Swedish newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* (March 5, 1934), the young Uppsala philosophers Ingemar Hedenius (1908-1982) and Anders Wedberg (1913-1978) responded to a criticism against "the barbaric Uppsala School" raised by the famous conservative nationalistic literary critic Fredrik Böök, by claiming that "there is no such thing as an Uppsala philosophy". The philosophers in Uppsala, Hedenius and Wedberg argued, did not propose any common doctrines save the call

11 "…förkväva all filosofisk tankefrihet i landet".

12 On paradiastolic redescriptions see Palonen 1999, 48-49; Palonen 2003a, 164-169; Skinner 1996, 150-172; Skinner 1999.

13 "Till och med en sådan filosofisk storman som Høffding med sin egendomliga klarsyn och djupa världsvisdom verkar mot bakgrund av den svenska spekulationen och det svenska nutida tänkandet närmast som en kulturpersonlighet med intima relationer framför allt till det levande och pulserande livet i sin egen samtid, och de filosofiska tankarna äro hos honom ej så konsekvent genomtänkta eller skarpt fixerade som fallet är t. ex. hos Hägerström eller Phalén här i Sverige."

for a careful analysis of the concepts involved, and thus there was no single argument by which all of these individual philosophers could be brushed aside (Hedenius & Wedberg 1934a). Somewhat less radically Oxenstierna explained in the philosophical journal *Theoria* in 1935, that, while he saw himself as a representative of "Uppsala philosophy" it was important to recognise that his ideas diverged considerably from those of, for example, Hägerström (Oxenstierna 1935, 189).

It should be noted that while Hägerström's own disciples were likely to credit the grand old man himself by using phrases such as "the Hägerströmian ideas" or "Hägerströmianism" (Fries 1927; Lundstedt 1942), it seems as if the label "Uppsala philosophy" was more frequently used by those who, like Tegen and Oxenstierna, were mainly influenced by Phalén (e.g. Marc-Wogau 1932a-d; 1933; Hedenius & Wedberg 1934a; 1934b). By using "Uppsala philosophy" they called attention to the fact that there was more to Uppsala philosophy than Hägerström. After the death of Phalén in 1931, his disciples found themselves in a difficult position. With their mentor gone, the Phalénians were repeatedly neglected in the races for the few and precious chairs at the universities. When Hägerström as an appointed referee prioritised a non-Uppsala philosopher (Anders Karitz) over the Phalénian pupil Oxenstierna to Phalén's old chair in theoretical philosophy in Uppsala, it was received as a declaration of war by the Phalénians, who throughout the 1930s made a series of different attempts at challenging the position of Hägerström as the sole front man of the movement (Nordin 1983, 93-114). Against this background it was hardly surprising that Oxenstierna, Hedenius and Wedberg, during the mid-1930s, were keen on stressing that "Uppsala philosophy" was not a unanimous voice.

Gradually, the deteriorating relations between the Hägerströmians and the Phalenians evolved into an open battle for the right to define and represent "Uppsala philosophy". In the very same debate as that in which they had denied the existence of a unanimous "Uppsala philosophy", Hedenius and Wedberg also launched an attack on the legal scholar and Social Democratic Member of Parliament Vilhelm Lundstedt, who was an ardent devotee of Hägerström, accusing him of making illegitimate use of Hägerström's ideas for popular and political purposes. By presenting simplistic caricatures Lundstedt had, Hedenius and

Wedberg claimed, "damaged the reputation of Uppsala philosophy far more than the antagonists Böök and Landquist" (Hedenius & Wedberg 1934b).[14] This provoked a reply from Hägerström himself who entered the discussion by publically sanctioning the writings of Lundstedt and by arguing that Uppsala philosophy should be evaluated on the basis of its arguments rather than its public reputation (Hägerström 1934).

One of the most explicit efforts to promote Phalén as the main representative of Uppsala philosophy was the small pamphlet with the revealing title *Vad är Uppsala-filosofien?* (What is Uppsala philosophy?) by Oxenstierna (1938). Here Phalén was hailed as the sole originator of nearly every aspect of Uppsala philosophy except the value theory, while some early works by Hägerström were considered to have "nothing to do" with Uppsala philosophy (Oxenstierna 1938, 4). Oxenstierna's book was naturally met with anger by the Hägerströmians, for example by Martin Fries in the newspaper *Stockholms-tidningen* (June 13, 1938) and by Lundstedt, who interpreted the book as another move by which the Phalénians were trying to diminish the accomplishments of Hägerström (Lundstedt 1942, 143).

"Value nihilism" – claiming a legacy

By the late 1930s it was clear that "Uppsala philosophy" had become the subject of internal struggles between the two different branches of the school: the Hägerströmians and the Phalénians. But despite the efforts of the Phalénian faction, Hägerström remained the central figure of Uppsala philosophy in the eyes of both the academic world and the general public. This was largely due to his controversial value theory which continued to play a central role in the Swedish debates. The claim that conservative moral and political ideas were meaningless was a powerful argument in the hands of politicians and intellectuals with radical ambitions, and during the 1920s and 30s, Hägerström's ideas were often used as an argument in favour of modernisation, and politi-

14 "…därigenom har uppsalafilosofiens anseende skadats i långt högre grad än vad som kunnat ske genom angrepp sådana som prof. Böös och dr Landquists".

cal, cultural and moral change, particularly, but not exclusively, by intellectuals who, like Lundstedt, sympathised with the Social Democrats (Källström 1986; Strang 2008).[15] But Hägerström's value theory was controversial and its many critics suggested that the theory was, if not responsible for, then at least a symptom of, a general cultural and moral decline of Western society.

It was also among the critics that the label "value nihilism" emerged in the early 1930s. It is usually asserted that the first time that it was used was in a review of Anders Vannérus's book *Hägerströmstudier* (1930) which John Landquist published in the newspaper *Aftonbladet* on May 23, 1931.[16] Here Landquist claimed that Hägerström wanted to dispose of all cultural and moral knowledge, and that "such a value nihilism is not culturally normal". The term rapidly established itself among the critics who suggested that Hägerström's theory, in denying the objective status of moral norms, undermined the very foundations of society, culture and civilisation, and that Hägerström preached a practical nihilism according to which "everything is allowed". Approaching the Second World War, and especially after the posthumous – Hägerström died in 1939 – publication of a collection of Hägerström's moral philosophical essays in 1939 (*Socialfilosofiska uppsatser*), the criticism became even more fierce. In a number of newspaper articles and reviews titled "Hägerström and the world crisis" and "Hitler and Hägerström" the critics suggested that there was a connection between the "value nihilism" of Hägerström on one hand, and the decline of civilisation and the rise of totalitarianism on the other (see e.g. Källström 1986, 110-116; Strang 2009).

The Uppsala philosophers themselves struggled hard to overcome this negative rhetoric. They argued that a philosophical analysis of the concepts of "value" and "duty" could not by itself lead to the destruction of morality (Marc-Wogau 1933, 9); that an Uppsala philosopher indeed could have strong moral convictions; or that the very statements "destroy morality" or "everything is allowed", which the opponents as-

15 Among the other intellectuals who made political use of Hägerström one can mention the economist Gunnar Myrdal and the social scientist Herbert Tingsten.

16 This according to several sources, e.g. Marc-Wogau 1968, 202.

cribed to Hägerström, were value judgements and as such meaningless according to the theory itself (Oxenstierna 1938, 63). Instead of "value nihilism" they used vague descriptions like "Hägerström's value theory" (*Hägerströms värdeteori*), (Lundstedt 1942, 7), "the radical value subjectivism of Hägerström" (*Hägerströms radikala värdesubjektivism*) (Marc-Wogau 1933, 9) or "Hägerström's criticism of the concept of value" (*Hägerströms kritik av värdebegreppet*) (Oxenstierna 1938, 57).

Eventually, however, "value nihilism" became a term that the proponents would use themselves. In this connection Ingemar Hedenius' book *Om rätt och moral* (1941) marked a decisive turning point. Hedenius was perhaps not the first Uppsala philosopher to use the label,[17] but he was certainly the first to programmatically defend "value nihilism" as a philosophical position. It was a conscious rhetorical move; his explicit motivation to use this, what he called, "totally misleading term" was partly "brevity", and partly the aspiration to "wear out the dismal, but unfounded associations, that have made the word a useful weapon against Uppsala philosophy" (Hedenius 1941, 13).[18] It is probably safe to say that Hedenius succeeded with his ambitions. There were hardly any complaints about the terminology in the reviews of *Om rätt och moral*, and "value nihilism" soon became a fairly neutral name for the theory in the Swedish.

The move of claiming the vocabulary of the opponent in order to demobilise it is, of course, a familiar rhetorical strategy.[19] However, there are good reasons to presume that Hedenius had additional and more

17 Anders Wedberg had used "nihilism" of Hägerström's theory already in 1933.

18 "Ehuru denna benämning [värdenihilismen] egentligen är alldeles missvisande skall den användas här, dels för korthetens skull och dels i hoppet att genom nötning få bort de kusliga, sakligt ogrundade associationer, vilka någon gång gjort ordet ifråga användbart som tillhygge mot uppsalafilosofien."

19 According to Skinner "ambition" and "shrewdness" were exclusively used pejoratively until the 17th century when they were neutralised (Skinner 2002, 152), and Henrik Stenius has similarly pointed to the ways in which potentially oppositional concepts such as Pietism have been neutralised and disarmed as they were transferred and introduced to the Nordic countries (Stenius 2010, 35).

subtle intentions by using "value nihilism" in 1941. It was also a move in the struggles between the Phalénian and the Hägerströmian factions of Uppsala philosophy. The death of Hägerström in the summer of 1939 opened a *Spielzeitraum* for the Phalénians who immediately started publishing articles on Hägerström in order to claim his legacy. While Konrad Marc-Wogau (1902-1991) wrote articles on Hägerström's theory of knowledge (Marc-Wogau 1940a; 1940b; 1946; 1947), Hedenius focussed on the value theory (Hedenius 1939; 1940a; 1940b; 1940c; 1941b; 1941c; 1942a; 1942b).[20] Hedenius programmatic use of the pejorative but popular label "value nihilism" (which had been shunned by Hägerström himself) must therefore be seen as a move towards claiming Hägerström's position as the main representative of Uppsala philosophy. And also in this respect, Hedenius' move was extremely successful. Although some reviewers were less than impressed with Hedenius "diluted" version of Hägerström's theory (e.g. Ljungdal 1943), it was clear that Hedenius by virtue of being a "value nihilist" had emerged as the new front figure of Uppsala philosophy ahead of several other contenders. From this perspective it is hardly a surprise that the only ones to complain about the usage of the term "value nihilism" were the orthodox Hägerströmians such as Lundstedt (e.g. 1942, 24).

It is also important to recognise the temporal aspects of Hedenius' move. He succeeded in utilising the momentum created by Hägerström's death to colonise the legacy of Uppsala philosophy, and now he was able to use it for his own strategic purposes. His move to claim the past was a move to be able to direct the future. At this point in time, Hedenius was together with his closest Phalénian colleagues Marc-Wogau and Wedberg abandoning the doctrines of Uppsala philosophy in favour of recent trends in international philosophy, especially logical empiricism. Accordingly, there were significant theoretical differences between the value theory originally proposed by Hägerström and "the value nihilism" that Hedenius defended in *Om rätt och moral*. While Hägerström had elaborated his value theory on the basis of Austrian *Werttheorie* (Brentano, Ehrenfeldt, Meinong), Hedenius presented it as a semantic theory akin to the emotive or non-cognitive theories of

20 Many of these articles were incorporated in Hedenius' book *Om rätt och moral* (1941a).

the logical empiricists Carnap (1935) and Ayer (1936) (see e.g. Nordin 2004, 106-115). Hedenius was very much aware of the fact that he did not doctrinarily follow the Hägerströmian arguments; he explicitly stated that he will "formulate it in a different manner from what is common amongst hägerströmians" (Hedenius 1941a, 13). But by adopting the familiar rhetoric of "value nihilism", Hedenius was able to claim the Uppsala legacy. It can even be argued that Hedenius introduced logical empiricism to Sweden by rhetorically anchoring it in the domestic "value nihilistic" tradition after Hägerström (Strang 2010a; 2010b).

"Analytic philosophy" – making a tradition

The shift in Swedish philosophy, from the Uppsala philosophy of Hägerström and Phalén to logical empiricism, or analytic philosophy, happened in a few years around 1940 with Hedenius' *Om rätt och moral* (1941a) as a pinnacle. It was a swift and drastic change, but by using the familiar terminology of "Uppsala philosophy" and "value nihilism" Hedenius was able to soften or even blur the transformation. It is striking that Hedenius hardly ever used "logical empiricism" or "logical positivism" even if he was clearly inspired by this kind of philosophy.[21] Instead he preferred terms that on the one hand referred back to the Uppsala tradition, but which also, on the other hand, had an established meaning and use within the logical empiricist framework.

One important label in this regard was "scientific philosophy" (*vetenskaplig filosofi*), which already by the old Uppsala philosophers of the 1920s had been used as an authoritative marker distinguishing their own philosophical method from, for example, that of Landquist's Bergson-inspired *Lebensphilosophie*. During the 1940s and 50s this familiar rhetoric was furnished with an international framework, referring also to the "philosophy of science" practised by the logical empiricists who

21 Although, admittedly, at this point in time the terms "logical positivism" and "logical empiricism" were not very common among the international representatives of the movement either.

had moved over to the United States in the 1930s and 40s.[22] The curious translation of "philosophy of science" (*vetenskapsfilosofi*) to "scientific philosophy" (*vetenskaplig filosofi*) was mitigated by the fact that the latter term also figured internationally.[23]

From this perspective it was also rather convenient for Hedenius to subscribe to the emerging rhetoric of "analytic philosophy". Internationally, "analytic philosophy" was launched as a name of a particular philosophical movement by Ernest Nagel in 1936, but it was not until Arthur Pap's *Elements of Analytic philosophy* (1949) that the label established itself in the international philosophical vocabulary.[24] The term "analysis", however, had been central to both the logical empiricists and the Cambridge philosophers Russell and Moore, not least by virtue of the journal *Analysis* which was founded in Oxford 1933 by a younger generation of British philosophers.[25] In Sweden, the Uppsala philosophers had honoured both "conceptual analysis" (*begreppsanalys*) and "logical analysis" (*logisk analys*) as their main philosophical methods since at least the early 1920s (see e.g. Tegen 1921, 54). But the nature of the Uppsala philosophical "analysis" was rather different from that of the logical empiricists. While the Uppsala philosophers believed that a logical analysis concerned the psychological ideas (*Vorstellungen*) associated with the concept, the logical empiricists thought that the analysis would either have to concern the facts denoted by a term or the logi-

22 For example in the journal *Philosophy of Science* which was founded in 1934.

23 E.g. Hans Reichenbach, *The rise of scientific philosophy*, 1951. A search on JSTOR on the terms "scientific philosophy" and "philosophy of science" in the period between 1930 and 1960 generates 1117 respectively 3727 hits (on December 3, 2010).

24 Cf. Strang 2006; Hacker 1996, 274; von Wright 1992, 200. This is also confirmed by a search on the terms "analytic philosophy" and "analytical philosophy" in three leading philosophical journals in the period 1930 to 1960 (*Mind*, *The Journal of Philosophy*, *The Philosophical Review*). While there are 31 hits in the 1930s, and 24 hits in the 1940s, there are 108 hits in the 1950s (on December 3, 2010).

25 Susan Stebbing and Gilbert Ryle were among the first editors, while philosophers such as Alfred Ayer and Max Black figured as authors in the first volume.

cal relation of a term to other terms in a formal logical system. During the late 1930s, when Hedenius, Marc-Wogau and Wedberg were in the process of converting from Uppsala philosophy to logical empiricism, they seemed to nurse hopes of uniting these perspectives with each other. For example, in the article "Begriffsanalyse und kritischer Idealismus" Hedenius defended a position according to which the analysis concerned the facts denoted by a term or a phrase, but he still claimed that this view was compatible with Phalén and Hägerström (Hedenius 1939, 294-298; see also Nordin 1983, 149). A couple of years later it was already quite obvious that Hedenius, Marc-Wogau and Wedberg had abandoned Uppsala philosophy, and at that point, "analysis" was primarily a way of linking their Uppsala philosophical past with their logical empiricist present. In *Om rätt och moral* (1941a) Hedenius presented logical empiricism, the Cambridge school and Uppsala philosophy as expressions of the same "tendency of sobering and logical analysis in modern philosophy" (Hedenius 1941a, 10).[26]

When the label "analytic philosophy" arrived to Sweden in the 1950s,[27] Uppsala philosophy was presented as a central part of the (pre-) history of the movement. For example, when Gilbert Ryle's famous compilation *The revolution in philosophy* (1956), which canonised philosophers such as Frege, Moore, the Vienna Circle, Wittgenstein and ordinary language philosophy as a distinct revolutionary philosophical movement, was translated to Swedish, it also included a chapter by Marc-Wogau on "Axel Hägerström och Uppsalafilosofin". The preface of the book explained the addition by boldly claiming that Uppsala philosophy, the Cambridge School and logical empiricism were the three most significant branches of modern scientific philosophy, "often called analytic philosophy" (Marc-Wogau & Wennerberg 1957, 7). The same characterisation was repeated in several publications in the following years, for example in the third edition of Alf Ahlberg's *Filosofiskt lexikon* from 1963, where "Analytic philosophy or scientific philosophy" was said to be "the label of a number of directions in modern

26 "tillnyktringens och den logiska analysens tendens i modern filosofi."

27 Konrad Marc-Wogau had used "analytische Philosophie" already in 1942, in a review of Hedenius' *Om rätt och moral*, but at that point it was arguably used more as a description than as a name. Marc-Wogau 1942, 61.

philosophy. […] The three most significant braches are the *Cambridge circle*, *logical empiricism* (in its earlier stages the *Vienna Circle*), *Uppsala philosophy*, and during recent years the *Oxford School*" (Ahlberg 1963, 10).[28] Also in Marc-Wogau's *Filosofin genom tiderna* (Marc-Wogau 1964, 123), in Wedberg's *Filosofins historia* (Wedberg 1966, 366), and even as late as in 1984, in the third edition of Marc-Wogau's *Filosofisk uppslagsbok*, Uppsala philosophy was mentioned as one of the main sources of modern analytic philosophy (Marc-Wogau 1984, 23).

In repressing the phenomenological, Neo-Kantian and Nietzschean roots of Uppsala philosophy and ardently associating it with logical empiricism and analytic philosophy, Hedenius' and his companions legitimised their own personal philosophical development from Uppsala philosophy, through logical empiricism, to analytic philosophy. But it was also a way of furnishing this foreign philosophy with domestic roots in order to facilitate its introduction to Sweden. The domestication of analytic philosophy could be used as a political argument against rivalling philosophies. In the aftermath of the Second World War the position of analytic philosophy was often promoted by either explicitly or implicitly playing the domestic vs. foreign card. A common strategy was to stigmatise continental, and particularly German philosophy (idealism and phenomenology), as semi-fascistic (see Östling 2008), while simultaneously celebrating the democratic nature of analytic philosophy. Not only did analytic philosophy have strong national roots in the Uppsala philosophy of Hägerström, it was now also very much associated with the English-speaking world that had emerged from the war as the champions of democracy.

The Nazi-stigma was not the only means by which "the other philosophers" were outmanoeuvred.[29] In his inaugural lecture as Profes-

28 "Analytisk filosofi eller vetenskaplig filosofi kallas en rad riktningar i nyare filosofi. […] De mest betydande riktningarna inom denna filosofi är Cambridgekretsen, den logiska empirismen (i sitt tidigare skede Wienkretsen), Uppsalafilosofin och under de allra senaste åren Oxfordskolan."

29 "The other philosophers" [dom andra filosoferna] was Hedenius' way of denoting "… not only structralisms, but also other existentialisms and Neo-Marxisms and drivel-theologies" […inte bara strukturalismer utan också andra existentialismer och nymarxismer och svammelteologier"]. Hedenius 1977, 33.

sor in Practical Philosophy in Uppsala in 1948, Hedenius claimed that neo-Thomism and Marxism were popular philosophies largely only because of the support they received from the Catholic Church and the Communist party. Existentialism, in turn, was refuted as a psychological reaction to the horrors of the World Wars. Hedenius even claimed that "if philosophy was given full freedom everywhere, the philosophical tradition that now appears as the most scientific one, would probably prevail" (Hedenius 1948, 17-19).[30] In a similar vein in the textbook *Att studera filosofi* (1961), Marc-Wogau made a brief settlement with "philosophy as it should not be studied" in a chapter called "Unscientific philosophy", before he commenced with philosophy "as it should be studied" in the chapter on "analytic philosophy". The first chapter was clearly inspired by Hedenius' inaugural lecture as it had the telling subchapters "In the grip of politics. Philosophy in the Soviet Union", "In the duty of religion. Neo-Thomism" and "In the wake of the World Wars. Existentialism" (Marc-Wogau 1961, 1-24). In this way, the analytic philosophy was in Sweden presented as the only politically scrupulous philosophy, as more autonomous and scientific than its contenders.

Conclusion – the Hedenian moment

The making of the analytic tradition in Sweden illustrates the ways in which the history of philosophy can be studied from a political-rhetorical perspective; that is, as a game of controversies, contingencies, redescriptions, and redefinitions. Precisely as when applied on political labels and terms, the nominalistic perspective is particularly rewarding when studying periods of great turbulence, when opposing philosophical schools and movements are formed and defined against each other ("the analytic" vs. "the continental"), or when two factions of the same school dissociate and struggle for the sole right to represent the movement and its legacy (Phalénians vs. Hägerströmians on "Uppsala philos-

30 "Och dock är det en tröst, att om förhållandena överallt medgåve full frihet åt filosofien, så skulle troligen den filosofiska tradition, som nu framstår som den mest vetenskapliga, bli den enda härskande".

ophy"). Philosophical labels are often coined by adversaries and loaded with a considerable pejorative weight ("Uppsala philosophy" or "value nihilism"), but by making the right moves, they can be neutralised, or even turned into weapons for the proponents themselves. It is also important to remember that the meaning of a philosophical label is not given once for all. For example, "value nihilism" was to a considerable extent filled with a new content by Hedenius, but by means of a consistent use of the same term, he succeeded in creating a sense of continuity. Finally, the example of "analytic philosophy" shows how an international conceptual innovation can be transferred and appropriated in a national context by giving it a domestic history and background.

More than anything, the rhetorical making of the analytic tradition in Sweden emphasises the importance of timing. It is surely justified to talk about a "Hedenian moment" in the 1940s, a particular *Spielzeitraum* during which the introduction of analytic philosophy in veil of Hägerström was possible.[31] The death of Hägerström in 1939 was, of course, absolutely crucial in this respect, as it balanced the contest between the Hägerströmian and the Phalénian factions of Uppsala philosophy and triggered a struggle for the right to the Hägerströmian legacy. With the grand old man alive it would hardly have been impossible for Hedenius to claim the value theory and to redescribe Uppsala philosophy as part of the analytic tradition. But Hedenius' move was also made possible by the central position that logical empiricism had gained in the international and the Nordic philosophical debates. During the 1930s logical empiricism had become a leading philosophical movement, presented to the world in many popular and wide-spread introductions such as Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic* (1936), Carnap's small pamphlets in the *Psyche* miniatures series (Carnap 1934; 1935), and von Mises' *Kleines Lehrbuch der Positivismus* (1939). Even if logical empiricism did not have a commanding representative in Sweden,[32] its central arguments were

31 J. G. A. Pocock (1975) famously used the word "moment" to designate a specific political situation in which a certain move was possible. Palonen (2003b: 65) notes that the idea has since been borrowed by Rosanvallon (1985) and Palonen (1998) himself.

32 Åke Petzäll (1901-1957), who later became Professor in Practical Philosophy in Lund (1939-1957) had written an introduction to logical empiricism already in 1931, but his efforts went largely unrecognised in an Upp-

undoubtedly familiar to the Swedish philosophical community. The philosophical situation in the neighbouring countries was immensely important in this respect. The strong position of logical empiricism in the Nordic countries and of the Nordic philosophers within the logical empiricist movement was manifested not least through the Second International Congress for the Unity of Science which was arranged in Copenhagen in 1936 with many Uppsala philosophers as guests. The logical empiricists Eino Kaila in Finland, Jørgen Jørgensen in Denmark and Arne Næss in Norway, assisted the transformation from Uppsala philosophy to analytic philosophy in many ways. Not only by taking part in the common-Nordic philosophical debate (for example in the journal *Theoria*), but also as referees in the nomination processes for the vacant chairs in philosophy in Sweden. For example, in the race for the chair in Theoretical Philosophy in Uppsala in 1945, Kaila strongly favoured Marc-Wogau and Hedenius who stood for an "Uppsala philosophy in progress", while claiming that an appointment of the orthodox Hägerströmian Martin Fries would represent "stagnation" (Kaila 1945-46, 11-12).[33] For Kaila, the time was ripe for Swedish philosophy to catch up with the philosophical development in more advanced countries.

Simultaneously, one must also recognise the fact that logical empiricism itself was in a process of transition during the 1940s. The exodus from continental Europe meant that logical empiricism was fused with British and American ideas, and gradually replaced both substantially and rhetorically by novelties such as "ordinary language philosophy", "philosophy of science" and "analytic philosophy". This transition certainly played to the advantage of Hedenius and his companions as they no longer were forced to import the "logical empiricism" which had been shunned by their predecessors within the Uppsala school. Instead they could participate in the making of something new, that is, analytic philosophy.

Finally, "the Hedenian moment" can also be said to have been char-

sala philosophy-dominated Swedish discussion.

33 "Hos [Marc-Wogau] – och likaså hos hans medsökande doc. Hedenius – kan man numera tala om uppsalafilosofi i utveckling" and "[Valet av Fries] skulle betyda ett stillastående och icke ett framåtskridande."

acterised by the political circumstances that Hedenius and his companions were able to draw upon in furthering their own position. Hedenius' move coincided providentially with the general cultural turn from Germany to Great Britain and the United States. Whereas "analytic philosophy" was framed as Anglophone and democratic, competing philosophies were burdened with associations to Germany and totalitarian modes of thinking. The radical political connotations that had marked Uppsala philosophy during the 1920s and 30s were largely transformed in the emerging Cold War context. No longer a radical argument against the conservative political and moral elite, "value nihilism" and "analytic philosophy" supported and legitimised the official political agenda of the neutral (and Social Democratic) Swedish establishment. It is not unlikely that these political connotations, together with the domestic roots that the analytic tradition was furnished with in the figure of Hägerström, can serve as an explanation for the comparatively strong and persistent analytic dominance in Swedish philosophy during the latter half of the 20th century, and for the rather hostile reception of Næss' book *Four Modern Philosophers – Carnap, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Sartre* in the mid-1960s.

The rhetorical making of the Swedish analytic tradition described above is an example of the ways in which a rhetorical-political perspective can open up for novel interpretations in the history of philosophy, and I am sure that a similar examination of, for example, the *Positivismusstreit* in Germany or the curious invention of "continental philosophy" in the English speaking world in the 1960s and 70s, would produce equally fascinating results. The time is certainly ripe to abandon the rather tedious debates on whether this or that philosopher is an analytic philosopher or not, in favour of a discussion of what particular intellectuals have tried to do in using philosophical labels such as "analytic philosophy".

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