



Ethics and the Will: Essays (Vienna Circle Collection)

Friedrich Waismann, Josef Schächter, Moritz Schlick

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INTRODUCTION The present volume unites contributions by the leading figure of the Vienna Circle and by two of his closest associates, contributions that deal with an area of thought represented, indeed, in this Collection but certainly not the central one in the common picture of the Circle's activities. It is no accident that an interest in ethics and the philosophy of action was particularly marked in what Neurath was apt to call the right wing of the Circle. For them, as for Wittgenstein (the respected mentor of Schlick and Waismann in particular), the advance to be hoped for in philosophy consisted not solely in freeing natural science from a confused sense of dependence on speculative metaphysics but also in seeing that other areas of language and action had to be thought about in their own terms, which were neither those of natural science nor those of philosophy as traditionally conceived. The scepticism of Schlick about the programme of Unified Science was well known: *Einheitswissenschaft* he called it, as it might be 'boozified science'. And in sober truth the programme sometimes masked a left-wing set of values taken (surely illogically) for granted, though the members of the Circle entertained a wide range of political views. Schlick's own contribution to the present volume is a section from the notes for one of his final lecture series, for sight of which we warmly thank the only surviving contributor to our volume, Dr Joseph Schachter: Schlick's grandson Dr. M. H. van de Velde has kindly consented to their publication. This section poses the problem we have outlined: there are questions and a need for clarification in ethics, but these no more demand a metaphysical solution than does a similar situation in epistemology. Here, as in his earlier *Problems of Ethics*, Schlick sets his face against the whole process, most obvious in Kant, of making the concept of value absolute. One might say that for Schlick there is no unhypothetical imperative.

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