INTRODUCTION:
ADAM WIEGNER’S NONSTANDARD EMPIRICISM

1. Adam Wiegner’s philosophical work belongs to the Polish brand of analytical philosophy, the Lvov-Warsaw School — though to its rather peripheral branches. The mainstream of the Lvov-Warsaw School was parallel to the German neopositivism and to the British empiricism, all of which were under the spell of Hume’s epistemology. By contrast, Wiegner was inspired by the tradition of neokantianism and proposed a theory that in many ways precedes the views developed later by K.R. Popper. Some of his epistemological views remain original to this day.

2. Here are the main epistemological ideas that were the reference point for A. Wiegner:
   I. Analytic-synthetic dualism. All beliefs are based either on the analysis of its component concepts or on the association of experiential data. The former can be certain if the analysis is correct, the latter can be at best probable. The content of the former is limited to the content of the concepts involved (analytic beliefs), the content of the latter is enriched through experience (synthetic beliefs).
   II. A priori synthetic beliefs are impossible. The combination of the two characteristics of certainty and contentfulness is excluded. Contentful (synthetic) beliefs are uncertain, certain (analytic) beliefs have no content. Metaphysics aspires to discovering certain and contentful truths. Its allegedly synthetic a priori claims are only illusions. The only disciplines whose claims have an epistemic value are mathematics and logic, on the one hand, and empirical sciences, on the other.
III. *Experiential dualism.* There are two kinds of experience: external (extraspection) and internal (introspection). The former is uncertain, at best probable. The latter is completely certain.

IV. *Atomistic nature of experience.* All experience — whether extraspective or introspective — is based on sense-data, which are the atoms of the mind. Sense-data represent particular simple features of the world. They are combined (in association) to represent more complex features. Various mental procedures lead to the creation of ever more complex ideas.

V. *Atheoretical nature of experience.* If sense-data constitute the ultimate basis for all our synthetic knowledge, they themselves cannot presuppose any knowledge of this kind. Sense-data are atheoretical and neither do they nor does our experience of them rely on any further presuppositions. To the contrary, any assumptions that may appear to be independent of experience can be ultimately reduced to configurations of sense-data.

Theses I, II, IV and V are ultimately based on D. Hume’s epistemology. Thesis III captures the Cartesian epistemology of experience. Adam Wiegner calls into question this epistemological paradigm by revising, or at least reinterpreting, theses III–V. In other words, he questions Hume’s conception of extraspection and completely undermines the Cartesian conception of introspection.

3. *Wiegner inherits the critique of Hume’s epistemology of extraspection from the Fries/Nelson version of neokantianism.* Two arguments are of particular importance:

Hume reduces the notion of a necessary connection to the recollection of a succession of impressions, i.e. to the association of one impression with another. As a result, the occurrence of one impression leads to the expectation that another impression will occur. But an expectation is something over and above a recollection. After the occurrence of one event we may expect another, which we did not have a chance to associate with the former — expectations go beyond an individual’s experience.

Experiencing a relation is something else than a relation between experiences. There is a relation between the experience of high heat and the experience of pain, but it is dubious whether it is identical to the experience of a relation between these two impressions. The former is objective relation between experiential facts, the latter is part of the conscious experience just like the just mentioned facts.

According to Wiegner, the critical tradition does not reach beyond Hume when the understanding of the basic structure of experience is concerned. It holds that sense-data ("impressions," "sensations") are the