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THE NEURATH–HALLER THESIS: AUSTRIA AND THE RISE OF SCIENTIFIC PHILOSOPHY

1. 'THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY'

It will be useful to begin by considering that peculiar creature of the North-American university which goes by the name of 'Continental philosophy'. There are many hundreds of courses with this title taught each year in universities throughout the United States and Canada—a practice that is questionable, to say the least, given that such courses prove on examination to deal not with philosophy on the continent of Europe as a whole, but rather with a highly selective slice of *Franco-German* philosophy, a slice which sometimes seems to include Heidegger as its sole fixed point. Around him is gathered a slowly rotating crew of currently fashionable, primarily French thinkers, each successive generation of which claims itself the 'end' of philosophy (or of 'man', or of 'reason', of 'the subject', of 'identity') as we know it, and competes with its predecessors in the wildness of the antics with which it sets out to support such claims. The later Husserl, Heidegger's teacher, is sometimes taken account of in courses of this Continental philosophy; not, however, Husserl's own teacher Brentano, and not, for example, such important twentieth-century German philosophers as Ernst Cassirer or Nicolai Hartmann. French philosophers working in the tradition of Poincaré (or Bergson or Gilson) are similarly ignored, as, of course, are Polish or Scandinavian or Czech philosophers.

What, then, is the moment of unity of this 'Continental philosophy'? What is it that Heidegger and, say, Derrida or Luce Irigaray have in common which distinguishes them from phenomenologists such as Reinach or Ingarden or the famous Daubert? The answer, it seems, is: *antipathy to science*, or more generally: antipathy to learning, to scholarly and investigative activity, to all the normal bourgeois purposes of the modern university. This is combined—in the case, certainly, of all French thinkers accredited as 'Continental philosophers'—with a substitution of politics for science (the former understood, again, in a somewhat generalized sense). Philosophy, since Heidegger, who all but terminated the previously healthy scientific line in phenomenology, becomes an only lightly disguised form of ideologically motivated social criticism, the disguise taking the form of styles of writing which—in their heady mixture of elements derived from near pornography and pseudo-scientific jargonizing inspired by sociology and psychoanalysis—have to be seen to be believed.[1]

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2. AUSTRIAN PHILOSOPHY

Here, however, it is the fate of philosophy in *Austria* which is our primary concern, and the first thing which strikes us on turning to this topic is the extent to which philosophers from Austria have fared so badly as concerns their admission into the pantheon of 'Continental philosophers'. Why should this be so? Why, to put the question from the other side, should there be so close an association in Austria between philosophy and science? Bernard Bolzano, Ernst Mach, Ludwig Boltzmann, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Ludwik Fleck, Vienna Circle, Karl Popper, Michael Polanyi, Paul Feyerabend, Wolfgang Stegmüller, Rudolf Haller, is after all an impressive list, however much one might disagree with the views and platforms of some of the individual figures mentioned.

Before canvassing an answer to this, our principal question, it is necessary to point out that even in Austria—and even in the innermost thickets of the Vienna Circle—the strictly scientific orientation was not without admixtures of a political sort. Indeed when the Vienna Circle manifesto was published in 1929 under the title "Scientific Conception of the World", Moritz Schlick, to whom the work was dedicated, was dissatisfied with the result precisely because he was not taken by the conception of the circle as a 'movement' of any sort, favouring a more modest and more strictly scientific approach. As Heinrich Neider puts it in his interview with Haller and Rutte of 1977: 'Schlick hated everything that smacked of agitation, was against it all'. And in Schlick's own words:

> It is not necessary for us to agitate: that we can leave to the political parties: in science we say what we have found, we hope to say the truth; and if it is the truth, then it will win out[2]

Or, as Thomas Masaryk expressed it in the words he chose in 1918 as the State Motto of the new Czechoslovak Republic: *the truth shall prevail!*

Neurath, on the other hand, someone who would one year later serve in the central planning office of the erstwhile Bavarian Soviet Republic, propounded *agitation*. He, it seems, was a person who

> looked at everything—ideas as well as facts—through an often distorting lens of socialist philosophy and with an eye to the possible effects of the ideas and facts on a socialization of society. I have never seen a scholar as consistently obsessed with an idea and an ideal as Neurath. (Menger 1994, p. 60)

For the 'proletarian front', as Neurath puts it, 'military technique and propaganda-interest coincide with the holding high of science and the overcoming of metaphysics'.[3]

3. TRUTH VS. AGITATION

There is indeed a subtle tension by which the practice of scientific philosophy in Austria has been marked since its inception in the work of Bolzano, the tension between *science*, on the one hand, and *politics*, on the other; between *truth* and *agitation*—or between *Schlick* and *Neurath*, as we might also say—a tension whose subtlety derives from the fact that it is *truth* or *science* on whose behalf such agitation is incited. The tension is present in the very system of higher education in Austria, under which successive Ministers of Science (and even, most strikingly in the case of Brentano, the Emperor himself) have played an important role in appointing—and disappointing—university professors in their posts. But the tension is present also, and more importantly for our purposes, in the very talk of 'Austrian philosophy'—as also in talk of 'Continental' or 'French' or 'Polish' or even 'women's' philosophy—talk which smacks not a little of earlier talk (of 'Aryan' chemistry, and the like) of a sort which should surely be anathema to those who have embraced the scientific conception of the world and who believe that it is the truth that we should be striving to find, and that, if it is the truth, then it will win out.

Some, however, have defended the thesis that Viennese positivism ought to be viewed precisely in a political light. In particular the Viennese sociologist-historian Friedrich Stadler has provided a large body of documentation to support a case along these lines. Stadler suggests that we see the University of Vienna in the interwar period as split into 'two camps':

> on the one side, in the realm of scientific philosophy, there dominated democratic (enlightenment, liberal, socialist) tendencies; on the other side there was a spectrum of almost all forms of anti-democratic feeling, from neo-romantic conservatism to fascist-totalitarian outgrowths. Thus it is tempting to see philosophical life [in interwar Vienna] as part of the fierce party-political *Kulturkampf* of the time, between the bourgeois camp and the workers' movement (Stadler 1979, p. 42).[4]

A similar thesis is defended by Ayer, who encountered the Vienna Circle on his honeymoon in Austria in 1932:

> The members of the Vienna Circle, with the notable exception of Otto Neurath, were not greatly interested in politics, but theirs was also a political movement. The war of ideas which they were waging against the Catholic church had its part in the perennial Viennese conflict between the socialists and the clerical reaction. (Ayer 1977, p. 129)

And as Dvorak formulates the matter, citing Neurath:

In light of the fact that the bourgeoisie—especially in Central Europe—had discharged itself of all enlightenment traditions and paid homage rather to the cults of irrationalism, while the proletariat struggled for a rational formation of society, the hope certainly prevailed that "It is precisely the proletariat which will become the carrier of a science without metaphysics". (1985, p. 142)[5]

In regard to Austrian society in general between the wars, the 'two camp' thesis has a certain plausibility. It can on no account, however, be translated into a thesis according to which the flowering of scientific philosophy in interwar Vienna might be accounted for by regarding the work of the Schlick circle as a manifestation of Austrian socialism, or of anti-clericalism, or as a part of 'a non-capitalist socialization of science, a radical democratization of science'.[6] Socialist anti-clericalism did not, after all, lead to similar phenomena in France, or Spain, or Italy. Moreover, the too slavish adherence to the two camp thesis has led on the part of its adherents to an undervaluation of the role, discussed at greater length below, of the Brentanists and other groups far from socialism in preparing the ground for scientific philosophy in Vienna and elsewhere in the decades preceding the founding of the Vienna circle. More importantly still, the thesis is not able to cope with the fact that so few important Austrian philosophers of science, and not even a majority of the members of the Vienna Circle, were of socialist persuasion.[7] Indeed as far as the philosophers in interwar Vienna are concerned we must be careful to distinguish three groups: the left (Neurath and his brother-in-law Hahn), the right ('Christian socialists', Othmar Spann, *et al.*, otherwise dominant in the University, especially in the medical and legal faculties), and those of an English-style liberal persuasion (Schlick, Mises, Popper, Hayek) in between.[8] This third group, as history proved, enjoyed under the then obtaining circumstances a highly tenuous position. (When, in 1936, Schlick was shot by a paranoiac former student on the steps to the auditorium of the University of Vienna, newspapers close to the government saw the incident as a response to Schlick's 'corrosive' philosophy.) Yet its ideas have shown themselves in the longer run to be of first importance.

It was Neurath's conspicuous advocacy of crackpot schemes for 'international planning for freedom' associated with the project of an 'economy in kind' as a substitute for prices and markets which dissuaded Hayek from making overtures to the Schlick group after his interest had been sparked by his friend and fellow member of the Ludwig von Mises circle Felix Kaufmann.[9] As already the case of Schlick himself makes clear, however, it would be overly simplistic to see the circle in particular or Viennese scientific philosophy in general as in any sense a part of the Austrian socialist movement. Certainly it is interesting that Austrian scientific philosophy (and

above all the thought of Mach) exerted some influence upon Austro-Marxists such as Friedrich Adler. Another Austro-Marxist, Otto Bauer, came to value the work of the Vienna circle enough to view logical positivism as pointing the way forward for Marxist materialism itself. But the idea of a two camp theory which would align all honest, scientifically-minded thinkers in Vienna with progressivism, positivism and the Viennese socialist city government, and would have them standing opposed to Catholicism, fascism and other dark forces, breaks down precisely when confronted with liberal or conservative intellectuals such as Schlick, Kraft, Waismann, Menger, Kaufmann and even Wittgenstein.

4. THE LATE FLOWERING OF LIBERALISM

How, then, are we to explain the dominance of an analytic, scientific orientation of philosophy in Austria, and especially in Vienna between the wars? One answer to this question, due to J. C. Nyíri, might read as follows. Austria, by the end of the nineteenth century, clearly lagged behind its more developed Western neighbours in matters of intellect and science. The Empire, it is often held,[10] had witnessed a relatively late process of urbanization, bringing also a late development of those liberal habits and values which would seem to be a presupposition of the modern, scientific attitude. It therefore lacked institutions of scientific research of the sort that had been founded in Germany since the time of von Humboldt. On the other hand, as more liberal ways began to be established in Austria—effectively in the second half of the nineteenth century—the desire to enjoy the trappings of a modern enlightened culture made itself felt. The Austrians were not of course in a position to summon forth the means to create reputable institutions and traditions of science in the narrow sense, and this, as Nyíri puts it, created 'a vacuum which the *theory* of a practice so attractively pursued elsewhere could then fill' (1986, p. 143).

Nyíri's thesis might be held to be illustrated particularly clearly by the case of Boltzmann, whose lack of funds for serious experimental work seems to have constrained him to turn instead to the (cheaper) field of theoretical physics, as also to work in philosophy. (A variant of the thesis may be used to explain the comparative advantage of smaller countries in certain fields not requiring vast research expenditures—for example of Finland and Hungary in the field of mathematics.)

The Nyíri account has its problems, however. The liberal, scientific, enlightenment revolutions in England, France and Holland came *before* massive urbanization, which was indeed to no small degree a *product* of

science and liberalism (having been made possible, *inter alia,* by Pascal's invention of the omnibus). It will not do, moreover, to provide an explanation of developments in the intellectual or cultural sphere exclusively by appeal to underlying social or economic factors. Explanations of this kind have been found tempting by Marxist thinkers and by other advocates of a broadly economic approach to human behaviour. Where, however, we are dealing with complex movements of thought and doctrine, such explanations can be at best only partial. For they rarely give us the needed insight into the precise intellectual content of the movements in question. Why should the Austrians' initial substitute for true scientific development have taken precisely these (phenomenalist and physicalist) forms, rather than those? What is to account for the peculiar blend of British empiricism and Russellian logic which provided the basic framework within which, in their various ways, the members of the Schlick circle would operate?

Clearly, and for all the dominance of schools and movements in any particular case, we must point to the influence of specific *individuals* if we are to be in a position to provide satisfactory answers to questions such as these. And there are a number of candidate individuals who come to mind in this connection, including Boltzmann (whose vision of a unitary science made itself felt not only among physicists but also in the wider intellectual community in Vienna) and Wittgenstein (whose *Tractatus* exerted a not inconsiderable influence on both Schlick and Carnap in precisely the formative years of the Vienna Circle). We may presume, reasonably, that no social or economic explanation of the genius of Boltzmann or Wittgenstein (or Gödel, or Einstein) would be forthcoming. Equally we may presume that no social or economic explanation will be forthcoming of the peculiar *longevity* of Brentano (1838–1917) and the members of his wider circle—Marty (1847–1914), Stumpf (1848–1936), Meinong (1853–1920), Höfler (1853–1922), Husserl (1859–1931), Ehrenfels (1859–1932), Twardowski (1866–1938)—who did so much to spread the gospel of scientific philosophy throughout the Empire and beyond.

5. THE NEURATH THESIS

Even when all of this is granted, however, it would still be insufficient to look at individuals in abstraction from the wider social and institutional context in which they worked. This is not only because the individual is shaped by his surrounding culture. It is also, and more importantly, because his ideas will be able to take root in this culture only to the extent that they strike a congenial chord in the thinking of those to whom they are addressed.

More importantly, however, an individual, even an individual of genius—and even an individual of genius of great longevity—will be able to exert an influence upon his contemporaries only to the extent that there are *institutions* which can facilitate the dissemination of his ideas.

Hence there is a need, in regard to our specific problem of the rise of scientific philosophy in interwar Vienna, to provide a mixed explanation, one that makes room both for institutional and economic and sociopolitical factors of the kind so far considered and also for the serendipitous role of individuals. A forceful and coherent explanation along exactly these lines has been provided by Neurath himself, in the section labelled "Prehistory" of the Vienna circle manifesto.

Vienna, Neurath argues, provided especially fertile soil for the development of the scientific conception of philosophy because of the growth of liberalism in Vienna in the second half of the nineteenth century, and of an anti-metaphysical spirit which stemmed from the enlightenment, from empiricism, utilitarianism and the free trade movement of England. Mach, too, was a product of this Viennese liberal enlightenment, and the same anti-metaphysical attitudes manifested themselves in Mach's attempt to 'purify' empirical science of metaphysical notions:

> We recall his critique of absolute space which made him a forerunner of Einstein, his struggle against the metaphysics of the thing-in-itself and of the concept of substance, and his investigations of the construction of the concepts of science from ultimate elements, namely sense data. (Neurath 1929, p. 302 of translation)

The influence of Mach and of his successor Boltzmann, Neurath now argues, 'makes it understandable' why there was in Vienna 'a lively dominant interest in the epistemological and logical problems that are linked with the foundations of physics'. Thus Hayek, for example, reports that he and his contemporaries, upon arriving in Vienna to take up their studies in the immediate post-war years, 'found in Mach almost the only arguments against a metaphysical and mystificatory attitude' such as was manifested by the dominant philosophers in the University at the time.[11]

Neurath mentions further a number of Viennese social thinkers, from both the Marxist and the non-Marxist camps, who had 'served consciously in the spirit of the enlightenment' in the late nineteenth century.[12] Thus 'in the sphere of political economy, too, a rigorously scientific method was cultivated by the school of marginal utility' which Carl Menger (father of Karl) had founded in 1871.

Neurath mentions in his account of the Viennese prehistory of logical positivism also the role of Franz Brentano. As Neurath himself puts it, the

ground was cleared for the endeavours of the Vienna circle in the direction of a reform of logic and of a concern with problems of foundations also by Brentano:

As a Catholic priest Brentano had an understanding for scholasticism; he started directly from the scholastic logic and from Leibniz's endeavours to reform logic, while leaving aside Kant and the idealist system-philosophers. Brentano and his students showed time and again their understanding of men like Bolzano and others who were working toward a rigorous new foundation of logic. (*Op. cit.*, p. 302)

Brentano, too, was marked by the Austrian liberalism of the nineteenth century. Thus for example he played an instrumental role in commissioning the young Sigmund Freud to translate one of the volumes—a collection of writings on female emancipation, socialism and Plato—in the Gomperz edition of the works of Mill. (Freud was himself for a time a devoted admirer of Brentano's work, though his youthful devotion seems to have been quashed, for reasons as yet unexplained, on a trip to Manchester during the early period of his studies in Vienna.) It is remarkable, finally, in support of Neurath's contention as to the importance of Brentano, to consider the degree to which the centres of scientific philosophy in Europe—Vienna, Prague, Lemberg, Graz, Berlin, Göttingen—were precisely those cities in which Brentano's most distinguished students had held chairs in philosophy from the 1890's onwards.

6. THE NEURATH-HALLER THESIS

Brentano was not only sympathetic to the idea of a rigorously scientific method in philosophy; he also shared with the British empiricists and with the Vienna positivists an anti-metaphysical orientation, manifesting an especially forceful antipathy to the 'mystical paraphilosophy' of the German idealists and stressing in all his work the unity of scientific method. Brentano's writings involve the use of methods of language analysis similar in some respects to those developed later by philosophers in England. Moreover, he and his students encouraged teamwork amongst themselves as well as an active collaboration with logicians, psychologists and the representatives of other extra-philosophical disciplines.

Rudolf Haller, now, has developed Neurath's account of the rise of Viennese positivism along the lines set forth above, and transformed it into a thesis to the effect that these and certain related features—which were shared in common not only by the Brentanists and the logical positivists but also by thinkers as diverse as Mach and Wittgenstein—serve to constitute a separate Austrian line of *regional or national philosophy*. Haller's writings on the

history of this 'Austrian philosophy',[13] have extended and clarified, and even institutionalized,[14] the Neurath doctrine.

But now, if this Neurath-Haller thesis can be accepted, if, in other words, it can truly be accepted that there exists a separate and internally coherent tradition of *Austrian philosophy*, then it follows that the Vienna Circle itself comes to be linked, via Brentano, to Catholic scholasticism. And one could go further, and point to the *method* of communal philosophy—of philosophizing by means of a sometimes ritualized process of discussion and argument—as something that is shared, not merely by Brentano and the medieval schoolmen, but also by Schlick, with his Thursday-evening discussion-circle, and by Wittgenstein in his cell in Cambridge.[15]

7. PROBLEMS WITH THE NEURATH-HALLER THESIS

Haller's own formulation of what I have called the Neurath-Haller thesis is to be found in his paper "Wittgenstein and Austrian Philosophy":

> I wish ... to defend two theses: first, that in the last 100 years there has taken place an independent development of a specifically *Austrian philosophy*, opposed to the philosophical currents of the remainder of the German-speaking world; and secondly that this development can sustain a genetic model which permits us to affirm an intrinsic homogeneity of Austrian philosophy up to the Vienna Circle and its descendants. (1981, p. 92)

The thesis, however superficially convincing, is not without its problems. Thus, to take just one example, while it seems that the works of Brentano, like those of Meinong and Husserl, were mentioned in discussions of the Vienna Circle, in the case of Brentano, at least, these writings were discussed primarily because Brentanian ethics was chosen by Schlick as a special object of scorn.

The Neurath-Haller thesis has been attacked, too, by Friedrich Stadler, who is reluctant to accept the running together of the 'two camps' of Catholic reaction and progressive socialist neopositivism (of darkness and light) which the thesis implies. Thus Stadler has pointed out, correctly, that—in contrast to the picture of the typical Austrian philosopher painted by Neurath and Haller—the influence of logical positivist ideas, or of scientific philosophy in general, was in fact rather small, at least as concerns the official life of the University of Vienna in the period from 1918 to 1938. He has pointed out also that what predominated in this period, both in lecture courses and in dissertation topics, was the history of philosophy of a rather old-fashioned sort, dealing in Kant, Schopenhauer, Spinoza, Plato, Nietzsche.[16] The circle around

Schlick can be seen from this perspective to have consisted largely of philosophical cranks and dabblers, or of mathematicians, fashioners of "ideal languages", individuals who would be taken seriously as *philosophers* only later, and then initially only outside the borders of Austria itself.

A somewhat different sort of criticism turns on the fact that the suggestion that there exists a separate line of 'Austrian philosophy' must surely constitute a sort of insult to the good citizens of Austria. For it amounts to the thesis that philosophy in Austria is something outside of and apart from the tradition of German-language philosophy as a whole. The educated Austrian surely wants to believe, after all, that the intellectual tradition of his motherland is allied with, is indeed part and parcel of, the great tradition of Kant, Goethe, Fichte, Lessing, Schiller—of the *Land der Dichter und Denker.* To ask young Austrian philosophers to concentrate their energies on native tributaries in the suggested fashion—the tributaries of Otto Neurath or Otto Weininger—for reasons of national pride or loyalty—would surely imply a restriction on their interests as radical as that which would be involved if young literature students in Canada or Wales were forbidden to read Chaucer or Shakespeare or Milton.

8. LANGUAGE AND STYLE

The attitude I have in mind, a still widespread attitude of dismissal at the very idea of a special 'Austrian philosophy', can be illustrated very clearly in the case of Edmund Husserl, the great German-speaking Jewish-Austrian philosopher from Habsburg Moravia, whose newly published correspondence reveals a thinker who conceives himself precisely as the legitimate heir of the *German* culture of Lessing, Herder, Schiller and Goethe, and who takes it for granted that it is the historical mission of the German people 'to light the way for all other peoples in philosophy'. Husserl, like his teacher Brentano, at no stage conceives his own philosophy in light of any putative distinction between 'Austrian' and 'German' traditions, and when he refers to 'my old Austria' he does so in purely geographical terms. Indeed like Meinong and Frege, Husserl was from at least around 1910 a self-styled 'National-Deutscher' (though unlike Meinong and Frege he was not an antisemite). Like almost all German academics he became caught up in the furore of German nationalism at the start of the First World War, and he looked forward at its close to the 'longed-for unification of German-Austria and Germany'.[17]

Yet as everyone can testify who is familiar with Husserl's early logical writings or with the work of Bolzano, Brentano oder Mach, there are radical differences of *style* and of mode of philosophizing as between these Germanophone philosophers standardly associated with Austria and those, such

as Hegel, Heidegger, or Habermas, associated with Germany proper.[18] Most simply put: the former employ a sober, scientific style, and shun pretentions. There are also other striking and systematic differences, for example in the degree to which the German, but not the Austrian, line is marked by a sort of philosophical *hagiography*. (Thus there are Kant- and Hegel-"breviaries" which one can buy in German bookshops, alongside similar compilations of gnomic or uplifting sayings drawn from the writings of Goethe or Lutheror Jacob Boehme.) There are also the differences adverted to already above—pertaining to the differential role of science and logic as opposed to that of politics in the two traditions—differences which serve to explain why it is (certain selected) German and not Austrian philosophers who have been taken up into the bosom of 'Continental philosophy' in North America. These are differences which, as we shall see, are deeply and historically rooted, and they do much to explain why Germany—in spite of the fact that it has brought forth such giants of mathematical logic as Frege, Hilbert and Gentzen—has taken so long to develop a community of analytic philosophers on its home-territory, and why not a few of those most centrally responsible for this development—above all Wolfgang Stegmüller—have hailed from Austria.[19]

Haller himself expresses it thus:

as we could easily confirm at every stage, academic geography has played an extensive role in determining the historical dispersal of ideas. Whilst in Germany it was the influence of Husserl, and later of Heidegger which grew, and remained dominant right up until the '60s of this century, neither the remaining Brentano School nor the philosophy of the Vienna Circle [has] been able to establish a foothold in German universities; empiricism just does not seem to flourish in every climate. (1981, p. 97)[20]

9. THE SICK MAN OF EUROPE

Perhaps, then, we should reformulate our initial question as to why scientific philosophy should have taken root in (Catholic) Austria and ask instead why such philosophy should have to such a great extent failed to flourish in (Protestant, northern) Germany. And here again we might turn first to Neurath, who provides an explanation of this failure in religious terms:

Catholics accept a compact body of dogma and place it at the beginning of their reflections, [thus] they are sometimes able to devote themselves to systematic logical analysis, unburdened by any metaphysical details. ... Once someone in the Catholic camp begins to have doubts about a dogma, he can free himself with particular ease from the whole set of dogmas and is then left a very effective logical instrument in his possession. Not so in the

Lutheran camp, where ... many philosophers and scholars from all disciplines, while avoiding a commitment to a clear body of dogma, have retained half-metaphysical or quarter-metaphysical turns of speech, the last remnants of a theology which has not yet been completely superseded. ... This may explain why the linguistic analysis of unified science prevailed least in countries where the Lutheran faith had dealt the hardest blows to the Catholic church, despite the fact that technology and the sciences that go along with it are highly developed in these countries. (Neurath 1933, p. 277 of translation)

Hence, Neurath claims (somewhat over-optimistically), the 'revolt against the metaphysical tradition is succeeding outside Lutheran countries in Calvinistic as well as in Catholic ones' and he notes with pride that there are in Austria 'no such metaphysical autocrats as Heidegger, Rickert or others' (*loc. cit.*).

Unfortunately for Neurath, however, Heidegger himself was steeped rather in Catholic than in Lutheran metaphysics as a young man; and as we have already noted, there are many Catholic countries in other respects comparable to Austria where logical empiricism and analytic philosophy have failed to take substantial root, just as there are Lutheran countries (Finland is here the most striking example), and of course countries of Anglican-Episcopalian filiation—not mentioned at all by Neurath—which have served as the veritable bastions of the analytic tradition.

One must clearly look elsewhere; and from this perspective it seems that features not of religion but of the political history of the Germans (as contrasted to that of the English or the Austrians) are of particular relevance. For philosophy has come to play a role in the political consciousness of the German state in a way that it has not in that of England or Austria. Just as England has its National Theatre, we might say, so Germany has its own National Philosophy: Kant, Fichte and Hegel, like Goethe and Schiller, are national monuments of the German people, whose memory is held sacred not least because they are seen, retrospectively, as having been involved in creating that unified national consciousness which made possible Germany itself as a unified nation state. Philosophers and philosophical master-texts have thus acquired a role in the history of Germany that is analogous to the role of Homer in the history of Greece or of Shakespeare and the Magna Carta in the History of the English.

The characteristic property of such master texts, now, be they master texts of a religion, a sect, a people or a culture, is their tendency to spawn a commentary literature, with all that this implies by way of association with the commentary literatures on, for example, Aristotle, the Bible, or the writings of Marx and Engels.[21] It cannot be emphasized too often that German philosophers have for at least a century been schooled systematically in the habits of a philosophical culture in which the most important textual models have that sort of status, and that sort of density and obscurity, which is

associated with the need for commentaries. They grow up further in a philosophical culture which is sealed off by firm disciplinary boundaries from the empirical sciences and which places a high value not on consistency and clarity but rather on 'depth' and 'authenticity'. The work of the philosopher—as of the poet—is after all an expression of the national spirit (as Herder, long before Heidegger, and in much the same tone, insisted); hence also it should not be seen as subject to revision, or to second, more carefully considered thoughts on the part of its author, nor (*a fortiorissimo*) to criticism on the part of others; rather it should be conveyed to the reader as far as possible in the 'authentic' form in which it was first put down, as a direct expression of the author's soul or 'spirit'. Consider, in this context, the mind-deadeningly repetitive stream-of-consciousness rantings of Derrida, who shows how, in this as in so much else, French philosophy (or more precisely: that part of French philosophy that is dubbed 'Continental'), has become little more than a parody of its German model.[22] Teamwork and the exercise of mutual criticism and persistent argument, and indeed the search for any sort of 'truth' in philosophy, are in French and German C.P.-philosophy simply out of place.[23]

In the wider world, however, it is not classical German idealism, with its political and historical associations, but rather empirical, or at least scientifically oriented, philosophy that has for a long time come to constitute the contemporary mainstream. The latter is, for reasons not altogether accidental, a philosophy which values logic, argument and technical competence more highly than those literary, ideological and historical qualities which are at a premium in certain philosophical circles in Germany and France. Moreover it seems likely to be the case that (whether for good or ill), as the discipline of philosophy becomes ever more a creature of the modern university, it will come to be marked to increasing degrees by the factor of professionalization, so that respect for technical competence and for the scientific method, and the rejection of hagiography and the use of a mystificatory style, will come increasingly to characterize the discipline of philosophy as a whole.[24]

The most prominent Austrian philosophers have accordingly, as we might put it, been speaking prose all along without knowing it. Or to put the point another way: Haller's institutional account of the rise of regional or national philosophies in Europe ought most properly to be seen as applying not to Austria at all, but rather to Germany (and France), where the political and literary associations of philosophy have had, from the perspective of the disciplinary mainstream, serious negative consequences in holding back the development of philosophy in ways which have become ever more striking in recent decades.

If, now, we return to our question as to how we are to explain the rise of scientific philosophy in *Austria*, then we can see that this question in fact needs no answer. In Austria, exactly as in Poland and Scandinavia, and exactly as in England and the rest of the Anglosaxophone world, the rise of scientific philosophy is an inevitable concomitant of the simple process of modernization.[25] 'Austrian philosophy', for all its usefulness in combining together in a single unity the philosophies of Vienna, Graz and Lemberg, of Bolzanians, Machians and Brentanists, is thus a misnomer to the degree that it suggests, erroneously, that there is a corresponding sectarian or regional or ethnic philosophy. For Austrian philosophy is philosophy *per se,* part and parcel of the mainstream of world philosophy: it is that part of German-language philosophy which meets international standards of rigour, professionalism and specialization.[26]

In this respect, to repeat the point, it is Germany, not Austria, which is the special case, Germany which is *the philosophical sick man of Europe.*

Austrian philosophy after the Second World War could of course have very easily gone either way. It could have become, like German, or Bulgarian, philosophy, a backwater, shipwrecked on the reef of history (and such was indeed for a time the fate of philosophy in Vienna). That it did not in this fashion get stranded on the paraphilosophical fringe; that it did not go the zany way of French (Parisian) philosophy and become reduced to the level of a mere sect, is due primarily to one individual—an individual, as we all hope, of great longevity—it is due to Rudolf Haller. In this respect it may be said that one signal contribution of Rudolf Haller to the philosophy of the twentieth century has been to ensure that there is no such thing as 'Austrian philosophy'.

10. THE LAW OF CONSERVATION OF SPREAD

In analogy with the physicist's law of conservation of matter (and with Robert Musil's law of the conservation of happiness), one might venture to formulate also a law of conservation of the various branches of intellectual concern which have traditionally, in the West, been grouped together under the heading 'philosophy'. If one or other of these branches is in one way or another suppressed, or so we might hazard, then it will somehow find a way to force itself through in some new, unexpected territory, or in some other, perhaps bastardized, form. (To paraphrase Bacon on matter and its protean nature: should we drive it to extremities with the purpose of reducing it to nothing, then it will, finding itself in these straits, turn and transform itself into strange shapes, passing from one change to another till it has gone through the whole circle.[27]) If Marxist philosophy, broadly conceived, is no longer able to

be taken seriously in the fields of economics or political theory, then it will rise again in the field of, say, comparative literature (T. Eagleton *et al.*) or of linguistic pragmatism (J. Habermas, K.-O. Apel). Something like this, I suggest, has been the fate of many of the classical philosophical concerns now customarily dealt with by those pleased to call themselves 'Continental philosophers', many of whom are of course assembled not in philosophy departments but in womens studies and 'humanities' centres, in departments of film studies, and so forth.

But now, one reason for the explosive growth of C.P.-philosophy in these extra-philosophical environs in recent decades lies in the fact that the philosophers proper have too often ignored the corresponding issues and areas of concern, having devoted their primary energies rather to logic and to other, more technical branches of our discipline. Other fields of traditional philosophical concern have in this way been left clear for fools, knaves, and others, who have rushed in to fill the vacuum thereby created. Part of the blame for the excesses of the latter is, accordingly, to be laid squarely at the door of Carnap and Ryle.

How, now, should those—the contemporary heirs of Schlick and Masaryk, be they in Providence or Canberra, in Helsinki or Graz—who believe in truth in philosophy, react to these developments? Should they simply ignore 'Continental philosophy' and the text- and commentary-based traditions of philosophizing in Germany and France from out of which it grew, in the hope that they will simply go away? Should they, as is now all too customary, allow the inhabitants of the C.P.-ghetto of Heideggerians, Derridians and Irigarians to perform their antics undisturbed, whether in the spirit of pluralistic tolerance or in that of scornful disdain? To react in this fashion would, I believe, be a great mistake. This is not, be it noted, because I believe that the proper reaction to the cynicisms, relativisms and irrationalisms which predominate in so many corners of our 'postmodern' world would be to form a new 'movement' charged with agitation on behalf of the scientific world-conception along the lines promulgated by the 'linker Flügel' of the Vienna Circle. For as Schlick, however dimly, saw, the formation of a movement of 'scientific philosophy'—to be ranked alongside 'women's philosophy', 'Australian regional philosophy', and the like—can only contribute to the widespread confusion of supposing that there are *different sorts of truth*: scientific truth, women's truth, aboriginal truth, Kiwi truth, and so on.

Rather, we should orient ourselves more steadfastly around the idea that it is the proper business of philosophy to search for truth simpliciter, including truth in the various fields of the history of philosophy. This, surely, must imply also a search for truth even in relation to those byways of philosophical history and of philosophical concern which do not fit well into the customary

and rather narrow picture of philosophical history that has been favoured by analytic philosophers hitherto. It must imply, indeed, a search for truth in the history of German and even of French philosophy in all its breadth. Here, too, something like rigour and technical competence is possible, as the best scholars in the fields of the history of philosophy and of textual scholarship have demonstrated.

It would be one incidental benefit of the study of the history of philosophy along these lines that it would help to make clear to philosophers and others that in former times, too, which is to say in previous dark ages of philosophical development, generations of philosophers have repeatedly been wont to declare themselves as constituting the 'end' of philosophy as we know it and have engaged in competition with their predecessors in the wildness of the antics with which they set out to support such claims.[28] On the other hand, however, it will become clear also to the student of this catholic history of philosophy that such dark periods in philosophical history were in each case succeeded by new and healthier phases, in which truth and reason were once more, and with renewed vigour, given their due.

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NOTES

1. Consider the following characteristically pretentious passage, chosen at random from Derrida's *Spurs,* in which Derrida seems to be arguing that the concepts of *truth* and *castration*, hitherto commonly held to be distinct, are in fact identical:

> The feminine distance abstracts truth from itself in a *suspension* of the relation with castration. This relation is suspended much as one might tauten or stretch a canvas, or a relation, which nevertheless remains—suspended—in indecision. In the *epoché*. It is with castration that this relation is suspended, not with the truth of castration—in which the woman does [not*] believe anyway—and not with the truth inasmuch as it might be castration. Nor is it the relation with truth-castration that is suspended, for that is precisely a man's affair. That is the masculine *concern,* the *concern* of the male who has never come of age, who is never sufficiently sceptical or dissimulating. In such an affair the male, in his credulousness and naivety (which is always sexual, always pretending even at times to masterful expertise), castrates himself and from the secretion of his act fashions the snare of truth-castration. (Perhaps at this point one ought to interrogate—and "unboss"—the metaphorical fullblown sail of truth's declamation, of the castration and phallocentrism, for example in Lacan's discourse). (1978, pp. 59f.)

*The 'not' is left out by the translator, to no apparent consequence

2. Haller and Rutte 1977, p. 31
3. Neurath 1981, vol. I, p. 355, quoted by Haller 1993, p. 157.
4. We note hereby the regrettable shift from the careful statement in the first sentence of this passage to the convenient ideological simplification of the second sentence.

5. Compare also the passages from Neurath cited by Wartofsky 1982, pp. 94: 'the fight against metaphysics and theology meant the destruction of the bourgeois world-order'; 'Whoever joins the proletariat can say with justification that he joins love and reason.' 'It is precisely Marxism that uncovers indirect relations and detours, and thus might ascertain that cultivating pure logic and the most general problems of mathematics and physics is especially favorable to revolutionary thinking.' Such passages are, gratifyingly, absent from Neurath's writings from about 1933 onwards.
6. Dvorak 1985, p. 134. On pp. 139f. of this work Dvorak puts forward a derivation of the idea of unified science from the Marxist doctrine of historical materialism.
7. Apart from Neurath and Hahn (the *Vorsitzende des Bundes der sozialistischen Professoren*), Frank, Carnap and Zilsel were strong socialists, and even Gödel for some time wondered if he should support the Communists. Socialists were represented, too, in the institute of Karl Bühler, for example by Lazarsfeld and Jahoda.
8. As Heinrich Neider puts it:

> Schlick was a man who had no sympathy at all for politics and the state; he was a liberal in the old sense, for whom the fire brigade and the police were admitted as at best a necessary evil. Otherwise one did not need the state at all. (Haller and Rutte 1977, p. 24)

9. Personal communication of Professor Hayek.
10. For another view see Good 1984.
11. Hayek continues, 'from Mach one was then led on to Helmholtz, to Poincaré and to similar thinkers, and of course, for those who went into the matter systematically such as my friend Karl Popper, to all the natural scientists and philosophers of the period' (Hayek 1966, pp. 42f.).
12. *Op.cit.*, p. 303. A comprehensive discussion of this aspect of the development of positivism in Austria is provided by Stadler 1982.
13. Collected as Haller 1979; see also his 1981, 1986a, 1988, 1993 and the (in many respects definitive) essay "Zur Historiographie der österreichischen Philosophie" of 1986. On the 'Neurath-Haller thesis' see also Uebel 1994, p. 632.
14. Through the foundation of the *Forschungsstelle und Dokumentationszentrum für österreichische Philosophie* in Graz.
15. From various sources we learn that it was the possibility of *genuine discussion* which was the reason why Wittgenstein so often felt the need to return to Cambridge.
16. Stadler 1979, p. 43. Compare also Menger 1994, p. 17.
17. Husserl's views in this connection are presented in more detail in Smith 1995.
18. See Smith 1991 and Mulligan 1993.
19. More precisely, in Stegmüller's case, from the South Tyrol.
20. For a more forceful expression of this point, see Duhem1991, pp. 16ff., 67. One should of course point out that it is not in every sphere that there is a line of division between what is 'Austrian' and what is 'German' in the sense at issue here. Even the division between Austrian and Germany philosophy becomes established only in the second half of the nineteenth century.
21. See Smith 1991a
22. Thus consider Derrida (in a typically repetitive nonsense-passage) on the theory of relativity:

> The Einsteinian constant is not a constant, not a center. It is the very concept of variability—it is, finally, the concept of the game. In other words, it is not the concept of some thing—of a center from which an observer could master the field—but the very concept of the game. (1970, p. 267)

23. See Puntel 1991.

24. This prognosis may be over-optimistic: in American C.P.-circles hagiography is explicitly embraced, as an element in the contemporary 'critique of the discursive politics of truth'; see, for a representative sample, Halperin 1995, pp. 6, 15f., 25ff.
25. On this whole issue see my forthcoming papers: "Why Polish Philosophy Does Not Exist", "The Non-Existence of Scandinavian Philosophy", "Canadian Philosophy: A Misnomer", "Against Australasian Regional Philosophy", etc.
26. Dahms reveals his misunderstanding of the relevance of the last-mentioned feature when he expresses his regret that the 'academization' which befell the Vienna Circle through the emigration of its members above all to the United States 'had as a consequence also the neglect of questions concerning the social circumstances and consequences of science of a sort which for Neurath, Zilsel and Frank had been a matter of course.' (1987, p. 106. See also Dahms 1985, pp. 25, 354.)
27. "Proteus", Myth 13; see Bacon 1905, p. 838.
28. See, on this cyclic character of the history of philosophy, Brentano 1968.

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