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(Dis-)Similarities:

Remarks on “Austrian” and “German” Philosophy in the 19th Century

In this paper, I re-examine Barry Smith’s 1994 list of features of Austrian Philosophy. I claim that the list properly applies only in a somewhat abbreviated form to all significant representatives of Austrian Philosophy. Moreover, Smith’s crucial thesis that the features of Austrian Philosophy are not shared by any German philosopher only holds if we compare Austrian Philosophy to a canonical list of German Philosophy II. This list, however, was established in 20th century as a result of historical misrepresentations. If we correct these misrepresentations, we obtain another list of hidden representatives called German Philosophy I. German Philosophy I is fundamentally identical to Austrian Philosophy, whereas German Philosophy II is entirely different from both Austrian Philosophy and German Philosophy I. Therefore, a slightly modified version of Smith’s Austrian Philosophy account still makes sense as a tool to position the pro-scientific and rational currents of Austrian Philosophy and German Philosophy I against the tendentially anti-scientific and irrational current of German Philosophy II.

Although Austria and Germany¹ were independent nations in the 19th century, there are many aspects that overlap between the countries. Austria and Germany share the same language, and the borders between Austria and Germany were always more or less open for academics to move from one country to the other.² Religious differences do exist, but they do not coincide with national borders. Whereas Austria is mainly Catholic and Germany is mainly Protestant, important parts of (southwestern) Germany are mainly Catholic as well. People in Catholic parts of Germany often speak an idiom that is closer to the Austrian dialect than to the idioms in Berlin or Hamburg. Additionally, many famous Austrians were native Germans and vice versa. Some Austrian philosophers (viz. Bolzano, Mach, Meinong) were indeed “real” native, catholic Austrians who probably

¹ This paper benefitted greatly from various discussions with Hans-Joachim Dahms, Christoph Limbeck-Lienau, Michael Schorner, Friedrich Stadler, Thomas Uebel, and Bastian Stoppelkamp, as well as critical remarks by Kevin Mulligan and Barry Smith after my talk at the *Brentano Centenary Conference* in Vienna and specific comments on a previous version of this paper by Bastian Stoppelkamp. First ideas on the points developed in this paper are formulated in (Damböck 2017, pp. 39-42).

² See (Dahms and Stadler 2015), where the situation in Vienna is described. German philosophers and psychologists who moved to Vienna included Brentano, Jodl, Schlick, Bühler, and Carnap.

also spoke an Austrian idiom; others deviated from that scheme in that their religious affiliation was either Protestant (Schlick, Carnap) or Jewish (Neurath, Popper, Wittgenstein) and their native country was Germany (Brentano, Schlick, Carnap).

To more closely examine the topic, let us now pick a list of names that consists of philosophers who are both reasonably called Austrians and who are important enough to be chosen as paradigmatic examples. To be reasonably called Austrian, we may require that a person spent important parts of her or his intellectual career in Austria. We include Brentano, Schlick, and Carnap here, because they were not native Austrians but spent important parts of their career in Austria. We do not include Husserl though, because his intellectual career almost exclusively took place in Germany.³ We also do not include a philosopher like Tarski here, because he was a member of the Lvov-Warsaw School, which certainly was *in part* an Austrian undertaking (Lvov belonged to the Habsburg Empire) but this connection is extremely weak because: (1) Warsaw never was Austrian; and (2) even Lvov was no longer Austrian during the time when the Lvov-Warsaw School flourished. Furthermore, to be important enough to be chosen as a paradigmatic example, one should be a key figure for subsequent developments in the history of philosophy and should be important mainly as a philosopher. For that reason, we do not include philosophers like Zimmermann, Riehl, Ehrenfels, Kraus, Mally, Zilsel, Frank, Kaufmann, Waismann, Gustav Bergmann, and Kraft because they were not that influential and we do not include people like Freud, Musil, Menger, and Gödel because their main influence lies in fields outside of philosophy. Finally, we restrict ourselves to a period between the beginning of the 19th century and the dawn of the First Republic.

Our list of Austrian Philosophers is as follows: Bolzano, Mach, Brentano, Meinong, Twardowski, Neurath, Schlick, Carnap, Wittgenstein, and Popper. The list might be divided into

³ Cf. (Damböck 2017, pp. 16-22) and (Mayer 2009, pp. 17-36). Husserl was born in Moravia in 1859, then a part of the Habsburg empire. He studied in Leipzig and Berlin and attended lectures by Franz Brentano during his stay as a one-year volunteer at the Austrian military in Vienna in 1886. He became privatdozent in Halle in 1887 and spent the rest of his intellectual career in Germany (Halle, Göttingen, and Freiburg). Given our geographical criterion, there is no sufficient basis to call him an Austrian Philosopher. Additionally, although Husserl was a student of Brentano, he hardly ever shared the latter's scientific attitude. Rather, he tried to develop phenomenology as a method that is disconnected from science in general and psychology in particular, to provide science a basis that was otherwise missing. In our framework, Husserl, rather than an Austrian Philosopher, is one of the key representatives of what we call German Philosophy II.

four relatively independent groups: 1) Bolzano and 2) Mach, as somewhat unique figures; plus 3) the Brentano and Meinong School; and 4) the Vienna Circle with the inclusion of its periphery.⁴ Bolzano, in turn, might be considered a figure somewhat close to the Brentano and Meinong School, Mach as a forerunner of the Vienna Circle of some kind. As a result, we obtain two main camps in Austrian Philosophy: the Bolzano-Brentano-Meinong camp and the Mach-Vienna Circle-Vienna Circle periphery camp.

Based on the above list, we now may ask whether there are any criteria that are shared by all members on the list. Barry Smith developed a now-classic approach to our topic, which includes the following criteria:⁵

Smith's features – entire list:

“Austrian philosophy, it is held, is marked by:

i. The attempt to do philosophy in a way that is inspired by or is closely connected to empirical science (including psychology): this attempt is associated also with a concern for the unity of science. In the work of some of the Vienna positivists it is manifested in the extreme form of a physicalistic or phenomenistic reductionism. In the work of Brentano and his followers it relates rather to a unity of method as between philosophy and other disciplines.

ii. A sympathy towards and in many cases a rootedness in British empiricist philosophy, a concern to develop a philosophy ‘from below’, on the basis of the detailed examination of particular examples.

iii. A concern with the language of philosophy. This sometimes amounts to a conception of the critique of language as a tool or method; sometimes it leads to attempts at the construction of a logical ideal of language. In many cases it manifests itself in the deliberate employment of a clear and concise language for the purposes of philosophical expression and in a sensitivity to the special properties of those uses and abuses of language which are characteristic of certain sorts of philosophy.

iv. A rejection of the Kantian revolution and of the various sorts of relativism and historicism which came in its wake. Instead we find different forms of realism and of ‘objectivism’ (in logic, value theory, and elsewhere – illustrated by Bolzano’s concept of the proposition in itself and in Popper’s doctrine of the ‘third world’).

⁴ See (Stadler 1997, pp. 660-920). The “core” of the Vienna Circle comprises 19 philosophers, among them Gustav Bergmann, Carnap, Feigl, Frank, Gödel, Hahn, Kaufmann, Kraft, Neurath, Schlick, Waismann, and Zilsel. The “periphery” comprises 18 philosophers, among them Ayer, Bühler, Hempel, Kelsen, Morris, Popper, Quine, Ramsey, Reichenbach, Tarski, and Wittgenstein.

⁵ See (Smith 1994, pp. 2-5). Smith’s list of names (p. 2) contains every name from our proposal and additionally Ehrenfels, Husserl, Mally, Waismann, Gustav Bergmann, and Gödel.

v. A special relation to the *a priori*, conceived not however in Kantian terms but in terms of a willingness to accept disciplines such as phenomenology and Gestalt theory which are, as Wittgenstein expressed it, ‘midway between logic and physics’. (The question as to how such apriorism can be consistent with a respect for empirical science will be one of the issues addressed below.)

vi. A concern with ontological structure, and more especially with the issue as to how the parts of things fit together to form structured wholes. In some cases this involves the recognition of differences of ontological level among the entities revealed to us by the various sciences and consequent readiness to accept a certain stratification of reality.

vii. An over-riding interest in the relation of macro-phenomena (for example in social science or ethics) to the mental experiences or other micro-phenomena which underlie or are associated with them. This need not imply any *reduction* of complex wholes to their constituent parts or moments. Certainly a reductionism of this sort is present in Mach and in some of the Vienna positivists, but it is explicitly rejected by all the other thinkers mentioned.” (Smith 1994, pp. 2-3)

Smith also grants that “it is far from being the case that all the given features are shared in common by all the thinkers mentioned” (p. 3). However, it seems to me that Smith’s features are somewhat too much focused on the Bolzano-Brentano-Meinong camp. Although it is fair not to require that everybody in Austrian Philosophy share every feature of a specification of *typical* features, it seems to be necessary for a feature to be reasonably called typical, that it is shared by significant parts of *both camps*. Thus, we may reject any candidate for a specification of typical Austrian Philosophy features if none of the paradigmatic members of one camps share it. Based on this clarification, Smith’s list can be re-evaluated.

We keep the essential parts of features i to iii. These three features are something that almost everyone shares in Austrian Philosophy, although the third point is certainly shared in very different ways and to very different extents so that it makes sense to formulate it less specifically. The rest of Smith’s features are less uncontroversial, when the second camp is examined. To start with feature iv, it appears that what almost all Austrians share is a critical attitude towards (if not a rejection of) the Kantian revolution. However, not all Austrians reject “the various sorts of relativism and historicism which came in its [the Kantian revolution’s] wake”. Paradigmatic Austrians such as Mach and Neurath are relativists and historicists of some kind, and similar things can be said even for Carnap (although these accounts are rather implicit in his case). Moreover, the conventionalism of various philosophers in the sphere of the Vienna Circle is not just a reference to French philosophers such as Poincaré and Duhem, but it also involves a variety of post-Kantian

philosophy.⁶ Thus, we cannot include the second part of Smith's feature iv here and we also cannot claim that Austrian Philosophers generally *reject* Kant. Moreover, core members of the Vienna Circle do not share features v to vii. This is especially the case for vi and vii, because these two features are inevitably connected to a specifically "mereological" reasoning, which is crucial for most or all thinkers of the first camp but is not shared by any of the thinkers of the second camp.⁷ However, even feature v cannot reasonably be ascribed to the second camp, because it is too specific. Although most members of the second camp also share a certain non-Kantian (viz. analytical) variety of aprioricism (at the level of formal logic or other ways of tautological reasoning), it is not the case that these features have much to do with either phenomenology or Graz style Gestalt theory.⁸ Thus, we may reformulate feature v in some way, restricting it to an affinity toward a non-Kantian way of reasoning *a priori*. The resulting abbreviated and slightly reworked list of Smith's features is as follows:

Smith's features – abbreviated list:

"Austrian philosophy, it is held, is marked by:

- i. The attempt to do philosophy in a way that is inspired by or is closely connected to empirical science (including psychology) [...]
- ii. A sympathy towards and in many cases a rootedness in British empiricist philosophy, a concern to develop a philosophy 'from below', on the basis of the detailed examination of particular examples.
- iii. A concern with the language of philosophy. [...]
- iv. A rejection of [or at least a critical attitude toward] the Kantian revolution. [...]
- v. A special relation to the *a priori*, conceived not however in Kantian terms [but rather in the realm of analyticity]."

⁶ Thanks to Bastian Stoppelkamp who stated this point in a personal communication.

⁷ Cf. (Smith 1982) for an overview of the mereologically centered picture of Austrian Philosophy as developed by Barry Smith, Kevin Mulligan, and Peter Simons.

⁸ Carnap, Bühler, Reichenbach, and other members of the Vienna Circle and its periphery were influenced to some extent by Berlin style Gestalt psychology which is different from Gestalt theory of the Austrian Philosophy fashion. Thus, to include Austrian style Gestalt theory here would rule out the Vienna Circle in its entirety.

This list does not add anything new to Smith's proposal, but it removes certain aspects that appear to be peculiarities of the first camp. As already indicated, it is not Smith's claim that Austrian Philosophy is characterized *positively*, in the sense that *everybody in Austria shares* the features of his definition. Rather, his account ascribes these features to Austria in a specific *negative* way. The point of Smith's account is simply that "the features mentioned have played almost no role at all in German philosophy" (ibid). Rather,

"German philosophy is determined primarily by its orientation around epistemology: attention is directed not to the world but to our knowledge of the world. [...] This is sometimes connected further with what we might call the romantic element in German philosophy, a mode of thought which, in stressing the ultimate unintelligibility of the world, is often inimical to scientific theory." (p. 4)

Smith holds that, despite the differences among Austrian philosophers who do not all share the features mentioned above, the main defintory feature for Austrian Philosophy is that almost no German philosopher shares any of these features. There are exceptions, Smith grants—he mentions Frege, Hilbert, Bauch, Natorp, and Cassirer—but these are "thinkers outside the mainstream of German philosophy" who were influential as philosophers outside of Germany. Thus, more specifically, Smith holds the following:

None of the mainstream philosophers in Germany ever shared any of the features of Austrian Philosophy, as mentioned by Smith.

To reevaluate Smith's account, we first need to have a list of names again, covering paradigm cases of what one might call mainstream philosophy in Germany. To provide such a list appears to be considerably more difficult than in the case of Austrian Philosophy. The latter scenario is rather homogeneous, if we restrict ourselves to the time until 1933. There are two camps that diverge in numerous respects, but apart from that, there is no fundamental break that might entirely change the evaluation criteria that define philosophical mainstream. The reason for that homogeneous appearance is simply that philosophical mainstream in Austria always was built by a partly non- or semi-academic avantgarde that was often not even noticed by the wider intellectual public. Paradoxically, *philosophical mainstream in Austria was never mainstream at all*. In Germany, however, there always have been extremely important and famous philosophical figures who were

widely known by the public and therefore represented a real mainstream. Of note, the German public intellectuals were also considered mainstream in Austria. The wider (nonacademic-philosophical) public in Habsburg and interwar Vienna hardly ever considered Bolzano, Brentano, Mach, Wittgenstein, or Schlick as philosophical mainstream, but instead favored such figures of German philosophy as Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche.⁹

To be “mainstream”, in the sense usefully adopted here, involves being very important for certain historically crucial philosophical currents. In other words, to be mainstream means to play an important role in the world history of philosophy, either during the life time of a philosopher or later or both. However, who is mainstream in Germany, given that definition? On the one hand, we have the usual suspects, and the big list that starts with Kant, Fichte, Hegel, and Schelling, and also includes Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer, Adorno, and Habermas. However, since the 1980s, it has been continuously claimed by historians of philosophy such as Klaus Christian Köhnke, Herbert Schnädelbach, and, recently, Frederick Beiser, that the aforementioned official list is in part a product of historical misrepresentation of 19th century philosophy in Germany that became influential in the interwar period.¹⁰ Philosophers such as Heidegger and Löwith started to ignore almost every important academic philosopher from the time after about 1830 and highlighted only non- and semi-academic figures such as Nietzsche and Schopenhauer as being important or mainstream.¹¹ This led to the adoption of a wrong picture about historical influences that remained important until recently. If we correct this, we obtain roughly the following picture. Nietzsche and Schopenhauer were important, but first more as public intellectuals and only after 1900 as role models for academic philosophy. Other figures played the most important roles in the academic philosophy scene in the 19th century. These philosophers form a somewhat hidden current, which we here call *German Philosophy I*.

⁹ Cf. “Cultural History of Modern Times [Kulturgeschichte der Neuzeit]” of the Viennese intellectual Egon Friedell (Friedell 1976). The book that was published between 1927 and 1931 has broad space for a discussion of philosophical topics. However, among the Austrian philosophers on our list, only Mach is briefly mentioned (as an example of an “impressionist thinker”, pp. 1385–1388). This is contrasted by very broad coverage of the usual suspects of German philosophy Kant (on 70 pages), Hegel (34 pages), Schopenhauer (49 pages), and Nietzsche (84 pages).

¹⁰ See (Köhnke 1986; Schnädelbach 1983) and (Beiser 2011, 2013, 2014a, 2014b).

¹¹ For the details and references see (Damböck 2017, pp. 2-9).

Key figures in German Philosophy I were Herbart, Beneke, Lotze, Trendelenburg, Lazarus, Steinthal, Wundt, Dilthey, Lange, Cohen, Windelband, Rickert, Bauch, Frege, Natorp, and Cassirer. They are to be considered mainstream in a fourfold sense. First, they—or some of them—were among *the* crucial philosophers of the 19th century, and they influenced philosophical developments outside of Germany no less significantly (and in some respects even more significantly) than Comte, Whewell, Mill, Spencer, or Peirce. In the second half of the 19th century, everybody studied not only German science but also German philosophy.¹² Second, these philosophers had crucial influences on subsequent developments in the field of the human sciences, from psychology to sociology and history.¹³ Third, these philosophers also were crucially important for subsequent developments in German and central European philosophy, although this importance became hidden as a consequence of the aforementioned historical misrepresentations. Fourth and finally, these philosophers were also crucially important for the development of Logical Empiricism and Analytic Philosophy, a fact that became appreciated by the wider public of historians of philosophy since the 1980s.¹⁴ In addition to and partly in connection with these different ways of being mainstream, this variety of German philosophers had important influences on paradigmatic Austrian philosophers. Herbart played an important role in Austrian Philosophy in various respects.¹⁵ Mach was influenced by Beneke and historicism as well as Fechner’s psychophysics;¹⁶ Brentano was a student of Trendelenburg;¹⁷ Neurath studied in Berlin and also was deeply influenced by the historicist tradition;¹⁸ Schlick also studied in Berlin and his views always remained close to certain

¹² Hermann Lotze, for example, was one of the most published, read, and quoted philosophers in 19th century, who also had an enormous influence in the English-speaking world. See (Beiser 2013, p. 127). It was quite common among 19th century intellectuals of US, French, or British origin not only to read German philosophers but also to move to Germany for some time and study there.

¹³ On the role of the human sciences in German philosophy of the 19th century see (Damböck 2017, pp. 22-30).

¹⁴ See, for example, (Friedman 1999) for a now classic account that highlights the importance that Neo-Kantianism had for Logical Empiricists such as Schlick, Carnap, and Reichenbach.

¹⁵ See (Stadler 1997, pp. 96-106).

¹⁶ On the influence of Fechner on Mach see (Heidelberger 1993, pp. 202-216, 271-282). Mach also seems to have studied Beneke’s writings, which he found in his father’s library. Hajo Siemsen, personal communication.

¹⁷ See (Huemer 2007).

¹⁸ See (Sandner 2014, pp. 42-53). Neurath developed a close friendship with Ferdinand Tönnies. On Neurath’s relationship on historicism and hermeneutics see (Damböck to appear; Uebel unpublished manuscript).

Neo-Kantian ideas;¹⁹ and Carnap studied in Jena and Freiburg, with Frege, Nohl, Rickert, Cohn, Husserl, and his philosophy was deeply influenced, not only by Frege, but by Marburg and—to a lesser extent—Southwest German Neo-Kantianism and the Dilthey school.²⁰

Our list of paradigm examples of German Philosophy I also shows interesting sociological similarities with our list of Austrian philosophers. In both cases, we have figures who did not receive wide public fame during their life time. This holds, in comparison with the German scene, for *all* Austrian philosophers (until 1933 at least); and it holds, on the German side, for Beneke, Lazarus, Steinthal, and Frege, and, after the First World War, for all Neo-Kantians, whose public fame subsequently strongly decreased. There is also another sociological feature that almost all philosophers on both lists share. With the partial exception of Lotze (for the 19th century) and Popper and Wittgenstein (for the 20th century), none of these philosophers belong to the list of 19th and 20th century *public intellectuals*, being public because everybody with an academic education read them. Everybody read Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Adorno, Habermas, and, with restrictions, even Heidegger and Husserl.²¹ However, Bolzano, Brentano, Carnap, and Neurath were never read by a wider public, and the same holds for Trendelenburg, Steinthal, Dilthey, Cohen, Rickert, and Frege. All these philosophers, either mainly or exclusively, addressed a specialized community of intellectuals. This sociological feature is important for our discussion, because one aspect of Austrian Philosophy is to take it as a forerunner of Analytic Philosophy. At least sociologically speaking, German Philosophy I is no less a forerunner here.

The parallels between Austrian Philosophy and German Philosophy I are shown here to go far beyond mere influences and sociological similarities. For that purpose, let us re-consider our abbreviated list of Smith's features of Austrian Philosophy.

Feature i: "The attempt to do philosophy in a way that is inspired by or is closely connected to empirical science (including psychology)." This is something that holds for every paradigmatic member of German Philosophy I. They all reject Hegel's unscientific treatment of philosophical

¹⁹ See (Neuber 2012).

²⁰ See (Damböck 2016; 2017, pp. 172-190).

²¹ Heidegger and Husserl never made it to become Suhrkamp authors. However, they were heavily cited by real public intellectuals such as Derrida or Sartre. Here, the canon was the three capitol Hs: Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger.

problems and try to develop philosophy exclusively inside of the scientific world view. This comprises, on the one hand, the adoption of the state of the art methods of philology and history. However, it also comprises, in most cases, the adoption of state-of-the-art methods of psychology and physiology. Lotze, for example, was a physician who was always up to date about the latest developments in medicine and psychology. Beneke, Lazarus, Steinthal, Lange, Dilthey, and Cohen also studied the latest scientific developments and followed the writings of Fechner, Helmholtz, and other recent scientists in the fields of psychology, physiology, and psychiatry.²² This also connects with:

Feature ii. “A sympathy towards and in many cases a rootedness in British empiricist philosophy, a concern to develop a philosophy ‘from below’, on the basis of the detailed examination of particular examples.” Both sub-features are also characteristics of German Philosophy I.²³ Beneke was a pioneer of the German reception of British empiricism and French positivism. Even more explicitly and sustainably, the writings of the respective British and French authors were studied and followed by the philosophers of the “new era”, such as Lazarus, Steinthal, Lange, Dilthey, and Cohen.²⁴ Whether one is willing to go so far as to call these philosophers “German Empiricists”—as I did in my habilitation thesis—is certainly a matter of opinion.²⁵ What is striking here is the fact that these authors—and Dilthey above all—were by no means accidentally called “positivists” by later critics in the continental philosophy camp such as Misch, Heidegger, Gadamer, or Habermas.²⁶ We, as positivists, only have to flip these verdicts from the negative to the positive.

Feature iii. “A concern with the language of philosophy.” Philosophy of language does not only have its roots in Austrian Philosophy. In Germany, there is at least Steinthal and the method of “Völkerpsychologie”, which developed an extremely interesting linguistic approach toward

²² See (Dilthey 1914ff, vol. XXI, p. XVIII etc.). Similar things can be said about the other authors mentioned.

²³ This is a major point of (Köhnke 1986, part I and II).

²⁴ The “new era” was the time between the revolution of 1848 and the constitution of the German Reich in 1871. See (Nipperdey 1998, I, pp. 697, 715).

²⁵ See (Damböck 2017, pp. 31-37, 116-118).

²⁶ For references see (Damböck 2017, p. 73).

philosophical problems.²⁷ Besides that, however, it seems that many 19th century approaches toward hermeneutics as developed and followed by Trendelenburg, Boeckh, Dilthey, and Cohen and also the Völker-psychologists were related to what was later called ordinary language philosophy.²⁸

Feature iv. “A rejection of [or at least a critical attitude toward] the Kantian revolution.” Here, it is not only in Austria where the so-called breakdown of German idealism²⁹ led to the development of a thoroughly critical attitude toward both the absolute idealists and Kant. Rather, this breakdown and the resulting decidedly scientific climate first took place and flourished in Germany, not in Austria. The rejection of the pathologies of Hegel’s philosophy was widespread in Germany until the end of the 19th century, but it also was not the case that, against the background of the rejection of Hegel’s alleged anti-scientific attitude, Kant might have automatically been considered a pro-scientific alternative. Rather, critics such as Beneke, Trendelenburg, or Dilthey considered the entire idealist movement with the inclusion of Kant to be overcome. As Beneke once put it, it is not enough only to overcome Hegel:

“If we do not want to expose ourselves to the danger that the ulcer [of German Idealism] that was cured at one place might break even more dangerously at another place, we do not have to focus on criticism of a daughter or grandchild philosophy but on Kantian philosophy in itself, in order to identify in it the root of all evil and to clog the source of the stream which threatens to flood Germany with intellectual barbarism.” (Beneke 1832, p. 11)³⁰

²⁷ See (Steinthal 1972).

²⁸ This is possible, because in sharp contrast to 20th century Gadamer style hermeneutics that was developed in an entirely irrationalist and subjectivist setting, 19th century hermeneutics was decidedly objectivist and empirically minded. See (Boeckh et al. 1886). Boeckh was the hero of this 19th century hermeneutic movement, and he deeply influenced the “positivist” spirit of philosophers such as Trendelenburg, Steinthal, Cohen, and Dilthey.

²⁹ On this narrative cf. (Schnädelbach 1983, p. 15). Before the historical misrepresentation of post-idealist philosophy took place and turned the whole time after 1830 into a “dark age”, almost nobody in Germany received this “breakdown” with regret.

³⁰ “Wollen wir uns aber nicht der Gefahr aussetzen, daß das an der einen Stelle geheilte Geschwür [des deutschen Idealismus] an einer anderen nur um so gefährlicher wieder aufbreche, so müssen wir unsere Kritik nicht auf eine der Tochter- oder Enkelphilosophieen, sondern auf die Kantische Philosophie selber richten, um wo möglich in dieser die Grundwurzel allen Uebels zu entdecken, und den Strom, welcher Deutschland mit einer intellektuellen Barbarei zu überschwemmen droht, an der Quelle zu verstopfen.”

Even those philosophers who committed themselves to a variety of what was sometimes called “Neo-Kantianism” from the 1870s onward³¹ were by no means uncritical followers of Kant. They also did not carry on what we today would call Kant “scholarship”, i.e., the attempt to restore Kant’s own opinions (on the neutral level of philology). Rather, the (so-called) Neo-Kantians committed themselves to Kant because they, on a rather political level, accepted him as a national hero.³² This did not hinder them, on the other hand, to think that Kant’s philosophy was overcome, in substantial respects. Windelband, for example, a philosopher who like Rickert has surprisingly little to say about Kant, famously stated the motto “To understand Kant means to go beyond him.”³³ Windelband’s philosophy following that motto was “Kantian” in a similar sense as the “Wittgenstein award” of the Austrian Science Fund is Wittgensteinian.³⁴ Cohen, who wrote several long books on Kant was neither an uncritical follower nor a mere Kant scholar. His account of (what he, Cohen, called) “Kant’s theory of experience” amounted to a radical criticism of Kant.³⁵ To conclude, feature iv holds for each single philosopher in our list of German philosophers.

Feature v. “A special relation to the *a priori*, conceived not however in Kantian terms [but rather in the realm of analyticity].” None of the philosophers in our list committed themselves to the synthetic *a priori* as initially intended by Kant. They either rejected the idea of the synthetic *a priori* in its entirety or at least developed a highly non-classical reading (like in Cohen’s “transcendental method”³⁶). Thus, a more restrictively analytical or at least non- or semi-Kantian reading of the *a priori* became important for most of the philosophers in our list.

³¹ See (Holzhey 1971). The term “Neo-Kantianism” was used for the first time around 1875. Note also that most so-called Neo-Kantians never actually called themselves by this name. This holds, in particular, for the members of the Marburg-school. Therefore, Dieter Adelman calls the term a “rumor [Gerücht]”. See (Adelman 2010, pp. 258-259).

³² On the political side of the appreciation of Kant and Plato after 1872 see (Köhnke 1986, pp. 404-433).

³³ (Windelband 1921, vol. I, p. IV): “Kant verstehen, heißt über ihn hinausgehen. ”

³⁴ The Wittgenstein award is given to outstanding scientists. To date, it has never been given to a philosopher or to a Wittgenstein scholar.

³⁵ On the extremely critical attitude toward Kant that Cohen developed during his life, see (Damböck 2017, pp. 151-162).

³⁶ See (Cohen 1918, pp. 93-110).

To conclude, the features of our abbreviated list do not only apply to all paradigmatic Austrian philosophers, they also generally hold for representatives of German Philosophy I. In this sense, Smith's Austrian Philosophy thesis that (almost) no German philosopher ever shared any feature of Austrian Philosophy is straightforwardly untenable. However, this does not imply that there is no way in which one could make sense of Smith's thesis. Rather, we need to qualify his claim differently, not to apply it to German Philosophy I but to the other, the official list of those philosophers who were mainstream Germans according to the picture that was developed in 20th century. If we take this official list of what we might call *German Philosophy II*—Kant, Hegel, Fichte, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer, Adorno, and Habermas—then Smith's Austrian Philosophy thesis can be immediately and unequivocally restored. Even Smith's diagnosis of a particularly hostile attitude toward science becomes correct, as soon as we restrict ourselves to those people on the list who belong to the 20th century. To overcome irrationalism and anti-scientific world conceptions, Smith's narrative is unbrokenly useful and important. However, it is also important to improve that narrative to identify the real enemy and to do justice to post-idealist academic philosophy in Germany, which did not start to go astray from science until 1900.

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