

# Chapter 26

## Austrian and Hungarian Philosophy: On the Logic of Wittgenstein and Pauler

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**Abstract** As Kevin Mulligan, more than anyone else, has demonstrated, there is a distinction within the philosophy of the German-speaking world between two principal currents: of idealism or transcendentalism, characteristic of Northern Germany, on the one hand; and of realism or objectivism, characteristic of Austria and the South, on the other. We explore some of the implications of this distinction with reference to the influence of Austrian (and German) philosophy on philosophical developments in Hungary, focusing on the work of Ákos von Pauler, and especially on Pauler's reading of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*.

**Keywords** Austrian philosophy · Wittgenstein · Lukács · Picture theory of meaning

### 26.1 Austrian Philosophy

In a series of extraordinarily fertile essays (cf. Mulligan 1981, 1986, 1989, 1993, 2001, 2006a, 2006b, 2011a, 2011b, 2012), Kevin Mulligan has demonstrated not merely that there is a distinction within the philosophy of the German-speaking world between the transcendentalism of the North and the realism of the South (comprising, roughly, Bavaria and the Habsburg lands) but also that paying attention to this distinction can yield fruitful consequences for our understanding of twentieth-century philosophy in general and of the rise of analytic philosophy in particular.

It would of course be going too far to suggest that there is any one system of thought properly to be called “Austrian philosophy” which would unite all of those thinkers, from Bolzano and Wittgenstein to Gödel and Popper, born within the frontiers of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It is however clear that there are certain tendencies which these philosophers exhibit to varying degrees, tendencies which set them in contrast to their Northern contemporaries in something like the way in which (for example) those who read Musil (or Kafka) are set apart from, say, admirers of Thomas Mann.

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First, there is the *tendency to realism*, reflecting the fact that the Kantian revolution was not, on the whole, accepted in Catholic Austria. Austrians such as Bolzano (referred to in laudatory fashion as “the anti-Kant” by his pupil Příhonský; cf. Příhonský 2003) are distinguished by their striving for ontological adequacy and by their readiness to admit entities of different sorts on their own terms and not to seek to dismiss them as creatures of reason or of language. Mulligan (1995) refers in this connection to the Austrian “descriptivist tradition” comprising “Bolzano, Brentano, Ehrenfels, Pfänder, Stumpf, Meinong, Witasek, Baley, Husserl, Orestano, Geiger, Bühler, Musil, Kolnai, Katkov, Köhler, Kunz, Duncker and especially...Scheler (not to mention minor figures who drew extensively on this tradition such as Heidegger and Sartre).” (Oddly, he does not mention also the Poles, Ingarden, and Wojtyła, the latter born in 1920 in the former crown land of Galicia and Lodomeria as the son of a former career officer in the Austrian Imperial and Royal Common Army; cf. Wojtyła 1979.)

Second, there is a recognizable *method* of doing philosophy in Austria, and a recognizable *style* of philosophical writing. Austrians sought to develop philosophy as a rational enterprise, often taking the natural sciences as their model, typically employing a language which is, by comparison to that of their North German counterparts, marked by a concern for logical clarity and by a ploddingly pedantic concern for exactness and comprehensiveness (see Mulligan 1990). Many Austrian philosophers are distinguished by the fact that they employed an aprioristic method distinguished from that of Kant in that it rested on a commitment—best illustrated by the writings of Husserl’s early disciples in Munich and Freiburg—to the existence of a broad range of synthetic a priori truths, embracing domains such as perceptual psychology, ethics, aesthetics, and law. And we can recognize also a powerful strain of methodological individualism—a concern to understand macrophenomena in terms of the individual mental experiences which underlie or are associated with them (cf. Grassl and Smith 2010)—where Germans turn, instead, to larger social wholes, and to speculative history à la Marx or Hegel.

We can also point to certain characteristic types of *problem* dealt with by Austrian philosophers. In particular, we can note that the Austrians are often at one with Anglo-Saxon philosophers in awarding a central place in their work to the problems of logic and of the philosophy of science (cf. Smith 1996).

That the above is not an empty characterization is seen by observing how rarely the mentioned features are manifested in the works of the principal philosophers of *Reichsdeutschland*. The latter are marked, to varying degrees, by hostility to science, by the running together of philosophy, politics, and religion, by a blindness to logic, and by the privileging of style over substance. Obvious exceptions, leaving aside mathematicians in Jena or Göttingen, were all too often, as in the case of Stumpf, heavily influenced by figures central to the Austrian tradition.

One illustration of these last two points is the extraordinarily impressive and influential philosophy of the social sciences (and of economics in particular) set out by Carl Menger (cf. Menger 1981, 1985), founder of the Austrian school of economics whose most conspicuous twentieth-century adherent was F. A. Hayek (a relative of Wittgenstein, and—as an accident of his family connections—one of the

first to read the *Tractatus*: cf. Hayek 1992). One primary foil of Menger's economic writings is the historical approach to economics of the German school, and specifically of Gustav Schmoller (Menger 1884). (It was Schmoller who coined the name "Austrian school" as part of an attempt to sully Menger and his followers with the taint of provincialism.) Menger's philosophy of exact laws is a striking counterpart of the philosophy of exact laws in the philosophy of mind underlying Brentano's descriptive psychology (see Grassl and Smith 2010).

## 26.2 From Austria to Hungary

Philosophy in Poland, and in the Czech lands, too, shows a marked influence of the Austrian tradition. In Hungary, however, philosophers have drawn their primary inspiration not from Austria but from the Germany of Kant and Hegel. One reason for this, as pointed out by Somos (1995), was the tendency on the part of ambitious young scholars in Hungary to pursue their studies abroad. (This precluded Austria as a place of study since Austria was precisely *not abroad*.) Another reason was that Vienna, in contrast to (say) Berlin, was not seen as a center of scientific research. Hungarians preferred Germany because that was where real science was done.

And finally Hungary, like Ireland, was facing problems on the nation-building side. Many young Hungarian aspirant thinkers thus felt the urge to associate themselves with the tradition that had brought forth Romantic nationalist figures such as Fichte and Herder. Austria, like England, had little need for a philosophy of this sort.

Given the political and constitutional turmoil faced by Hungarians in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, "philosophical interest in questions of practical relevance seems," as Demeter puts it,

quite natural and sheds light on the traditional contrast in intellectual history between "contemplative Austrians" and "activist Hungarians". This strong interest in social and political questions prepares the ground, as it were, for the emergence of a philosophy with characteristic sociological affinities. (Demeter 2008)

And as Demeter makes clear, many Hungarian philosophers are not merely caught in a sociological tradition of writing philosophy; when they write on the history of philosophy, too, they often use the sociological approach, for example, when attempting to understand divisions such as that between, for example, German and Austrian philosophy (cf. Nyíri 1988).

Yet, there are also exceptions to the rule which tilt Magyars in the direction of German philosophy. The role of Bolzanian logic in the grammar school textbooks of Kakania in effect divided Austro-Hungarian philosophers with an interest in the philosophical foundations of logic into two schools: those like Twardowski, Meinong, or Husserl, who *accepted* Bolzano, and those who *rebelled*, thereby becoming, as Nyíri (1999) puts it, "anti-Platonists, conscious of the role of language and communication in cognitive processes."

The former group is illustrated, in Hungary, by the nineteenth-century school of Bolzanians led by Jenő Enyvvári and Béla Fogarasi, and also, from 1909 to 1914, by some of the members of the BENBE circle (see Somos 1999),<sup>1</sup> to which also the young György Lukács belonged. Perhaps the most interesting Hungarian case among the latter is Melchior Palágyi (1859–1924), a philosopher, mathematician, and physicist prominent especially for his innovative four-dimensionalist views on space and time, similar in some ways to those of Poincaré and Minkowski.

Of concern to us here are the three remarkable books, *Kant und Bolzano* (1902a), *Der Streit der Psychologisten und Formalisten in der modernen Logik* (1902b), and *Die Logik auf dem Scheidewege* (1903), published by Palágyi between 1902 and 1903. All three were inspired, in one way or another, by the appearance of Husserl's *Logical Investigations* in 1900/1901. *Der Streit*, indeed, was reviewed by Husserl, who objected to Palágyi's suggestions that he had failed in the *Logical Investigations* to give due credit to Bolzano (cf. Husserl 1994, p. 201). As Claire Hill points out, Husserl makes clear in his review of Palágyi that, while he had initially believed that Bolzano's doctrine of *Sätze an sich* involved an appeal to abstruse metaphysical entities

in the 1890's it all of a sudden became clear to Husserl that Bolzano had actually been talking about something fundamentally completely understandable, namely the meaning of an assertion, what was declared to be one and the same thing when one says of different people that they affirm the same thing. This realization demystified meaning for Husserl (See Hill 1995).

Palágyi himself, in his *Kant und Bolzano*, criticizes Bolzano for neglecting the degree to which *language* is the medium of thought, so that the idea of propositions or meanings in themselves represents an incoherent dualism (see Nyíri 1999). The counterpart view—that meaning (*Meinen*) is necessarily bound up with an expression—is enunciated also by Reinach (1911), as Mulligan himself points out, in a passage from “Getting *Geist*” (*loc. cit.*) which also refers to Palágyi:

When phenomenologists, early and late, clamour that the introduction of “thingly” categories into the description of mind is an error which has catastrophic consequences, the positive alternative analysis they have in mind is that given by Reinach (and, first of all, by the Hungarian philosopher, Palágyi).

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<sup>1</sup> As Somos points out, one result of the rising interest in Husserl's *Logical Investigations* among those involved in the debates on neo-Kantianism in Hungary in this period, was that

the so-called Austrian line of the German-speaking philosophy became more interesting for Hungarian philosophers than earlier. At the same time, among the followers of the new idealism, only few adopted the strongly anti-Kantian position of Brentano and Bolzano. The members of the new generation, Béla Zalai, Béla Fogarasi, Vilmos Szilasi, Károly Mannheim, György Lukács set high value on the results of the *Logische Untersuchungen* but they had such an established, ingrained preference for neo-Kantian philosophy of value or the sociological viewpoint of Georg Simmel, that they did not take up the position against psychologism criticized by Husserl.

As Mulligan also points out (2001, p. 2), Palágyi's distinction between punctual mental acts (for example, acts of meaning something with an expression, acts of willing) and temporally extended experiences such as are involved in seeing or hearing or worrying about something anticipates a large number of related distinctions in twentieth-century philosophy—in Klages, Scheler, and Wittgenstein, as well as in Reinach.<sup>2</sup>

### 26.3 Ákos von Pauler

The principal object of our investigations here, however, is not Palágyi but his near contemporary Ákos von Pauler (1876–1933). Like Palágyi, Pauler was deeply impressed by Bolzano's arguments for the depsychologization of logic, and he came to see Bolzano as the beginning of a revolution in philosophy culminating, through Brentano, in the work of Husserl and especially of Meinong.

Pauler's allegiances did not always lie with the philosophy of Austria. As a student in the 1890s, he had embraced the positivism of Comte and Spencer, which he later saw as being allied to the thinking of Wundt and Fries. From there he moved on to become a Kantian of the Rickert school and absorbed the writings of Hermann Lotze—Lotze's philosophy of *Geltung* perhaps laying the seeds of the full-blooded Platonist philosophy of logic which was to follow later. It was around 1905 that the truly decisive influence—that of the writings of Bolzano and Husserl—occurred. While Pauler's general philosophy remained predominantly Kantian until around 1909–1910, he began, in his philosophy of logic, to work toward a conception of what he called “pure logic,” as a discipline which concerns itself exclusively with mere relationships of validity among propositions and thus has nothing to do with acts of a substance-like ego of any sort—including the hyper-individual ego favored by the Kantians.

Studies on Meinong from around 1909 led Pauler to further clarify his views in this matter, and Pauler came to see Meinong's theory of objects as having this advantage over Husserl's new phenomenological ideas: that it removes the “intuitive element” (cf. Somos 1995, 601). Pauler's logic henceforth has much in common with Meinongian *Gegenstandstheorie*.

In 1910, Pauler spent 2 months in Florence visiting Brentano,<sup>3</sup> and after a period as professor of philosophy in Kolozsvár (Klausenburg, Cluj), he was appointed to a chair in Budapest in 1915, by which time he had fully developed his

<sup>2</sup> Even philosophers such as Béla Zalai who stood on the fence between the pro- and anti-Bolzano camps were marked in their thinking by essential methodological elements taken over from the Austrian tradition. Thus, Zalai's general theory of systems is influenced by Ehrenfels's ideas on Gestalt qualities and also by Husserl's third *Logical Investigation* “On the Theory of Wholes and Parts.” See B. A. Banathy (1989), and Smith (1987).

<sup>3</sup> We can infer that it was in his discussions with Pauler in this period that Brentano remarked that “Bolzano's work exerted a significant influence on his own thinking, but that the traces of this influence are to be found not so much in his own essays, but in the world of thought of his students,

characteristically Austrian philosophy of logic—incorporating along the way a heavy dose of the thought of Aristotle and of that “Leibnizian vision of harmony” which W. M. Johnston saw as the characterizing mark of the Austrian mind (cf. Johnston 1983). By this stage, Pauler officially held Kant’s thought to be of value only as a carrier of the Aristotelian tradition, and certainly within his theory of pure logic Pauler is absolutely free from the taint of Kantianism.

## 26.4 Pauler’s Logic

By the 1920s, Pauler has established himself among his contemporaries as the foremost Hungarian philosopher. This period saw the publication of his two principal works translated into German: the *Grundlagen der Philosophie* 1925 and the *Logik* of 1929.<sup>4</sup> The latter, particularly, rings heavily with the thought of Bolzano. The object-domain of logic Pauler conceives as the totality of truths in themselves or *Wahrheiten*. This domain is ruled by principles which others might well call metaphysical, and which include, beyond the laws of identity, contradiction and excluded middle, also the “laws” of connection (everything is connected with everything else), classification (everything can be classified), and correlativity (there is nothing relative without an absolute).

The ontological status of truths in themselves is distinct from that of the real objects and events of the material world; truths enjoy, rather, a mode of existence which Pauler (following Lotze) calls *Gültigkeit* or validity. That which enjoys *Gültigkeit* (*besteht* or subsists, in Meinong’s terms) is atemporal, thus unchangeable, and incapable of bringing about effects in other things. It is independent of all mental acts of thinking subjects and would exist even in a world entirely denuded of such subjects. Thus, Pauler’s *Wahrheiten* closely resemble Bolzano’s *Sätze an sich*, though since, for Pauler, falsehoods have no *Gültigkeit*, there are no false *Sätze an sich* in the Paulerian ontology. This is almost the only significant difference between Pauler’s and Bolzano’s conceptions of the province of logic, and we can note that a similar preferential treatment of the true can be found among other Austrian realists, such as Meinong and Marty (cf. Smith 1990).

The locus of the false, for Pauler, lies not within the ideal sphere of *Gültigkeit*, but rather within the factual realm of human judgments. Each actually executed judgment constitutes an approximation to one or more propositions in the realm of truths in themselves; false judgments are distinguished by the fact that the degree of approximation is maximally small.

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especially Husserl.” See Pauler, “F. Brentano 1837–1917,” *Athenaeum* 1918, 4, pp. 73–78; cited from Somos, op. cit, p. 598.

<sup>4</sup> Both published by de Gruyter, who produced also a memorial volume, *Gedenkschrift für Akos von Pauler*, ed. L. Prohászka, 1936, in which especially the papers by J. H. Nagy (“Der Platonismus Paulers,” pp. 107–116), J. Somogyi (“Die Idee der Wahrheit in der Philosophie Paulers,” pp. 142–150), and B. Bencsik (“Die Ideologie Paulers,” pp. 151–166) are of importance. Pauler also published one further volume in German: his *Aristoteles*, Paderborn: Schöningh, 1933.

For Pauler, as for Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus*, the totality of *Wahrheiten* is conceived as forming a system. It is the object of pure logic to investigate the structure of this system on the one hand, and to determine the relationship between the system and the world, on the other.

## 26.5 Pauler and the Picture Theory

Wittgenstein's own account of this relationship draws on a distinction among propositions between the elementary and the logically complex. The former Wittgenstein conceives as *pictures* of states of affairs, in the sense that to each constituent simple object in a state of affairs there corresponds a constituent of the corresponding (true) elementary proposition. The two sets of constituents are said to stand in a relationship of projection, one to the other, and it is this purely structural account of the pictorial relation ("*abbildende Beziehung*") which exhausts Wittgenstein's treatment of the relation of elementary proposition and state of affairs:

The representing relation consists of the co-ordinations of the elements of the picture and the things. (2.1514)

There is, notoriously, something mysterious here, since we are told nothing of the nature of these two different kinds of "*Elemente*." Things are made no better when logically complex propositions, too, are brought into play, since Wittgenstein's account of the relation between such propositions and the world presupposes his account of the relation between an elementary proposition and its corresponding state of affairs and adds nothing of substance to this account. Wittgenstein gives us no indication of the natures either of simple objects or of the simple constituents of elementary propositions to which these would correspond.<sup>5</sup>

Similar picture theories of the relation between propositions and states of affairs can be found in the writings of a number of Austrian philosophers from Bolzano to the Husserl of the *Logical Investigations*. Adherence to a correspondence theory of truth is indeed one of the most important characterizing marks of the anti-Kantianism of the Austrians.

Pauler goes further than Wittgenstein, however, in attempting to give some positive—which is to say not merely structural—account of the relationship in question. He introduces a new term, "*logisma*" (see Pauler, *Logik* (*op. cit.*), 62 ff.), to designate the ultimate constituents out of which truths are composed. The *logisma*

<sup>5</sup> What applies to the constituents of the elementary proposition applies also to the constituents of its psychological correlate, the thought:

I don't know what the constituents of a thought are but I know that it must have such constituents which correspond to the words of Language. Again the kind of relation of the constituents of the thought and of the pictured fact is irrelevant. It would be a matter of psychology to find out. (Letter to Russell, from *Letters to Russell, Keynes and Moore*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1974, p. 72)

is the atom of the discipline of logic. It is thus contrasted with entities in the reality to which the truth relates on the one hand, and with the knowledge act in which the truth is grasped psychologically on the other. Like Bolzano's *Vorstellung an sich*, it is introduced as part of an attempt to remove the ambiguity underlying the traditional concept of concept (or *Begriff*) as between a logical content and a product of a mental operation.

The *logismata* which make up a true proposition stand to things in the world in what Pauler explicitly refers to as a "mirroring relationship"—the word "thing" being understood widely enough to comprehend objects, properties, and relations, and both concrete particulars and universals in the world around us.

To understand in more detail Pauler's account of the relationship of picturing, it will be necessary to say a few words about the traditional theory of logic against which Pauler, like Bolzano before him, reacted, but from which both also drew their inspiration. According to this traditional theory, the subject matter of logic is the totality of judgments (understood not as ideal entities related together in an atemporal, ideal system, but as concretely existing mental entities). The constituents of a judgment are conceived as ideas or concepts in the mind of the judging subject at a given moment and the judgment is conceived as a binding together, in thought, of a plurality of concepts.<sup>6</sup> Where Frege, for example, had rejected this traditional theory by arguing that logic has no business at all with the bare and fleeting ideas or *Vorstellungen* which inhabit people's minds, Pauler adopted a more lenient view. He recognized, first of all, that there is a proper place for a discipline which would investigate, from a logical rather than a psychological point of view, the properties of our thinking acts. He insisted only that this discipline be acknowledged as an *applied* logic; it is not identical to, because it presupposes, the discipline of *pure* logic, which is concerned exclusively with the properties of the ideal system of *truths*. Pauler's principal charge against Aristotle and the traditional logicians was thus that they had confused the applied science of judgment with the pure logic of truth, and that they had failed to recognize the necessity of the latter as a precondition for the former. He did not hold that the traditional logicians had been confused in their view of the judgment as in some sense a complex of concepts; rather, he takes this account as the starting point of his theory of the *logismata*, and thus also of his theory of the relation between proposition and fact, but conceiving the *logismata* as something objective, forming a gigantic, relationally ordered system, from which the judging subject needs to make a kind of "selection" (cf. Pauler 1925, p. 264 f. Compare Somos, op. cit., 601).

Taking the individual concretely executed judgment as his starting point, as Pauler sees it, the logician carries out a process of idealization to arrive at the corresponding ideal truth in itself. The latter is something like a prototype of the former, from which every imperfection of content and all incompleteness and one-sidedness have been removed. Similarly, the *logisma* is an idealization of the concretely exist-

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<sup>6</sup> Normally, we have to deal with a pair of concepts, the subject and the predicate. This "binding of concepts" theory of the judgment clearly faces severe difficulties when it is required to give an account of the negative judgment: cf. Reinach (1911).



ing concept, and if we can believe that we understand the relation between *concept* and thing, then we can extrapolate from this understanding in grasping the relation between *logisma* and thing. This will involve a combination of the Brentanian and Husserlian theories of intentionality—there is a directedness of *logisma* toward the thing—with Meinong's theory of objects—which for the first time provides, in Pauler's eyes, the means to do justice to the entire expanse of thought in embracing both what exists and what does not exist (cf. Pauler 1925).

Pauler's ontology of the logical can be conceived also as a refinement of the Platonic theory of ideas. The *logisma* is the platonic idea conceived as rooted in the system of truths in themselves, as the atom out of which this system is built. Where Plato had concerned himself almost exclusively with the vertical relationships between ideas and the world, Pauler lays the principal stress on the network of horizontal relationships among the ideas themselves. Where Plato is concerned with *Wesensforschung*—with the investigation of ideas or essences—Pauler is interested in the (logical) structure of the system of *logismata*, in the relations and connections between the ideas. This commitment to an ideal, eternal system of *logismata*, standing in an eternally established relation to the objects in the world, signals how far Pauler has traveled from his early commitment to positivism à la Comte, which consisted precisely in the denial of such a system. It signals also his departure—at least in his philosophy of logic—from any form of Kantianism, which sees the connection between logic and the world as dependent upon the *gesetzgebende Rolle der Vernunft* (roughly: on the law-giving role of reason; or the capacity of reason to compel reality to conform to its forms). For Pauler, as for the other Austrian logical realists, as for Leibniz before them, the existence of the Idea or *logisma* is a presupposition of the existence of the concept as this arises in the mind of the cognitive subject. Our grasping of the concept is itself an imperfect grasping of the Idea and grasping what is universal in this sense is as much a part of every experience as is the grasping of what is particular.

It is striking how many features of Wittgenstein's thinking on logic and meaning should be reflected in Pauler's *Logik*, which first appeared in its original Hungarian in 1925—which is to say some 5 years before Pauler can be presumed to have encountered Wittgenstein's work. While these parallels would be unintelligible were Pauler a product of the German philosophical tradition, they are of course perfectly understandable given the Austrian (Leibnizian, Bolzanian, Brentanian, Meinongian, Husserlian) background of his logical thinking. Or, to formulate the matter from the other direction: That Wittgenstein should have reproduced so many of the ideas that we find in Pauler provides yet further support for the central thesis of Mulliganism, since it can be explained only by pointing to the common (Austrian) heritage shared by the two philosophers.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> In the case of Wittgenstein, in the simplest possible rendering, Meinongian ideas were absorbed through the mediation of his teacher Bertrand Russell. For the fuller account, see Kevin Mulligan (2009).

## 26.6 Pauler, Lukács, and the Jews

At a time when, outside small circles in Cambridge and Vienna, awareness of the existence of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* was extremely rare, Pauler purchased or was presented with a copy of the work, and as we shall see he made a serious and sympathetic study of the text. The date inscribed by Pauler in the flyleaf of his copy (which is now in the possession of the present author) is 3 April 1930, 3 years before Pauler's death.

Before considering what might be the philosophical import of Pauler's reading of the *Tractatus*, we need to address the significance of his one nonphilosophical annotation, on p. 26 (the first page of Wittgenstein's "Preface"), which consists in the drawing of a Star of David together with the comment "moving modesty! Verecundia Judaica?" The annotation in question was inserted by Pauler in reference to Wittgenstein's assertion that "it is indifferent to me whether what I have thought has already been thought before me by another."

Schopenhauer (see *Parerga and Paralipomena*, vol. 2, § 132), Weininger (2005, pp 283, 289), and Scheler (1987, pp. 26, 73) all claimed that Jews lack *verecundia* (modesty, shame), and Weininger even thinks that this explains what he takes to be the absence of genius—as opposed to talent—among the Jews. Pauler's own relation to the Jews was a difficult one, and thus the significance of the mentioned annotation—almost certainly ironically intended—is not quite easy to understand. Suffice it to say that Pauler's attitudes were colored by the events of 1919, when Pauler was banished from the University of Budapest by the (mostly Jewish) leaders of the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic 8 days after the latter had seized power on March 21. Pauler was at that time a leading figure in the Council of the Faculty of Philosophy and a staunch defender of the autonomy of the university. His counterparts on the government side were, Zsigmond Kunfi, Commissar of Education from March 21 to June 24, and György Lukács, who served as Kunfi's Deputy and as People's Commissar for Education and Culture from March 21 to April 3. In its brief period of power, the Soviet government was responsible for murdering several hundred people, including many scientists and intellectuals. The government collapsed on August 1, when most of its members, including Lukács, fled to Austria (taking with them numerous art treasures and the gold stocks of the Hungarian National Bank). Pauler was reinstated on August 27.

Lukács is interesting in this connection not merely because he participated actively in acts of political thuggery but also because he sought to provide these acts with a moral justification. In his *Tactics and Ethics*, written shortly before the Communist takeover in 1919, he talks of political murder as an "imperative of the world-historical situation, a historico-philosophical mission." Citing the Russian novelist and terrorist leader Boris Savinkov, he goes on to point out that, while "murder is not allowed, it is an absolute and unpardonable sin," still

it "must" be committed. . . . the ultimate moral basis of the terrorist's act [is] the sacrifice for his brethren, not only of his life, but also of his purity, his morals, his very soul. In other words, only he who acknowledges unflinchingly and without any reservations that murder is under no circumstances to be sanctioned can commit the murderous deed that is truly—and tragically—moral.

And as Lukács wrote in an article in the Hungarian newspaper *Népszava* on April 15, 1919: “Being now in possession of state power means that this is the moment to annihilate the former repressive classes. The moment is here, but we have to make use of it!”

Sadly, this thuggish, sometimes murderous, strain was to haunt philosophical life in Hungary in the subsequent decades, and its shadow lingers on even today through the continuing influence of some of Lukács’ students. This explains at least in part why more rigorous Hungarian thinkers have had so little influence in their native land.

## 26.7 Pauler and the *Tractatus*

I shall have space here to provide further comment on only a small selection of the 70 or so philosophical annotations inserted by Pauler into his copy of the *Tractatus*, which are reproduced in English translation in the Appendix. They range from single words to complete sentences, supplemented by many marginal exclamations and question marks.

More pertinent, from a philosophical point of view, is the fact that the name “Aristotle” appears at a number of places in the margin of Pauler’s copy of the *Tractatus*, particularly where the words “form” and “substance” are used by Wittgenstein. At

2.021: Objects form the substance of the world. Therefore they cannot be compound.

Pauler claims to detect also—perhaps not so remarkably—the influence of Leibniz, another philosopher not without significance for the Austrian tradition. On the other hand, there is also evidence of some residual influence of Kant on Pauler in this reading of the *Tractatus*—though only at those points where Wittgenstein departs from the treatment of purely logical issues. For example, at 5.633, Wittgenstein asks, rhetorically:

*Where in the world is a metaphysical subject to be noted?*

Pauler’s wholly unsympathetic reply (translated by me here into German) is: *In der Vernunft!*

Opposite the remark, at 6.421, to the effect that “Ethics und aesthetics are one,” Pauler accuses Wittgenstein of “journalistic shallowness,” which is of course exactly the sort of criticism which Wittgenstein’s hero Karl Kraus leveled against his contemporaries.

The overwhelming impression is that of an intelligent and careful reading, Pauler’s most serious criticism of Wittgenstein as a logician being that he fails to live up to his own exhortations on the avoidance of “logical nonsense.” And again, such a positive reception would be astonishing were it not for the shared Austrian background of the two philosophers.

## 26.8 Logical Principle and Mathematical Axiom

At the very end of his life, Pauler authored a paper entitled “Logical principle and mathematical axiom” (1936), the manuscript of which was published by his students after his death.<sup>8</sup>

As is clear from its title, Pauler addresses in this chapter the issue of the relation between mathematics and philosophy. Although it remained incomplete, the piece is of interest not least because it contains a number of critical passages on the work of Frege, for example, on Frege’s definition of number in the *Grundlagen der Arithmetik* (§ 68), where Pauler notes that, while Frege’s account has the merit of not taking the psychological phenomena of numbering or counting as its starting point, his definition of number yet suffers from the defect that it applies only to cardinal and not also to ordinal numbers. For Pauler, in contrast, a correct “definition of number must grasp the root from which both cardinal and ordinal numbers can be deduced,” namely that a number is in every case “a member of the number series.”

As concerns Wittgenstein, Pauler raises in this essay an objection that he also raises against Russell, namely that they both deny the possibility of philosophical knowledge as something distinct from knowledge of mathematical (logical, analytic) truths. At the same time, however, Pauler views Wittgenstein as the greater thinker on other grounds, namely because he brought about the most significant renewal of the modern theory of relations. Pauler’s thinking can be seen, in this light, as in accord with Wittgenstein’s picture theory of language. *Names*, for Wittgenstein, stand for *things*, and the arrangement of names stands for a *situation in reality*. Both names and arrangements thereby belong not to the psychological but to the logical realm—the realm of *logismata*. Pauler might have pointed out that, while Wittgenstein was successful in keeping separate the logical and the psychological realms, his use of the term “name,” in this and related contexts, suggests that he failed to keep separate the logical from the *linguistic* realms, a failure which had, of course, tremendous significance for the subsequent development of analytic philosophy.

It will already be clear that there are many affinities between Pauler and Wittgenstein. Both see logic as the fundamental philosophical discipline; both defend an objectivistic view of propositions (in the spirit of Bolzano), which means that they both postulate, in addition to things and representations, a third realm of logical entities. Yet, Pauler and Wittgenstein differ greatly in the position they award to logic in relation to the other branches of philosophy. For Pauler, the principles of logic form the core of *philosophia perennis*—and for this reason, even though Pauler views the rise of modern symbolic logic as significant, he can find nothing to admire in it precisely because, through its invention of ever new logical systems, it gives the impression that *logic changes*.

Where for Wittgenstein, philosophical assertions belong to the realm whereof we cannot speak, for Pauler philosophical assertions are like other assertions—not least

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<sup>8</sup> I draw heavily in what follows on Somos (2001, pp. 211–217).

in that they are subject, too, to the principles of logic. They do, indeed, involve a certain self-referential aspect—it is for this reason that skeptical theses are nonsensical—and this self-referential aspect is ineliminable. But this is a discovery about philosophical assertions, one that can be stated in other philosophical assertions, which are once again themselves subject to the principles of logic.

Further objections against Wittgenstein in “Logical principle and mathematical axiom” echo the marginalia referred to already above:

It is a nonsensical statement on the part of Wittgenstein when he asserts that one cannot talk about the totality of things. (He does it himself, when he tells us of the totality of things that we cannot talk about it.)

Against Wittgenstein’s refutation of the principle of causality, Pauler points out that

Wittgenstein himself accepts this principle, for example when he wants to convince others of his point of view.

And as Pauler’s annotation (“this he has achieved!”) to Wittgenstein’s remark on p. 27 to the effect that the object of this book “would be achieved if there were one person who read it with understanding”—Wittgenstein did indeed succeed in exerting this causal influence on at least one reader, namely Pauler himself.

Pauler objects also to Wittgenstein’s treatment of the role of language in the *Tractatus*. He formulates his objection thus:

Wittgenstein’s main program is to find the limits of knowledge in language, in what can be linguistically expressed. Important parts of our mental experiences however are linguistically inexpressible, for instance feelings; yet still we affirm their existence and in a sense also we have knowledge of them. All of this is to misconceive the nature of language. Language evolved not for gaining knowledge, but for common action (*gemeinsame Handlung*). It is something social, not an instrument of the theory of knowledge. Wittgenstein’s program diminishes the realm of knowledge to an unbelievably stark degree—it would for example exclude knowledge of the mental life. And by the way, there is also thinking without language (for example in children).

Pauler’s use of the phrase “*gemeinsame Handlung*” (“*közös cselekvés*”), here, certainly has affinities with Wittgenstein’s reference at *Philosophical Investigations* § 206 to the “*gemeinsame menschliche Handlungsweise*” as a reference system through which we interpret a strange language. But as Somos correctly points out:

Pauler’s philosophical position is of course far from the philosophy of language of the older Wittgenstein. [It] calls to mind rather Bolzano, who calls everyday language the “*Sprache des gemeinen Lebens*.” (*op. cit.*)

For Pauler, indeed, the philosophy of language was a ludicrous one-sidedness (*irrsinnige Einseitigkeit*, Somos, *op. cit.*)—because of the degree to which it sought to banish the truly important logical and metaphysical problems from the realm of what philosophers shall be allowed to concern themselves with (cf. Mulligan et al. 2006).

**Acknowledgments** What follows is a revised and much expanded English version of my “Osztrák és magyar filozófia: Wittgenstein és Pauler logikájáról,” *Magyar Filozófiai Szemle*, (1981/1), 139–144. I am grateful to Tamás Demeter, J. C. Nyíri, Róbert Somos, and Gloria Zúñiga y Postigo for helpful comments.

## Appendix

Pauler’s notes are to a copy of *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, translated from the German by C. K. Ogden, with an introduction by Bertrand Russell, prepared with assistance from G. E. Moore, F. P. Ramsey, and Wittgenstein; a parallel edition included the German text on the facing page to the English text, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1922.

	Passage referred to	Translation of Pauler’s comments
p. 16	That the sun will rise tomorrow	Self-contradictory: he too builds his statements on the pr[ima] causa (that namely <i>tomorrow too</i> he will judge like this!!)
p. 17	It is impossible to say anything about the world as a whole	Naïve and self-contradictory nominalism!
p. 20	The psychological part of meaning... does not concern the logician	Right!
p. 23	To this hierarchy of languages there may be no limit	This is <i>certain!</i> (cf. Tarski.)
p. 26	It is indifferent to me whether what has been thought has already been thought before me by another	Moving modesty! Verecundia Judaica? [with penciled Star of David at top of page]
p. 27	[The object of this book] would be achieved if there were one person who read it with understanding	This he has achieved!
p. 29	If this work] has a value...this value will be better the better the thoughts are expressed	Alas, badly!
p. 29	The <i>truth</i> of the thoughts communicated here seems to me unassailable	no small achievement!
2.01	An atomic fact is a combination of objects (entities, things)	LHS: so the world does consist of things! RHS:? how come!
2.0121	A logical entity cannot be merely possible	“Merely possible” confused
2.0123	If I know an object, then I know all the possibilities of its occurrence in atomic facts	Good
2.0141	The possibility of its occurrence in atomic facts is the form of the object.	Aristotle
2.0201	Every statement about complexes can be analysed into a statement about their constituent parts	Russell

	Passage referred to	Translation of Pauler's comments
2.021	Objects form the substance of the world. Therefore they cannot be compound	Leibniz
2.023	The substance of the world can only determine a form and not any material properties	what is that?
2.0233	Two objects of the same logical form are...only differentiated from one another in that they are different	Diversitas
2.024	Substance is what exists independently of what is the case	Aristotle
2.0251	Space, time and colour...are forms of objects	through the mental?
2.062	From the existence or non-existence of an atomic fact we cannot infer the existence or non-existence of another	contradicts 2.0121, for if everything is connected, then surely one can infer from one to the other
2.17	What the picture must have in common with reality...is its form of representation	Aristotle
3.1432	We must not say, "The complex sign ' $a R b$ ' says ' $a$ stands in relation $R$ to $b$ ';", but we must say "The ' $a$ ' stands in a certain relation to ' $b$ ' says <i>that</i> $aRb$ "	Aristotle
3.333	...Herewith Russell's paradox vanishes	Right!
4	The thought is the significant proposition	But there is also languageless thought!!
4.11	The totality of true propositions is the total natural science	Are there then only natural sciences?
4.1272	Expressions like "1 is a number"...are senseless	Right!
4.128	Therefore there is no philosophical monism or dualism, etc	This is entirely unintelligible!
4.46	In the first case we call a proposition a tautology, in the second case a contradiction	Def
4.464	(Certain, possible, impossible: here we have an indication of that gradation which we need in the theory of probability.)	Excellent solution!
4.466	(And to no logical combination corresponds no combination of the objects.)	Contra Frege and Russell
4.5	The general form of proposition is: Such and such is the case	Right!
5.4	Here it becomes clear that there are no such things as "logical objects" or "logical constants" (in the sense of Frege and Russell)	What is that?
5.43	But all propositions of logic say the same thing. That is, nothing	Violence: he too explicates such propositions

	Passage referred to	Translation of Pauler's comments
5.454	In logic there cannot be a more general and a more special	Without giving reasons!
5.513	Two propositions are opposed to one another when they have nothing in common with one another	But there is no such thing
5.5151	The positive proposition must presuppose the existence of the negative proposition and conversely	Right!
5.524	LHS: If the objects are given, there-with are all objects also given	Right!
5.524	RHS: If the elementary propositions are given, then therewith <i>all</i> elementary propositions are also given	has nothing to do with the problem!
5.5303	To say of two things that they are identical is nonsense	Right!
5.533	The identity sign is therefore not an essential constituent of logical notation	Right!
5.5421	A composite soul would not be a soul any longer	Right!
5.422	The correct explanation of the form of the proposition "A judges p" must show that it is impossible to judge a nonsense	He does it too!!
5.552	The "experience" which we need to understand logic is not that such and such is the case, but that something is; but that is no experience	Right!
5.557	What lies in its application logic cannot anticipate	Clearly!
5.61	We cannot therefore say in logic: This and this there is in the world, that there is not	<i>Quite</i> right!!
5.62	That the world is my world, shows itself in the fact that the limits of the language (the language which only I understand) mean the limits of my world	I am <i>my world</i> ? [in English]
5.621–5.631	The world and life are one I am my world. (The microcosm.) The thinking, presenting subject; there is no such thing	Contradiction
5.633	Where in the world is a metaphysical subject to be noted?	In Reason  [margin:] naïve sensualism and empiricism
6.021	A number is the exponent of an operation	Right!
6.031	The theory of classes is altogether superfluous in mathematics	Contra Russell



	Passage referred to	Translation of Pauler's comments
6.111	This now by no means appears self-evident, no more so than the proposition "All roses are either yellow or red" would seem even if it were true	Confusing contrary with contradiction
6.112	The correct explanation of logical propositions must give them a peculiar position among all propositions	Right!
6.1231	To be general is only to be accidentally valid for all things	Not so
6.127	All propositions of logic are of equal rank; there are not some which are essentially primitive and others deduced from there	He himself sins against this!
6.21	Mathematical propositions express no thoughts	What is that?
6.23	If two expressions are connected by the sign of equality, this means that they can be substituted for one another. But whether this is the case must show itself in the two expressions themselves	Right!
6.2321	And, that the propositions of mathematics can be proved means nothing else than that their correctness can be seen without our having to compare what they express with the facts as regards correctness	right!
6.2323	The equation characterizes only the standpoint from which I consider the two expressions, that is to say the standpoint of their equality of meaning	Right!
6.343	Mechanics is an attempt to construct according to a single plan all true propositions which we need for the description of the world	Only description of nature
6.41	The sense of the world must lie outside the world...	Right!
	If there is a value which is of value, it must lie outside all happening and being-so. For all happening and being-so is accidental	Right!
	What makes it non-accidental cannot lie <i>in</i> the world, for otherwise this would again be accidental	= God? quite on the contrary
	It must lie outside the world	
6.421	Ethics and aesthetics are one	Journalistic shallowness
6.4311	Death is not an event of life. Death is not lived through	[in Greek:] <i>thanatos ouden pros hēmas</i> (death [is] not upon us) <sup>a</sup>

	Passage referred to	Translation of Pauler's comments
	If by eternity is understood not endless temporal duration but timelessness, then he lives eternally who lives in the present	Goethe <sup>b</sup>
6.5	For an answer which cannot be expressed the question too cannot be expressed...	He too does it
	If a question can be put at all, then it <i>can</i> also be answered	He too shows it to be false

<sup>a</sup> Compare Epicurus' *Kuriai doxai* 2: "Death is nothing to us: what is dissolved, does not perceive, and what is not to be perceived is nothing to us."

<sup>b</sup> Pauler is presumably here adverting to Goethe's remarks for example to the effect that "Every state, indeed every moment, is of infinite value, for it is a representative of eternity", (*Gespräche mit Eckermann*, November 3, 1823); "[Nature] knows neither past nor future. The present is its eternity" (*Die Natur*, 1773), "a sequence of consistent moments is always a kind of eternity (last letter to Zelter, 1832).

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