HANS-JOHANN GLOCK[*]

PHILOSOPHY WITHOUT PSYCHOLOGY: A CASE OF WISHFUL THINKING?

Frege's and Wittgenstein's views on psychologism are of great importance both for substantive philosophical reasons and because of their role in the development of twentieth century philosophy. They also play a role when it comes to understanding the relation between the two of them. In 1931, Wittgenstein listed the direct influences on his thinking: Boltzman, Hertz,

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[*] Hans-Johann Glock – Professor of Philosophy and Head of Department at the University of Zurich (Switzerland), as well as Visiting Professor at the University of Reading (UK). His recent publications include The Blackwell Companion to Wittgenstein (2017; co-edited with John Hyman), as well as several articles on the philosophy of animal minds, the normativity of meaning and the dominance of English as the medium of (analytic) philosophy. He gave the 2019 Francis Bacon Lecture of the Royal Institute of Philosophy on the topic of 'Animal Minds and Animal Ethics' and is a principal investigator of an international research programme 'The Structure and Development of our Understanding of Reasons for Action' financed by the Deutsche Forschungsgesellschaft.

Address for correspondence: Philosophisches Seminar, Zürichbergstrasse 43, CH-8044 Zürich. E-mail: glock@philos.uzh.ch.

Schopenhauer, Frege, Russell, Kraus, Loos, Weininger, Spengler, Sraffa (1977, p. 19). Among these, the great logicians Frege and Russell are the philosophically most relevant. Of the two, Russell may have exerted a greater influence on Wittgenstein, by dint of their extensive and intensive conversations in Cambridge between 1911 and 1914. But Frege occupied pride of place in Wittgenstein's own estimate. He met Frege several times before the war, and they continued to correspond until 1919. The Preface of the *Tractatus* contains an acknowledgement with an unmistakable ranking: 'I am indebted to Frege's great works and to the writings of my friend Mr. Bertrand Russell for much of the stimulation of my thought.' Even after having abandoned his early philosophy, Wittgenstein continued to admire Frege. In his lectures of 1939, he referred to him as 'a great thinker' (1939, p. 144). Shortly before his death, Wittgenstein observed that 'Frege's style of writing is sometimes great' and, on reading "On Concept and Object", he exclaimed, 'How I envy Frege! I wish I could have written like that' (1988, pp. xiii–xiv).

Interestingly, however, Wittgenstein had a comparatively low opinion of *Der Gedanke*, which is widely regarded as the crowning testament of Frege's anti-psychologism. In letters that have since been lost he criticized the work, prompting Frege to respond:

> Of course I do not take offence at your frankness. But I would like to know what the deep reasons for idealism (*tiefe Gründe des Idealismus*) are that I am supposed not to have grasped. If I understood you correctly you yourself do not take epistemological idealism to be true. Thereby you acknowledge, I think, that there simply are no deeper reasons for this idealism. The reasons for it can only be apparent, not logical…
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> (Frege, 1989, 3.04.1920)

After World War II, Wittgenstein still disliked *Der Gedanke.* When Max Black and Peter Geach prepared their *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege,* Wittgenstein counseled them 'to translate *Die Verneinung* but not *Der Gedanke*: that, he considered, was an inferior work – it attacked idealism on its weak side, whereas a worthwhile criticism of idealism would attack it just where it was strongest. Wittgenstein told me that he made this point to Frege in correspondence: Frege could not understand – for him, idealism was the enemy he had long fought, and of course

you attack your enemy on his weak side' (1988, pp. XIII–XIV; see Künne, 2009, pp. 26–34).

This article will compare and contrast Frege's and Wittgenstein's respective attitudes towards psychologism rather than idealism. As we shall see, although these two doctrines often go hand in hand, they by no means coincide (see below and Glock, 2009, pp. 124–128). Furthermore, I shall move beyond historical and exegetical points concerning Frege's and Wittgenstein's respective attitudes towards psychologism, to focus on a substantive issue: to what extent is it possible or advisable to disregard psychological facts in clarifying the logical, semantic and mental concepts that lie at the heart both of Frege's work and that of Wittgenstein, early and late. More specifically, I shall be concerned with the following questions:

1. How should psychologism be understood?
2. What is the relation between Wittgenstein's anti-psychologism and that of Frege?
3. Can conceptual clarification à la Wittgenstein avoid empirical psychology with respect to the following topics
   a. judgment
   b. meaning and understanding
   c. philosophical method?
4. If not, does that constitute a psychologistic aberration? Or is the idea of philosophy unaffected by psychological facts a case of wishful thinking?

I shall start by clarifying what psychologism and anti-psychologism amount to.

What is psychologism?

The attempt to protect philosophy from incursions by empirical psychology goes back to Kant.

It is popular to accuse Kant and his nineteenth-century successors of confusing logic not just with metaphysics and epistemology, but also with psychology (Kneale, Kneale, 1984, p. 355; Carl, 1994, chapters 1–2; cf. Dipert, 1998). There is some justification for this picture. Kant's transcendental idealism treats the necessary preconditions of experience as features to which the objects of experience have to conform because they

are imposed on them by our cognitive apparatus in the course of process-
ing the incoming data. This transcendental psychology was one of the main
sources of nineteenth-century psychologistic logic (another one being as-
sociationist and introspectionist psychology), because it suggests that the
mind can underpin apparently necessary propositions in mathematics and
metaphysics (see Glock, 2003). At the same time, Kant also inaugurated
crucial anti-genetic and anti-psychologistic modes of thought. What makes
a belief a priori is not determined by the way it is acquired, whether it is in-
nate or learnt, but rather depends on the way it can be *verified*. Furthermore,
Kant distinguished between the question of how we acquire a certain kind
of experience or belief (*quaestio facti*) and the question of what the logical
and epistemological status of that experience or belief is (*quaestio iuris*).
By the same token, he separated transcendental philosophy from 'empirical
psychology', notably Locke's 'physiology of the human understanding' (see
1989, A 84–5/B 116–7; A ix; 1783, §21a). As regards logic, he insisted on
the purity of *formal* logic – a term he coined. He strictly separated 'pure
general logic' from psychology, metaphysics and anthropology. He also
insisted on the *topic-neutrality* and *normativity* of logical laws (1879, VIII;
see Trendelenburg, 1840, p. 35).

Kant thereby inspired an anti-genetic and anti-psychologistic strand
in nineteenth century German-language philosophy (Sluga, 1997; Glock,
1999b; Anderson, 2005). It was in this context that the label 'psychololgism'
first came into prominence. It was first used by Johann Eduard Erdmann in
characterizing the approach of Friedrich Eduard Beneke. Its use is intimately
linked to two developments. First, a naturalistic-cum-empiricist backlash
against German Idealism; and secondly, the institutional parting of the ways
between the nascent discipline of psychology and academic philosophy
seeking to secure its purity and priority. Here the battle lines were drawn
between Wundt, founder of empirical psychology, and Lotze, champion of
philosophy as an independent foundational discipline. In the course of this
struggle, philosophy 'cleansed itself' from psychology, not just as far as
the phenomenological tradition was concerned, but also within the budding
analytic movement; whereas psychology, conversely, established itself as an
independent discipline (see Künne, 2010, pp. 342–69; Glock, 2015a; Kusch,
1995, p. 182; Beaney, 2014, p. 33f.).

Anti-psychologists are united in the view that philosophy, its sub-
disciplines (notably logic and epistemology) and related subjects (especially

mathematics), are autonomous, distinct not just from psychology, but also from other natural sciences such as physiology. Beyond this context, the use of the label is extremely diverse in several respects.

The first parameter distinguishing various brands of psychologism is scope. Psychologism could be *partial*, a position which treats logic and mathematics as part of or founded in empirical psychology (e.g. Mill). Or it can be a general perspective on philosophy and connected sub-disciplines. A second parameter is *evaluation*. For the most part, the label is used *pejoratively*, e.g. Erdmann, the Neo-Kantians and Husserl. According to this employment, it is constitutive of psychologism to mistakenly conceive a non-psychological phenomenon or problem as a subject of psychology. Psychologism is psychology in the wrong place. But there is also an *approbatory* employment. The self-proclaimed psychologism in the Brentano school purports to resist formalistic and aprioristic tendencies because of paying due homage to sciences of the mind. Similarly, the term 'logicism' was first used not for Frege's and Russell's programme of reducing mathematics to logic, but more generally as a contrast to psychologism, notably by proponents of the latter, such as Wundt and Nelson (see Gabriel, 1980). Finally, the appellation can also be *neutral*. Psychologistic positions on a given subject make substantial use of the concepts, theories and methods of empirical psychology. Husserl purported to use the term in this way, but this may well strike us as disingenuous (1900, p. 52; see Künne, 2010, p. 346).

Thirdly, and most importantly, varieties of psychologism differ over the way in which they contrast psychology and a contested discipline. The *alleged difference* could be one between

(i)   what is empirical (a posteriori) and what is non-empirical (a priori);
(ii) what is subjective and particular and what is objective and universal;
(iii) what is descriptive and causally explanatory and what is prescriptive or normative;
(iv) the causes which bring about a belief and the reasons that justify a belief.

There is a connection between (iii) and (iv): reasons are generally held to have a normative dimension. But a current debate attests to the fact that the nature and extent of the connection is complex, both from a historical and from a substantive perspective (see Star, 2018). (iii) is linked to a further distinction (see Künne, 2010, pp. 344–345), namely between 'radical

psychologism', which reduces a contested discipline to descriptive psychology, and 'moderate psychologism', which bases a contested discipline on prescriptions derived from empirical psychology, 'laws of thought' or *Denkgesetze*.

Finally, there are different conceptions of the *kind of psychology* and *mental laws* on which a contested discipline, in particular logic, is grounded. One option is the transcendental psychology-cum-logic mentioned above in connection with Kant's transcendental idealism. Another is empirical psychology of the mentalist kind pursued by Wundt and Brentano. The two differ over (i). Transcendental psychologism tries to explicate non- or pre-empirical preconditions for generating experience and its objects; mentalist psychologism records empirical regularities, for instance by way of introspection. But they converge regarding (ii): both are concerned with the minds of individuals which are not accessible from a third-person perspective. A final option is neuro-physiological psychologism. It agrees with the mentalist brand on (i), yet not on (ii). Psychology is empirical, but its topic is part of the objective causal order—the central nervous system. This proto-Quinean picture is psychologistic while at the same time avoiding idealism. Conversely, Hegel's position is idealist yet without being psychologistic. According to 'objective idealism', reality does not boil down to episodes in the minds of individuals; it is intelligible only because it is the manifestation of a divine spirit or rational principle (see Glock, 2008, p. 127f.).

Frege's logical anti-psychologism

Frege's anti-psychologism occupies an intermediate position between being partial and being general. It concerns not just logic and mathematics, but also epistemology, a point less frequently noted. Next, unlike Kant and Husserl, Frege is not concerned primarily with (i), i.e., to resist the reduction of logic to something empirical. Nor does he hold with respect to (iii) that logical laws are normative, contrary to a prevalent misinterpretation.[1] There

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[1] See Kusch (1995, pp. 30–40) and Künne (2010, pp. 351–359). Künne's account is particularly illuminating. But two views he ascribes to Frege stand in tension: first, logic is only *per accidens* a normative science; second, the relationship between the logical laws of truth and laws of thought is not that between a scientific truth such as 'Fungi flourish in high humidity' and a technical norm such as 'If you want to avoid mold,

is a difference between psychological laws of 'holding to be true' (*Gesetze des Fürwahrhaltens*) and logical laws of 'being true' (*Gesetze des Wahrseins*) (1893, pp. XV–XVI). Nevertheless, logical laws are *not* prescriptions, they are descriptive laws about abstract entities (1983, p. 139). Just as natural laws give rise to technical prescriptions, logical laws give rise to laws for judging truly (1893, p. XVII).

> The word 'law' is used in two senses. When we speak of moral or civil laws we mean prescriptions, which ought to be obeyed but with which actual occurrences are not always in conformity. Laws of nature are general features of what happens in nature, and occurrences in nature are always in accordance with them. It is rather in this sense that I speak of laws of truth [i.e., laws of logic]. Here of course it is not a matter of what happens but of what is.
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> (Frege, 1918/19, p. 58)

At the same time, Frege's rationale for regarding logical laws of thought as descriptive has a hitherto unnoticed normative trajectory. There are *laws* of truth because the notion of truth in general has a normative dimension.

> Any law asserting what is, can be conceived as prescribing that one ought to think in conformity with it, and is thus in that sense a law of thought.
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> (Frege, 1893, p. XV; see also 1983, p. 145;
> Künne, 2010, pp. 354–355).

This runs counter to the currently popular idea that a deflationary or minimalist account such as the one intimated by Frege and explicitly favoured by Wittgenstein reveals truth to be normatively inert. But it is correct. Any 'law asserting what is' and indeed any truth *states what is the case* (see 1922, 4.062). And we need to modify, i.e., correct our beliefs and activities in the light of what is the case, of things being thus-and-so. This in turn reflects

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ensure ventilation'. The relationship between the latter two is indeed accidental. But the relationship between a logical truth such as '$(P \& (P \rightarrow Q)) \rightarrow Q$' and the rule of modus ponens is *internal* rather than accidental. Frege himself suggests as much when he writes that rules of thought are 'given with' logical laws of truth (1983, p. 132). And the point is central to Wittgenstein's conception of logical inference. That '$(P \& (P \rightarrow Q)) \rightarrow Q$' is a tautology 'shows' that Q follows from P and $P \rightarrow Q$, and thus provides a 'form of proof' – modus ponens. See Glock (1996, pp. 216–220).

the fact that how things are is essential to how we should pursue our goals (see Glock, 2003, pp. 131–136).

On a connected issue, however, Frege's position is at least misleading. In *Logik,* a first draft of a book summarizing his logical insights, he writes:

> The causes which merely give rise to acts of judgment do so in accordance with psychological laws; they are just as capable of leading to error as of leading to truth; they are indifferent to the contrast between true and false. Logic excludes them from its subject matter (1983, p. 2; my translation; the one in Frege [1979] does not contain the final sentence).

It is unclear whether the 'they' after the first semi-colon refers to the causes or the psychological laws. In the second case, at least, this passage seems to yoke logic with (laws of) truth and psychology with (laws of) 'holding to be true', i.e., belief. But that correlation fails in both directions. On the one hand, conceptual truths about belief, ignorance, error and doubt are essential to epistemology and philosophy of mind. On the other, factual truths about the contrast between what is held/appears to be true and what is true are central to many parts of cognitive science. This holds, for instance, for psychological theories about perceptual illusions and cognitive biases, for evolutionary theories concerning systematic limitations of rationality and for linguistic theories about 'framing'. Such sciences do not just seek truths, but also have the contrast between true and false as one of their topics. In Frege's defence one might invoke the following passage:

> Error and superstition have causes just as much as correct cognition. Whether what you take for true is false or true, your so taking it comes about in accordance with psychological laws. A derivation from these laws, and an explanation of a mental process that ends in taking something to be true, can never take the place of proving what is taken to be true.
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> (Frege, 1918, p. 58f.)

To be sure, psychology needs to explain the genesis of false beliefs just as much as those of true ones. But from that, it does *not* follow that the contrast plays no role in these disciplines.

Next, one might try to dispel the examples of empirical disciplines concerned with contrasts such as that between truth and falsehood, knowledge

and mere belief. After all, according to a popular vision, cognitive science can and should be purely mechanical. It ought to relinquish any reliance on logical, epistemological and mental notions in favour of a neurophysiological or neurocomputational approach. But this would be cold comfort to Frege's rejection of naturalism and psychologism. Furthermore, our established use of mental and epistemic expressions defines the topic of cognitive science, its explananda, even if the explanans should turn out to be purely mechanical.

While this passage does not vindicate the idea that the truth/falsehood contrast is immaterial to psychology, it indicates another link between Frege's anti-psychologism and the issue of normativity (iii), namely via the idea of justification (iv). Frege accepted a distinction between reasons which justify believing that p and the causes of subject s believing that p. And as both the passage from *Logik* and the one from *Der Gedanke* show, this dichotomy plays an, often under-appreciated, role in his anti-psychologism.[2]

With any psychologistic account to logic "we lose the distinction between the grounds that justify a conviction and the causes that actually produce it" (Frege, 1979, p. 147; see Pfisterer, 2010).

Nevertheless, Frege's main attack on the 'psychological logicians' concerns (ii); it is directed mainly against the threat of subjectivism. Logic is objective and universal. Both features can only be secured, Frege thinks, by admitting that its subject matter – truth-values, thoughts (*beurtheilbare Inhalte*, *Gedanken*) and their structure – are neither private ideas (*Vorstellungen*) in the minds of individuals nor linguistic expressions but abstract entities signified by such expressions. Frege's system was axiomatic: all the truths of the predicate calculus can be derived as theorems from its 'Basic Laws' according to rules of inference. Frege understood the axioms not as analytic consequences of arbitrary definitions, but as self-evident truths about abstract entities such as numbers, concepts and relations which are certified by a 'logical source of knowledge'. These axioms 'contain', in undeveloped form, all the theorems which can be derived from them according to rules of inference (1879, §13; 1893, Apd.; 1979, pp. 267–279).

The need to ensure the objectivity of logic is also paramount in Frege's conception of thoughts and of sense. He distinguished between *Vorstellungen*, private ideas in the minds of individuals, and *Gedanken*, thoughts or

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[2] This is one of the few respects in which he was indeed influenced by Lotze and the Neo-Kantians. See Glock (2015).

propositions which are abstract entities inhabiting a Platonic 'third realm' beyond space, time and causality. His grounds were

   a) a thought, what someone thinks, is true or false independently of someone thinking it;

   b) two people can entertain and hold true the same thought;

   c) thoughts can be communicated (1892, pp. 29–32; 1918/19).

Frege derives (a)–(c) from a particular conception of logic. But they are also implied by the established use of 'what someone thinks (asserts, etc.)', as well as of derived notions such as that of the 'content' of assertions. They are also prerequisite for explaining communication, disagreement and argument. Only the sense of a sentence, the thought it expresses, is relevant to what is asserted by uttering it and for what that assertion logically implies. By contrast, the 'colouring' (*Färbung*) i.e., connotations associated with the sentence, is irrelevant (1892, p. 31; 1918/19, p. 63).

The early Wittgenstein: Anti-psychologism on stilts

Young Ludwig likened the development of function-theoretic logic to the scientific revolution in the 17th century (1913a, p. 3). He took over – and transformed – important elements of Frege's and Russell's logical systems. Moreover, he followed Russell in identifying philosophy with the logical analysis of propositions (1922, 4.003f.). But his 'philosophy of logic', departed radically from his predecessors. With considerable chutzpah he includes their work under the label 'the old logic', and castigates them for having failed to clarify the nature of logic (1922, 4.1121, 4.126; 1913b, p. 93; 1914, p. 109). In trying to fill this lacuna, Wittgenstein confronted three accounts of logical truths. In addition to psychologism and Platonism à la Frege, there was Russell's position. According to Russell, the propositions of logic are supremely general truths about the most pervasive traits of reality. This view is reminiscent of Aristotle's conception of metaphysics as the most general science (1903, pp. 3–9 & 106; 1913, pp. 97–101; 1914, pp. 189–190).

Wittgenstein eschews all three alternatives through a 'reflective turn' in the spirit of Kant (see Glock, 1997). Kant distinguished between 'formal logic', which abstracts from the objects of knowledge, and 'transcendental logic', which investigates preconditions of thinking about objects. The former

consists of analytic a priori truths. But there are also synthetic a priori truths in mathematics, metaphysics and the a priori elements of science. They hold true of experience (are synthetic) without being made true by experience (are a priori) because they express necessary preconditions of the possibility of experience. Wittgenstein picked up this idea from Schopenhauer and Hertz, who explained the a priori elements of science by reference to structural features of the way we represent objects. The *Tractatus* extends this idea to the analytic truths of formal logic, while rejecting the idea of synthetic a priori truths. Necessary propositions are neither statements about the way people actually think, nor about the most pervasive features of reality, nor about a Platonist hinterworld but reflect the conditions for the possibility of empirical representation. In contrast to Kant, these conditions no longer reside in a mental machinery. Logic investigates the nature and limits of thought, because it is in thought that we represent reality. But it does so by drawing limits to the 'linguistic expression of thought' (1922, Pref.). For Wittgenstein's predecessors, necessary propositions are true descriptions, either of how people think (psychologistic logic), or of relations between abstract entities (Frege), or of the most pervasive features of the universe (Russell). For Wittgenstein, by contrast, the a priori status of logical propositions is due not to the alleged fact that they describe a peculiar reality, but to the fact that they reflect rules for describing empirical reality. Logic embodies the necessary preconditions of symbolic representation. Logical truths are tautologies. They combine non-logical propositions which represent possible states of affairs in such a way that all the empirical information cancels out.

In the context of developing this account of logic, the early Wittgenstein modified, expanded and radicalized Frege's anti-psychologism. But his emphasis is not on the objective status of logic or of truth. Frege had argued at length against making both dependent on what humans believe and how they reason, especially in the Preface to *Grundgesetze*. By contrast, Wittgenstein takes alethic realism for granted: whether a proposition is true depends on how things are rather than on how humans think that they are. His aim is rather to ensure the a priori status of logic, in particular to purge logic and logicism from empirical assumptions such as Russell's appeal to the axiom of infinity.

> Psychology is no nearer related to philosophy, than is any other natural
> science. The theory of knowledge [*Erkenntnistheorie*] is the philosophy

of psychology. Does not my study of sign-language correspond to the study of thought processes which philosophers held to be so essential to the philosophy of logic? Only they got entangled for the most part in unessential psychological investigations, and there is an analogous danger for my method.

(1922, 4.1121)

In his attempt to avert that danger, the early Wittgenstein discarded even more phenomena as merely psychological. The most striking cases are judgment and assertion, to which we now turn.

Judgement: preliminary clarification and assertion

It is canonical to distinguish
– the faculty of judging (judgment, *Urteilskraft*) as opposed e.g., to perception, will, imagination, memory
– the act of judging that manifests this capacity, an act of accepting, affirming, etc.,
– the 'product' or 'object' of such an act.
But the 'act/object'–'act/product' distinction is misleading. First, concerning 'act', Leibniz maintained that a judgment is a deliberate and explicit mental act (14.04.1704). And according to Frege, a judgment is the response to a question, which in turn is a demand to judge (1918/19, p. 143). This yields the idea that a judgment is a deliberate response to a question. But unlike typical acts, including acts of a linguistic and mental kind (asserting, calculating in the head), judging is *not subject to the will*. I cannot judge at will that there is more than one even prime number.

Next, concerning 'object' and 'product'. What is judged is designated by noun-clauses of the form 'that p'. Yet that p is not a product of A's judging (by contrast to the token-sentence being produced by A uttering 'p'). It is preferable, therefore, to distinguish between act and *content*. But 'contents' are objects at most in an attenuated sense, Frege's Platonism notwithstanding (see Glock, 2015b). Furthermore, the trichotomy should be supplemented by the enduring *state* of holding or accepting that p, which corresponds to 'dispositional' i.e., long-standing rather than 'occurrent' or momentary beliefs. Although they were not the first to do so, Frege and Russell distinguished what is asserted or judged, the proposition or thought – from the act of

asserting or judging. Frege introduced the sign '|–' to express the act of judging or acknowledging something to be true. That something – the truth-bearer – is the thought expressed by the assertoric sentence following '|–'. Every well-formed formula in his axiomatic system has the form

(1) |–p

The sentence 'p' is the name of a truth-value. Adding the horizontal 'content-stroke' (*Inhaltsstrich*, *Wagrechte*) yields '–p', which ought to correspond to the mere thought that p.

Adding the vertical 'judgment stroke' (*Urtheilsstrich*) signals the act of judging that p [is true] (1879, §2–3; 1893, I § 5; 1891, p. 22).

Before passing on to a comparison with Wittgenstein, a substantive point is in order. Taken literally, *holding to be true* goes beyond mere *judgment*. Like belief, a judgment can merely be directed at what is or is presumed to be the case or a fact (cf. 1879, §3).

(2) A believes that p.

Holding something to be true is a conceptually more demanding phenomenon.

It involves taking a stance towards a (potential) claim about what is the case being true.

(3) A believes that it is true that p.

Unlike (2), (3) requires A to grasp the concept of truth.

Russell took over '|–', calling it the 'assertion-sign', and used it to add the force of 'it is true that' to the unasserted proposition. He held that true propositions have the quality of being asserted in a non-psychological, logical sense (1903, p. 35; 1913, p. 107 & 196; Russell, Whitehead, 1910, p. 8 & 92).

In 1911, Wittgenstein seems to have maintained that the only things which exist are 'asserted', i.e., true propositions (McGuinness, 2005, pp. 89–92). Assuming the Russellian conception of propositions, this anticipates his famous claim that the world is the totality of facts rather than things (1922, 1.1). But by the time of *Notes on Logic*, Wittgenstein had stopped using 'asserted' as equivalent to 'true'. Indeed, he had come to deny that assertion is logically relevant (1913b, pp. 95–96; 1922, 4.023, 4.063f., 4.442).

Assertion is merely psychological. […] The assertion–sign is logically quite without significance. It only shows, in Frege and Whitehead and Russell, that these authors hold the propositions so indicated to be true. "|–" therefore belongs as little to the proposition as (say) the number of the proposition.

(1913b, p. 95, 103)

The *Tractatus* makes the same point by reference to Frege:

Frege's 'judgment stroke' "|–" is logically altogether insignificant [be-deutungslos]; in Frege (and Russell) it only shows that these authors hold as true the propositions marked this way. A proposition cannot possibly say of itself that it is true.

(4.442, see 3.332; 1913b, p. 96)

This passage is sloppy, since Frege's judgment stroke is only the vertical part of '|–' (1893, §5; see Künne, 2009, p. 56). Yet this does not settle the question of what logical significance, if any, should be accorded to the sign in its entirety.

Wittgenstein is right to deny that a sentential sign that purports to say of itself that it is true amounts to a proposition with a sense – a proposition that makes a claim that can be assessed for its truth or falsehood. What claim is being made by 'This sentence is true'? Any attempt to provide a genuine answer to this question leads into a vicious regress.

(4) $\vdash p$

cannot be glossed as maintaining of (4) itself that it is true.

(5) This proposition is true.

Extracting a statement from (5) engenders regress. What proposition is said to be true in (5)? The proposition that this proposition is true. Hence, we are led to

(6) The proposition that this proposition is true is true.

(7) The proposition that the proposition that this proposition is true is true is true and so on.

If this is along the right lines, the assertion-sign can only serve to indicate that a proposition is judged to be true by the person using it. In that

respect, at least, it indeed signifies something 'psychological' – holding to be true or asserting. Frege himself grants as much in a letter to Jourdain written in 1912: 'Judging (or recognizing as true is certainly an inner mental process' (1980, pp. 78–79). But then again, why should that imply logical or semantic insignificance?

The assertion-sign can mark a *conceptual difference*, namely between merely considering or entertaining and asserting a thought that p. Dismissing that difference as 'merely pragmatic' would rightly be anathema to the later Wittgenstein. And the same should go for 'merely psychological'.

On the other hand, the potential utility of an assertion-sign does not by itself legitimize the uses to which Frege and Russell put it. In Frege and Russell '|–' serves to mark out a proposition as a premise or conclusion in a proof. This is a useful role. But it is not an indispensable one. Context generally suffices to distinguish asserted from unasserted propositions. The need for a special device arises only if, like Frege and Russell, one seeks an artificial language that aspires to dispense with contextual cues. Furthermore, it is a moot question, Wittgensteinian in spirit (1953, § 23–24) and explicitly raised by Davidson (2001, pp. 110–115, but cp. Glock, 2003, pp. 161–162), whether any sign, any force-indicator, can guarantee that the utterance is meant and / or understood as having a particular force like that of assertion.

Finally, in ordinary parlance, at any rate, one cannot infer or draw inferences from premises that one regards as false. Yet Wittgenstein is obviously right to point out that 'we can draw inferences from a false proposition' (4.023; 1914, 20.10.14). Unfortunately, this is something Frege explicitly denied: 'We cannot infer anything from a false thought' (1918/19, p. 145); and 'before acknowledging its truth, one cannot use a thought as premise of an inference' (1918/19, p. 145; 1923, p. 47). Various commentators have defended Frege on the grounds that in the passages at issue by 'Schluss' he in effect means *proof*, a valid inference with nothing but true premises, that thereby guarantees the truth of its conclusion (Anscombe, 1996, p. 115; Künne, 2009, p. 56; Pfisterer, 2009, chapter 2; Textor, 2011, pp. 80–81). But first, Frege does not say so in the published writings accessible to Wittgenstein. Secondly, even in the passages invoked in his defence (1979, pp. 174–175; 1980, pp. 16–17) he does not explain that expressions such as 'inference' or 'derivation' are to mean *proof*. Thirdly, even as regards proof, Frege's claim stands in need of further defence, since indirect proof proceeds from propositions which are neither true nor regarded as true. At the same

time, Frege explicitly addresses the issue of indirect proofs (1983, p. 264; 1919, p. 146; see also 1879, §4). He recasts the assumption P to be refuted as the antecedent of a conditional. With the help of contraposition, he can therefore reformu late any indirect proof.

(8)$\vdash$ P $\rightarrow$ (Q $\wedge\neg$ Q)

(9)$\vdash \neg$ (Q $\wedge\neg$ Q) $\rightarrow \neg$ P [(8), contraposition]

(10)$\vdash \neg$ (Q $\wedge\neg$ Q) [law of non-contradiction]

(11)$\vdash \neg$ P [(9) and (10), modus ponens]

However, fourthly, one should not run together the notion of inference and of proof, which fulfill two distinct and important roles not just in formal logic and mathematics but in other forms of argument as well.

In the final reckoning, the difference between the early Wittgenstein and his predecessors regarding the assertion-sign is part of a larger contrast concerning their respective conceptions of logic (see Glock, 1996, p. 216–220). '$\vdash$' is part of the conceptual notations of Frege and Russell, which stand in the service of their axiomatic presentations of logic, in which one deduces theorems from axioms that have to be not just true but self-evident. Wittgenstein's rejection of '$\vdash$' is equally part of his contrasting conceptual notation. In that notation, truth-tables serve not to define the logical constants, but as a way of writing down propositions (4.442; see 3.325) in a way which displays their logical relations – without the need for an axiomatic structure.

As a result, for Wittgenstein, logic is exclusively concerned with the unasserted proposition, which depicts how things are if it is true. At the same time, however, he seems to have concurred with Frege and Russell that such a proposition or picture can be common to the assertion that p, the question of whether it is the case that p, the command to make it the case that p, etc. (4.022; see also 1933, p. 149). This does not imply an inconsistency in his position; however, since logic is exclusively concerned with this common element rather than the diverse mental or linguistic acts. "Judgement, question and command are all on the same level. What interests logic in them is only the unasserted proposition" (1913, p. 96).

More worrying is the claim that an elementary proposition 'asserts the obtaining of a state of affairs' (4.21; see also 4.122, see 4.064). What elementary propositions do can hardly be logically insignificant. That apart,

however, the *Tractatus* position is coherent. The sense of a proposition is 'what it represents', namely a possible state of affairs or situation, an arrangement of objects which may or may not obtain, depending on whether it is true or false. The proposition shows its sense, i.e., 'how things stand if it is true. And it says that they do so stand' (4.022, see 2.201ff., 4.0621). It is reasonable to assume that asserting is the same as affirming or saying that. And in that case, one can simply distinguish between what an elementary proposition shows, its sense, and what it does, namely asserting that this sense – a possible state of affairs – obtains, which comes to the same thing as asserting the obtaining of that state of affairs.

Understanding

Frege showed that the sense of a sentence, the thought it expresses, cannot be private. He concluded that it is an abstract entity which can be apprehended by different people. However, he was forced to supplement this Platonist conception of meaning by a mentalist account of understanding. To understand a sentence is to 'grasp its sense', i.e., to latch on to this abstract entity. In communication the speaker does not induce in the hearer a qualitatively identical idea, but brings him to grasp a numerically identical thought. Understanding is a 'mental process', albeit one at the 'very confines of the mental', since it has to cross the ontological gap between the mental and the abstract. The nature of this process remains a mystery. It is equally mysterious how we can check whether speaker and hearer have indeed latched on to the same abstract entity, since Frege accepts the received idea that the contents of the mind are private (1892, pp. 29–30; 1918, p. 68; 1893, §32; 1979, pp. 137–145).

The early Wittgenstein combined Frege's anti-psychologistic evasiveness with Russell's logical atomism. We are capable of constructing and understanding an unlimited number of propositions because we can calculate their senses on the basis of knowing their constituents and their mode of combination. This implies that understanding is a process of calculation. The sense of a molecular proposition is derived from that of its constituent elementary propositions according to the rules of truth-functional combination. The sense of elementary propositions is derived from the meaning of its unanalyzable elements – logically proper names. The process

of calculation presupposes a process of analysis, since the constituents and logical forms of ordinary propositions are hidden behind their grammatical surfaces (4.002; 4.024–6, 3.318). Both processes must be unconscious: we are usually not aware of them, and they will only be made explicit by a successfully-completed logical analysis of the propositions of natural languages. The result of constructing (speaker) or calculating (hearer) the sense of a proposition is a string of 'thoughts' which accompany communication. Thoughts are psychic facts which consist of thought-constituents that correspond to the names in the propositional sign. The relation of these constituents to the objects of the depicted situation 'would be a matter for psychology to find out'. More generally, the study of 'thought-processes' is irrelevant to logic (4.1121; 1974a, letter to Russell 19.08.1919; 1961, 10.11.1914).

In sum, the early Wittgenstein's account of meaning features an unfortunate combination of avowed anti-psychologism and closet psychologism-cum-mentalism. Bracketing psychological notions in the name of anti-psychologism is unwarranted and counter-productive, even in the philosophy of language and epistemology, for these notions are internally connected to notions such as meaning and knowledge.

Wittgenstein's later approach is radically different. Instead of sweeping the problem of how we explain and understand words and sentences under the carpet in the name of anti-psychologism, he develops a non-psychologistic account of understanding. He rejects the assumption shared by mentalism and Platonism, namely that sentences merely provide the perceptible clothing of language-independent thoughts, an assumption Frege expressed by writing "The thought … gets clothed in the perceptible garb of a sentence" (1918, p. 61).

Frege and the early Wittgenstein were right to regard mental processes and images as irrelevant to sentence meaning, but wrong to think that the same goes for the concept of understanding.

The meaning of an expression e cannot transcend the understanding of competent speakers. It is immanent rather than "hidden" (1953, §126–128). It cannot be at odds with explanations of e which competent speakers can proffer on reflection or at least accept when they are formulated by experts. "'The meaning of a word is what the explanation of meaning explains." I.e. if you want to understand the use of the word "meaning," look at what is called "explanation of meaning"' (1953, §560). The meaning of e

is also determined by how competent speakers understand and explain *e*. Understanding is a 'correlate' of explanation and meaning, and instead of asking, 'What is the meaning of *e*?' we should ask, 'How is *e* explained?' and, 'What are our criteria for someone understanding *e*?' (1979, p. 43; 1933, p. 11; 1974a, pp. 45 & 60; see Glock, forthcoming).

Concluding thoughts

According to the enlightened anti-psychologism of the later Wittgenstein, communication is not a matter of making something happen in the hearer's mind – the grasping of a sense – such that it is irrelevant what happens thereafter. Understanding an utterance does not consist in having an experience, nor is it anything else which crosses the hearer's mind. Rather, it is a capacity, which is manifest in how the hearer reacts to the utterance (1953, §317, p. 363, pp. 501–510). Understanding a word is also an ability, which manifests itself in three ways: i) how one uses it; ii) how one responds to its use by others; iii) how one explains what it means when asked (1953, §75; 1979, p. 48ff.; 1976, pp. 19–28). These three criteria of understanding can in principle come apart (someone might use a word correctly without reacting appropriately or being able to explain it). But it is crucial to our concept that they commonly coincide. More generally, the mind is a complex of abilities. But in establishing *what* abilities, and how they relate to each other, we must take into account psychological facts. That at any rate is what I have argued elsewhere (Glock, 2017a).

On this occasion I end with a brief observation on another potential relation between psychology and philosophy. More strictly speaking, it concerns the relation between psychology and philosophical method or 'metaphilosophy'. Wittgenstein's later work features extensive reflections on the nature of philosophy and its problems. These revolve around what one might call a 'phenomenology of philosophical puzzlement'. Wittgenstein highlights the peculiar difficulties we encounter in philosophical trains of thought, and how these contrast with challenges in other intellectual endeavors. These observations furnish a novel understanding of the character of philosophical problems, which in turn calls out for an approach that contrasts sharply with scientific theory-building (see 1980, p. 1; 1974b, p. 193; 1979, pp. 27–28; 1954/1955, pp. 113–114).

According to irrationalist interpretations, the approach guiding Wittgenstein's philosophizing is a kind of psychotherapy modeled on psychoanalysis. In that case it would also be wholly irresponsible to ignore industrial strength psychological theories about the cognitive and affective mechanisms that make subjects susceptible to the disease. Fortunately, Wittgensteinian philosophy is not a psychotherapeutic attempt to cure people from the urge to philosophize, for his phenomenology reveals that philosophical puzzles are *conceptual*. As such they must be resolved by way of conceptual clarification and informal logic ('grammatical investigations'). We need to understand the logical structure of problems and arguments rather than the psychological profile of those propounding them (see Glock, 2017b). What I have argued just now is that this does not exonerate us from clarifying mental notions and paying heed to psychological facts and theories. The inclination to think otherwise would indeed amount to a case of wishful thinking.[3]

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Abstract

The topic of this lecture is the relation between Wittgenstein's thought and Wittgensteinian philosophy on the one hand, psychology and psychologism on the other. It will start by clarifying how the label 'psychologism' should be understood in this context, opting for a neutral rather than derogatory conception. Next it discusses the relation between Frege's anti-psychologism and that of the early Wittgenstein. The main focus will be on Wittgenstein's denial that assertion and

judgement are of logical relevance. The final sections turn to Wittgenstein's later thought. Can it avoid the intrusion of psychology concerning the following areas:

    – meaning

    – philosophical psychology

    – philosophical method?

Giving short shrift to psychological *notions* like understanding, perception, judgement and belief is impossible even in philosophy of language and epistemology, given their connections to notions like meaning and knowledge. If Wittgensteinian philosophizing were a kind of psychotherapy, it would also be wholly irresponsible to ignore psychological *theories*. Fortunately it isn't. Nevertheless it is neither feasible nor desirable to insulate the clarification of philosophical problems and contested concepts against empirical considerations. I shall substantiate this claim by looking at the problem of animal minds and the role that abilities play for mental and epistemic phenomena. If conceptual analysis is to serve as an instrument of critical thinking, it had better be impure.