The Frege-Wittgenstein Correspondence: Interpretive Themes

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Twenty-one cards and letters from Frege to Wittgenstein — the totality of the correspondence between them presently known to exist — were discovered in 1988, long after elaborate and far-reaching interpretive traditions had grown up around each philosopher.[1] It is unlikely that these missives will of themselves radically reshape our understanding of either. But for historians of logic and analytic philosophy, as well as for anyone interested in German and Austrian intellectual history at the time of the First World War — and especially Wittgenstein's and Frege's places within it — these are significant and interesting documents.

First and foremost, the cards and letters are accessible and engaging reading in their own right, documenting in a concrete way the course of intellectual exchange between two great philosophers, as well as some of Frege's own wartime observations of life in Germany. Second, they make a bit more vivid the nature of the relationship between Frege and Wittgenstein, a relation that unfolded over nine years during a period that was crucially formative in Wittgenstein's early development, and hence in the development of early twentieth century philosophy as a whole. Third, the letters provide a new kind of textual factor shaping reflection on the overall significance and nature of Frege's philosophical impact on Wittgenstein, and vice versa. For they contain a record of Frege's highly critical reactions to the *Tractatus* manuscript, which Wittgenstein had sent to him in December 1918 after having had the

[1] The letters from Frege to Wittgenstein were first published in an issue of *Grazer Philosophische Studien* as "Gottlob Frege: Briefe an Ludwig Wittgenstein", eds. A. Janik and P. Berger, in vol. 33/34, *Wittgenstein in Focus - Im Brennpunkt Wittgenstein*, eds. Brian McGuinness and Rudolf Haller (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1989), pp. 5-33, and again, with editorial revisions and commentary, in the CD-ROM of Wittgenstein's complete known correspondence distributed by Intelex, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Briefwechsel* (Innsbrucker elektronische Ausgabe 2004), eds. Monika Seekircher, Brian McGuinness and Anton Unterkircher. They are translated in this volume; see the preface to this translation for editorial commentary on their history.

manuscript rejected by the literary publisher Jahoda and Siegel.[2] And they also contain his reaction to Wittgenstein's frank criticisms (now lost, with Wittgenstein's side of the correspondence) of Frege's later highly influential philosophical essay "Der Gedanke" ("Thoughts"), an essay that, as the letters also establish, Frege sent to Wittgenstein in an offprint.[3]

What immediately strikes a reader of this correspondence is its tone of personal and intellectual closeness; a tone unique within Frege's published academic correspondence and something of a surprise for Wittgenstein scholars, who may not have known of the extent of this dimension of their relationship until the letters were published. Clearly this was a singular meeting of souls who shared mutual respect for one another's intellectual tenacity and sensibility, hope for collaboration, and philosophical values and interests (in clarity and intellectual honesty, in the importance of the new mathematical logic, in the nature and importance of logic to philosophy). The writings culminate, in spite of this closeness, in unanswered criticisms and an end to philosophical discussion and/or any imagined collaboration. Scholars previously knew of this result from remarks made, not only by Wittgenstein's sister Hermine, but also by Wittgenstein himself, in letters to Russell and Ficker and later remarks to Geach.[4] But here one may read the closing gesture in explicit form, as written down by Frege.

How are we to weigh the letters against the backdrop of recent discussion — wide-ranging and increasingly voluminous — about how to understand the

[2] Frege received the manuscript via Wittgenstein's sister Hermine in late 1918 or early 1919, but did not reply until 28 June 1919; see the Chronology in my Preface to the translation, as well as von Wright, "The Origin of the *Tractatus*", p. 76 and related correspondence in Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Cambridge Letters: Correspondence with Russell, Keynes, Moore , Ramsey and Sraffa*, eds. B. McGuinness and G. H. von Wright (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995). See also footnote 31 below.

[3] See Frege to Wittgenstein of 12 September and 15 October 1918, and 3 April 1920.

[4] G.H. von Wright analyzed this correspondence in detail before the discovery of the Frege letters in "The Origin of the Tractatus" (in his *Wittgenstein. With letters from Wittgenstein* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982/Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1983) and also reprinted on the CD-ROM *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Briefwechsel*). This essay remains essential reading for those interested in the origins and composition of the Tractatus. So too are the introduction to B. McGuinness and J. Schulte, eds., *Logisch-philosophische Abhandlung-Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, Kritische Edition* (Frankfurt, Suhrkamp Verlag, 1989) and essays touching upon this topic in Brian McGuinness's *Approaches to Wittgenstein: Collected Papers* (New York: Routledge, 2002). For Hermine's comments on the relationship with Frege, see her "My Brother Ludwig", in *Recollections of Wittgenstein*, ed. Rush Rhees (New York: Oxford University Press, revised edition 1984), pp. 1-11, especially pp. 5-6. For Geach's anecdote, see the Preface to Frege, *Logical Investigations*, ed. and trans. P.T. Geach (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977).

philosophical relations between Frege and Wittgenstein? Largely on the basis of the letters, Frege's biographer Lothar Kreiser has written that in the face of the *Tractatus* and Wittgenstein's efforts to explain it, both Frege and Wittgenstein simply "gave up" trying to understand each other.[5] This is surely not true of Wittgenstein, who, as is well known, returned repeatedly throughout his subsequent philosophical life to consideration of Frege's writings and turns of phrase and thought, as well as the content of their conversations.[6] But Kreiser's point may have been true for Frege. "It would remain a riddle" to Frege, Kreiser writes, "in what his influence on L. Wittgenstein might really have consisted, and for what reason he was thanked in the Preface to the *Tractatus*".[7] So far as we know, the friendship and correspondence between them was not further pursued by either after 1920 (Frege was to die in 1925).[8] Whether from Frege's side this had to do primarily with his retirement and lack of energy, or his philosophical reservations about the *Tractatus* and/or Wittgenstein's negative reactions to "der Gedanke" we shall never know.

In any case Kreiser's comments lead us naturally to the question whether readers ought to classify the correspondence as reflecting nothing more than a biographical curiosity of little interest to philosophy, an exchange between two thinkers that went nowhere.

In his 1989 editor's forward to the initial publication of the correspondence, Allan Janik departed from this view, suggesting that the depth of differences between Wittgenstein and Frege — evinced especially in Frege's critical remarks about the *Tractatus* — indicate something important about very different conceptions of clarity informing these two founding figures of early analytic philosophy. As Janik wrote,

> Frege's letters about the "Tractatus" convey not only the respect and friendship he felt for Wittgenstein, but also the two thinkers' utterly distinct conceptions of clarity (*Klarheit*) — a theme which continues to demand the attention of philosophers if we are to grasp the deepest distinctions separating one champion of an analytical philosophy from another.[9]

Janik does not specify the differences he sees at work between the "utterly distinct" conceptions of clarity informing Frege's and Wittgenstein's philosophies, but since the goal of conceptual clarity lies at the heart of the ana-

[5] Lothar Kreiser, *Gottlob Frege Leben-Werk-Zeit* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2001), p. 580.

[6] Reck, "Wittgenstein's 'Great Debt' to Frege", in Reck ed., *From Frege to Wittgenstein* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 3-38 summarizes the biographical data and contains a discussion of the Frege-Wittgenstein correspondence, as well as a few tentative suggestions about how we ought to be viewing the question of Frege's influence on Wittgenstein.

[7] Lothar Kreiser, *Gottlob Frege Leben-Werk-Zeit*, p. 580.

[8] Compare Hermine Wittgenstein, "My Brother Ludwig", pp. 5-6.

[9] Introduction to "Gottlob Frege: Briefe an Ludwig Wittgenstein", p. 7.

lytic tradition's self conception, his remarks claim for the Frege-Wittgenstein correspondence a special place within our understanding of the tradition's early development. If Janik is right, a fundamental and important philosophical break already existed at the origins. Since making this remark, Janik has gone on to examine the influence of Frege on Wittgenstein in more philosophical detail, though not primarily with an eye on the Frege-Wittgenstein correspondence. He of course does not deny that Frege had an impact upon Wittgenstein — noting that Wittgenstein himself placed Frege on the list of those who had most influenced him.[10] In particular, Janik stresses, Frege's anti-psychologism and style left their mark upon Wittgenstein, along with the theme of breaking the hold of misguided philosophical views of word-thing meaning relations by an appeal to contextualism.[11]

Of course, the content, basis, and implications of the anti-psychologism and contextualism have been the subject of much discussion, both about Frege's and Wittgenstein's philosophies. When we raise the question of the relationship between Frege and Wittgenstein, we are thus on the brink of larger, profound questions about gating ideas in early analytic philosophy and our relationship to them. How far did Frege and Wittgenstein really manage to work themselves into each others' point of view? Apart from Frege's style and intellectual tenacity and purity, which certainly left their marks on Wittgenstein,[12] is Frege's influence on Wittgenstein best seen as that of a thinker who posed problems that stimulated Wittgenstein, or instead as someone whose basic ideas were taken over by Wittgenstein, and perhaps thought through to a more thoroughgoing conclusion?[13] Was Wittgenstein's development largely independent of Frege, overlapping where the limitations of alternative approaches seemed most clear?[14] How much philosophical agreement underlay their disagreements? At which time? On which issues and grounds? What relevance do their answers have to contemporary philosophical discussion of their views?

It is clear that the letters alone cannot secure an interpretation of the Frege-Wittgenstein relation; we do best, in considering texts relevant to understanding this — both in matters of philosophical substance and in answering questions of influence and development — to look to a wide range of texts and the philosophical issues themselves, and avoid viewing the letters as an interpretive silver bullet. It seems unlikely, in fact, that answers will be forth-

[10] See the 1 April 1932 list of figures who Wittgenstein said had most influenced him, at item 154, 16r in his *Nachlass*.

[11] *Assembling Reminders: Studies in the Genesis of Wittgenstein's Concept of Philosophy* (Stockholm: Santérus Press, 2006).

[12] Cora Diamond, "Inheriting Frege: The Work of reception, as Wittgenstein did it", forthcoming in *The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein*.

[13] Those in this tradition include Geach, Diamond, Hintikka, and Ricketts.

[14] For this view see Goldfarb, "Wittgenstein's Understanding of Frege: The Pre-Tractarian Evidence", in E. Reck, ed., *From Frege to Wittgenstein* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 185-200.

coming from scrutiny of any smallish portion of the textual evidence alone — though such scrutiny is essential, of course, in arranging what evidence exists. To a large extent, we understand the letters by looking at surrounding texts.

This does not imply, however, that the letters have no philosophical significance whatsoever. Few interpreters of Wittgenstein and Frege have attempted to discuss the extent to which their contents shed unique light on such interpretive philosophical matters. And the biographies that have so far been written on both Frege and on Wittgenstein, while excellent, have also failed to address them within the larger context of a narrative about the origins of early analytic philosophy as a whole.[15]

While philosophy is not reducible to biography or vice versa, I also do not think it either possible or desirable wholly to abstract the life or historical context in which a philosopher writes from an interpretation of the significance of his or her writings.[16] In the case of a philosophical and personal correspondence this is especially important to bear in mind. To set the letters into proper light we must emphasize, not only philosophical themes and problems raised by the correspondence, but also certain contingencies of the historical situation in which the correspondents found themselves where these may be useful for assessing the philosophical significance of the letters. In what follows I shall be standing very much on the shoulders of Wittgenstein's biographers, Brian McGuinness and Ray Monk, and relying on the earlier, ground-breaking scholarly work (pursued before the discovery of the correspondence) of G.H. von Wright. My aim is not to give crucial philosophical weight to the letters, but to canvas several points surrounding their contents. I shall highlight primarily the biographical context (in Section I) and then (in Section II) some of the more philosophical issues.

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[15] Brian McGuinness's biography of Wittgenstein's early life, *Wittgenstein: A Life, Young Ludwig 1889-1921* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988) was published before the discovery of the letters; Ray Monk's *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius* (New York: Free Press, 1990) (especially at pp. 151ff, 174ff) and Lothar Kreiser's *Gottlob Frege Leben-Werk-Zeit* were published afterwards, and do weave references to the letters into the discussion of their subjects, though without emphasizing the questions I am raising here.

[16] On the theme of biography and philosophy, see my review of J. Klagge, ed., *Wittgenstein: Biography and Philosophy*, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* (2002.06.04) at http://ndpr.icaap.org/content/current/floyd-klagge.html. On the broader question of the historical contextualization of analytic philosophy, see my introduction, with S. Shieh, to J. Floyd and S. Shieh eds., *Future Pasts: Perspectives on the Analytic Tradition in Twentieth Century Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

I

Wittgenstein was the first to answer our question as to what philosophical significance, if any, the correspondence contains. For Heinrich Scholz explicitly wrote to him about the letters (2 April 1936).[17] Scholz had made it clear that he had evidence of the existence of a correspondence between Frege and Wittgenstein "in connection with a meeting that you [Wittgenstein] had with Frege".[18] He explained that his aim was to publish a collection of Frege's "scientific correspondence" and to create a Frege archive at the University of Münster. Then, with the perfectly appropriate but distinctive tone of a seeker of donations, Scholz cited Russell's "handsome" gesture in donating the originals of his correspondence with Frege to the archives (originals which included, we may presume, their remarkable exchanges about Russell's discovery of his paradox in 1902),[19] and urged Wittgenstein to follow suit. He was proposing, in other words, not only to read the contents of the Frege-Wittgenstein letters with an eye toward their publication, but also to retain the originals for posterity within the Frege Archive. He then asked for Wittgenstein's help in contacting Phillip Jourdain's widow, in case such a person existed, to obtain further Frege letters.[20] Finally, in closing, Scholz took up the role of an appreciator of Wittgenstein's work, adducing Schlick as a mutual close acquaintance and stating that the "many" letters he possessed from Schlick were "filled throughout" with what Scholz believed Schlick to have "owed essentially", philosophically speaking, to Wittgenstein.

Wittgenstein wrote back to Scholz within a week, that is to say, fairly rapidly. He said he was under the impression that Jourdain had been unmar-

[17] I have included the Scholz-Wittgenstein exchange of letters from 1936 in the translation in this volume.

[18] Reference to a record of this meeting is contained in Scholz List 2, now in the Scholz Archiv at Münster (see my Preface to the translations, in this volume, for citations to this list).

[19] The 1902 exchange between Frege and Russell is translated in Jean van Heijenoort, ed., *From Frege to Gödel: A Sourcebook in Mathematical Logic, 1879-1931* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 126-8, along with a stirring letter by Russell to Van Heijenoort praising Frege's intellectual honesty, dedication, and integrity. (Van Heijenoort evidently worked with copies of the original letters.)

[20] This was presumably because Scholz knew of the March 29, 1913 letter from Jourdain to Frege in which Jourdain says that he and Wittgenstein "were rather disturbed" by the idea that Frege might be writing a third volume of the *Grundgesetze*, and suggest a translation of earlier parts of the book into English instead. Frege approved the project in his reply (cf. Frege, *Philosophical and Mathematical Correspondence*, eds. G. Gabriel et.al., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980). As Reck notes ("Wittgenstein's 'Great Debt' to Frege", p. 12), this indicates, minimally, that Wittgenstein was interested enough in Frege's work to contribute to its translation, and that Frege trusted Wittgenstein enough to approve of his involvement in this venture. (This translation project was not completed.)

ried, but would "better inform" himself and write back if there were more to say (it seems he never did). Scholz's remarks about Schlick's letters owing so much to his influence were unlikely to have impressed Wittgenstein favorably, and he did not reply to these at all. Wittgenstein had already written to Schlick years earlier urging him to "tone down the fanfare stuff" in publicly praising Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, because "for 1000 reasons it was no triumph".[21] This was a reaction to Schlick's essay "The Turning Point in Philosophy", which Schlick had sent to him when it appeared in 1930.[22] Schlick had explicitly placed the *Tractatus* on a world-historical stage, writing that, even in relation to Leibniz, Russell and Frege, Wittgenstein was "the first to have pushed forward to the decisive turning point" in philosophy. Disturbed by the growing tendency to affiliate his early work with the Vienna Circle as a movement, realizing through his discussions with Ramsey the technical limitations of his early work, Wittgenstein was clearly worried that Schlick's hyperbolic praise of him bordered on the ridiculous. In reaction, he reminded Schlick of the saying from Nestroy that would later become the motto of *Philosophical Investigations*: "do not forget that handsome saying of Nestroy's ... that progress has this in it, that it always looks greater than it is."[23]

As for Frege's letters to him, Wittgenstein acknowledged to Scholz that they were in his possession (although, as we may plausibly assume, they were being held by or for him in Vienna, not in Cambridge).[24] In refusing Scholz's request for access to the letters, Wittgenstein cited three reasons.

1) The cards and letters are few in number and their contents are "purely personal and not philosophical", having "no value whatsoever" for a collection of Frege's [scientific] writings;
2) The cards and letters have a "sentimental" value for Wittgenstein;
3) Wittgenstein is "perturbed" by the idea of setting them up in a public collection of Frege's work.

[21] Wittgenstein to Schlick (18 September 1930); see *Briefwechsel*.

[22] It appeared in the first number of *Erkenntnis* vol. I (in 1930/31): 4-11; for Schlick's paper in English see Ayer, ed. *Logical Positivism* (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1959), pp. 53-59, especially p. 54.

[23] For more on the motto and its meaning, see David Stern, Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations: An Introduction* (Cambridge, 2004) and my "Homage to Vienna: Feyerabend on Wittgenstein (and Austin and Quine)", in *Paul Feyerabend (1924-1994): Ein Philosoph aus Wien*, eds. K.R. Fischer and F. Stadler, *Veröffentlichungen des Instituts Wiener Kreis*, vol. 14 (Springer Verlag, 2006).

[24] It seems plausible to assume that the letters were being held for Wittgenstein alongside the other pieces of correspondence with which they were later discovered, by his arrangement or perhaps that of a member of the family acting as his representative. This particular collection of over 500 letters was large, and it seems unlikely Wittgenstein would have had it shipped to Cambridge with him. Because the circumstances surrounding the later discovery of the correspondence are so murky, however, we know next to nothing of the history of this collection of letters.

In rejecting Scholz's eminently reasonable appeal for scholarly help, Wittgenstein was, it seems, not only needlessly dismissive of Scholz and the Frege archive project, but also positively dishonest with Scholz about the contents and philosophical significance of the correspondence. The overall impression, at least initially, is of a selfishly highhanded and impetuous man, unconcerned with scholarship, protective of his own vanity and reputation, unwilling to take any time to help a fellow researcher, and dismissive of Frege's philosophical remarks.

As I see matters, however, this initial impression is not all there is to say about the Scholz-Wittgenstein exchange. Even if the reasons Wittgenstein gave to Scholz constituted but a part of the truth, each contained large grains of it.

It should of course be asked whether Wittgenstein's decision to reply to Scholz as he did was nothing more than a selfish outburst by a philosopher who deemed the academic study of anything important impossible. McGuinness has raised the issue explicitly concerning the early Wittgenstein, writing that "Ludwig's own inclinations", at least in the period around 1919, were hostile to any form of study, and that "the idea of academic study of anything important is explicitly rejected in his book [the *Tractatus*]", at least as a life choice for Ludwig at that time, if not as a matter of philosophical principle.[25] If one grants that such an attitude was in place in 1919, at issue is the question whether a sufficiently strong residue of it extended into the 1930s in such a way as to explain, on its own, Wittgenstein's reply to Scholz.

Here I would answer in the negative. For I take Wittgenstein to have been acting in what is an understandable and rationally calculated way, attempting to do what he took to be the appropriate thing to protect the interests of all concerned — including, of course, his own. This is not to deny that Scholz, a working logician and founder of an important academic archive, had a right to feel that he had not been treated as well as he might have been, or that Wittgenstein was never fully devoted to academic professionalism. Nor is it to deny that Wittgenstein's temperament, including what he himself was repeatedly to call his own "vanity" in the prefaces and forewords to his projected books, played no part, either in his refusal to divulge the contents of the letters to Scholz or in his earlier behavior, intellectual and personal, with Frege.[26] But it is to suggest that we ought to assess Wittgenstein's decision in context, and allow ourselves to entertain the interesting question whether the letters (both the significance of their contents and their archival location) properly belong, ultimately, within the context of Wittgenstein's life's corpus

[25] *Wittgenstein: A Life, Young Ludwig 1889-1921*, p. 284.

[26] Remarks concerning the dangers both of vanity and of false humility in putting a philosophical work before the public find their way into the Preface to the *Tractatus* implicitly, but are made explicit in the Foreword to *Philosophical Remarks* and the Preface to *Philosophical Investigations*.

rather than with Frege's. It seems to me that Wittgenstein's 1936 decision, at the very least, correctly attached them to the former and not the latter.

Wittgenstein's 1936 reply to Scholz expressed a complex desire on his part to achieve a number of differing goals. Knowing what we now do about his preoccupations and state of mind in 1936, we can consider the forces and questions in play for him at that time.

The first reason Wittgenstein gave for not sharing the letters with Scholz is that the cards and letters are "purely personal and not philosophical", having "no value whatsoever" "for a collection of Frege's [scientific] writings". With the latter point it is difficult to disagree: the Frege-Wittgenstein correspondence is not nearly of the same importance to an understanding of Frege's development as a logician and philosopher as are, for example, his correspondence with Husserl, with Russell, with Hilbert and with Peano, of which scholars have rightly made a great deal. No fundamental points of symbolic logic or mathematics are touched on in the exchanges. And while Frege's philosophical ideas — above all about sense (*Sinn*) and reference (*Bedeutung*) — play an explicit role in his criticisms of the *Tractatus*, there are no new twists to the central lines of Frege's thought revealed here. Wittgenstein was often to refer to Frege in subsequent writings, but singled out other issues to criticize than those broached in the letters (he focuses mostly on Frege's criticisms of formalism, his definition of number, his view of logic as a maximally general science, his view of concepts, thought, and of the privacy of psychological images and sensations). Frege writes to Wittgenstein explicitly that he feels that even his essay "Der Gedanke" has "perhaps little new in it; but perhaps said in a new way and therefore more intelligible to some" (Frege to Wittgenstein 12 September 1918). Even if that essay's importance is by now historically confirmed, there is arguably little direct light shed on it by consideration of Frege's letters to Wittgenstein, including Wittgenstein's responses to Frege as indicated in his replies.

Nevertheless Wittgenstein's claim, that the cards and letters are "not philosophical", is obviously misleading. The criticisms Frege makes of the *Tractatus*, are explicit, fairly detailed, and harsh. During the war years there was a complete cessation of philosophical exchange between Frege and Wittgenstein. What we know of their philosophical conversations before the war is provided by what scholars have had in hand for some time, namely, the Scholz lists and related correspondence and testimony of Wittgenstein and others. So what we learn of their exchanges after the war is given by the final four letters of the Frege-Wittgenstein correspondence alone (June 1919-April 1920). It is striking that this final chapter in their recorded exchanges shows so vividly Frege's inability to appreciate the *Tractatus*, his suggestions that Wittgenstein revise the manuscript, and his highly tentative willingness to aid in securing its publication (and not in the form Wittgenstein sent it to him).

The letters show that Frege was not able to get far with either the manuscript or Wittgenstein's letters to him explaining it. As we know, Wittgenstein felt at the time he received Frege's reactions that they were

useless; he wrote to Russell in 1919 that Frege had not "understood a single word" of the *Tractatus*, that it was "VERY hard not to be understood by a single soul!", and that he was "thoroughly exhausted" by his efforts to give "simple explanations" to Frege.[27] Clearly in 1919 he honestly felt that Frege's criticisms of the manuscript were of no philosophical worth.

There is, however, an interesting question whether he felt differently about this in 1936, after his own thinking had evolved beyond the *Tractatus*. It is worth noting that he was later to propose that the *Tractatus* be published beside the *Investigations*, to show his later thought in its appropriate light.[28] This could be taken to suggest that he still did not take to heart any of the suggestions for improvement and rewriting that Frege had urged. Nevertheless, evidence does exist that the philosophical points discussed in their correspondence remained with him long afterwards, as we shall see (in Section II below).

What of Wittgenstein's remark to Scholz that the cards and letters are merely "personal" in character? This is true of all but the final four letters — indeed, this is what makes the correspondence so fascinating to read. We see Frege make remarks about his neighbors, about jokes in the local newspapers, about the deaths of relatives. We even gain what may be some small further insight, through his remarks on the wartime campaigns, of his thinking about Germany's place in the war.[29] For Frege, Wittgenstein was a young soldier to be respected and supported for his sacrifices on the battlefield, as well as a gifted student of (Frege's and Russell's) logic forty-one years his junior. Like Russell, Frege had seen in Wittgenstein a bright young hope for the future of logic, a gifted interlocutor (indeed, possible collaborator) willing and able to

[27] Wittgenstein to Russell, 19 August 1919, 6 October 1919; see *Briefwechsel* and *Cambridge Letters*.

[28] Item 128, p. 51, from 1943, in the *Nachlass*.

[29] This is not the place to discuss Frege's political views, which have been treated elsewhere by Kienzler, Kreiser, and Uwe-Dathe (see my footnote 2 to the translation of Frege's 2 August 1916 letter in this volume). But an example of the kind of remark I have in mind (noted by Burton Dreben) is contained in Frege's card to Wittgenstein of 28 August 1916, where Frege mentions with great trepidation the entry of Romania into the war. While Frege's nervousness about this may be partly intended to express concern for Wittgenstein, who is fighting on the eastern front, Frege fails in his letter to Wittgenstein of 26 April 1917 even to mention the entry of the United States into the war (on 6 April 1917), alluding instead to the successes of the U-Boat campaign in the Atlantic. Was this an underestimation (perhaps typical in Germany at the time) of the overwhelming role that was to be played by the emerging North American industrial power in the subsequent months of the war, or was it part of an effort to encourage Wittgenstein in the face of worrying news? Compare Monk's remarks in *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, p. 151.

discuss his logical doctrines with him.[30] Unlike Russell, when Wittgenstein's enigmatic manuscript came to him, he did not make sense of it, and it clearly disappointed him. This may partly explain the long delay in his responding to Wittgenstein's repeated requests for judgment on it. It is, moreover, worth remembering that the letters and cards were written by an aging logician primarily concerned about the lack of academic and intellectual recognition of his work and about the political future of Germany, and entangled in arranging life in his retirement during the war years.[31] Frege's health was not steady, as he attests more than once in the correspondence. Even before he received Wittgenstein's manuscript he declined invitations to visit him in Vienna and complained of his lack of strength.[32]

There is, however, above and beyond all these factors, another dimension to the "personal" side of the correspondence that must be mentioned. The letters document that Wittgenstein provided Frege with a substantial sum of money in the early part of 1918, the very year that he was to bring the manuscript of the *Tractatus* to its final form, writing in the Preface of his primary debt to "Frege's great works", and then making a series of strenuous and ill-fated efforts — including appeals to Frege — to get his manuscript published.[33]

At the time he arranged for the gift to Frege, Wittgenstein very likely viewed his act of financial beneficence — which fell squarely within his wealthy family's and his own (pre-1918) tradition of sponsoring intellectuals and artists[34] — as a tribute to Frege's logical work, as well as an alleviation

[30] Kreiser (*Gottlob Frege Leben-Werk-Zeit*, p. 577) writes that Wittgenstein's visit to Frege in 1911 was "a great encouragement" to Frege. Compare Frege's letters to Wittgenstein of 1918.

[31] Lothar Kreiser canvasses possible connections between the delay in Frege's reply to Wittgenstein after receiving the manuscript of the *Tractatus* and the practicalities of Frege's life both in his biography of Frege (*Gottlob Frege Leben-Werk-Zeit*) and in "Alfred", in G. Gabriel and W. Kienzler eds., *Frege in Jena: Beiträge zur Spurensicherung*, (Würzburg, Königshausen & Neumann GmbH, 1997), pp. 68-83.

[32] See Frege to Wittgenstein 12 April 1916, 2 August 1916, 28 June 1919. Kreiser discusses Frege's weak nerves and at times fragile condition in *Gottlob Frege Leben-Werk-Zeit*, pp. 513ff.

[33] See the letter from Frege to Wittgenstein of 9 April 1918, translated in this volume and in German on the CD-ROM *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Briefwechsel*. The foreword was found at the end of the manuscript that has come to be known as the *Prototractatus* (MS 104 in von Wright's catalog). For discussion of its status, see von Wright, "The Wittgenstein Papers" and "The Origin of the *Tractatus*", both in his Wittgenstein. Compare McGuinness and Schulte's introduction to their edition *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Logische-philosophische Abhandlung/Tractatus Logico-philosophicus, Kritische Edition*. On the gift's significance for Frege's financial situation, see Kreiser, *Gottlob Frege Leben-Werk-Zeit*, pp. 497, 505-5, 569.

[34] Among others whom Wittgenstein supported (albeit anonymously, through Ficker) were Karl Kraus, and the poets Rilke and Trakl. Their correspondence

of what he perceived to be Frege's genuine financial need.[35] But the following year, when Wittgenstein sought Frege's help in publishing his manuscript, this act of beneficence would run the risk of raising a more mixed or heightened interpretation of motives, at least in his own mind.[36] For Wittgenstein wanted from Frege not only honest intellectual judgment of his work, but also advice and support in bringing it before the world as a publication. Frege for his part certainly responded to these requests with full intellectual honesty, even if not with wholehearted enthusiasm: he stated that he would be willing to write to the editor Professor Bauch only "that I have come to know you as a thinker to be taken rather seriously", and not about "the treatise itself", for about this "I can render no judgment, not because I am not in agreement with the content, but because the content is not sufficiently clear to me".[37]

This brings us to the second reason Wittgenstein offered to Scholz, that the cards and letters had "a sentimental value" for him. Wittgenstein cannot

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with him (after learning of his support) were discovered alongside the Frege-Wittgenstein letters, and might therefore usefully be compared with Frege's to him. (They are on the CD-ROM *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Briefwechsel* (Innsbrucker elektronische Ausgabe 2004).) Note that support of intellectuals and artists was not the only kind of charitable giving in which Wittgenstein engaged during this period of his life. McGuinness reports that according to Wittgenstein's sister Hermine, around late 1916 or 1917 Ludwig gave 100,000 crowns for the purchase of better howitzer guns for the front (*Wittgenstein: A Life*, p. 257) — the gift of a soldier and an engineer, not merely an artist or humanitarian. Compare Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, pp. 106ff.

[35] Lothar Kreiser has said that without Wittgenstein's gift Frege could not possibly have purchased a house and retired in his home town of Bad Kleinen, Mecklenberg; moreover, without that gift, by the end of the First World War Frege would have been living "on the threshold of poverty" (*Gottlob Frege Leben-Werk-Zeit*, p. 566). Peter Geach's report of Wittgenstein's remarks about an early visit to Frege, in which Wittgenstein says he had heard that Frege was very poor (G.E.M. Anscombe and P. Geach, *Three Philosophers* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1961), pp. 129-130), though relevant to the question of perceptions, may reflect Wittgenstein's own privileged upbringing and youthful dandyism more than it does Frege's actual financial situation in 1913. Compare the follow-up correspondence between Geach and Frege's biographer Kreiser, quoted in Kreiser's *Gottlob Frege Leben-Werk-Zeit*, p. 498.

[36] On the topic of mixed motives in such acts of financial subvention of intellectuals, compare Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, p. 108:

> It is difficult to resist the conclusion that Wittgenstein's [1914] offer to Ficker [of 100,000 crowns] was motivated not only by philanthropy, but also by a desire to establish some contact with the intellectual life of Austria. After all, [in 1914] he had severed communication with his Cambridge friends, Russell and Moore, despairing of their ever understanding his ideals and sensitivities. Perhaps among Austrians he might be better understood.

[37] See Frege to Wittgenstein of 30 September 1919, translated below.

have forgotten the pain Frege's disappointment in the *Tractatus* had caused him seventeen years before, when he felt most committed to trying to publish his manuscript and at the same time most devastated by the effects of the war,[38] squeamish and vulnerable about the extent of his own pride and vanity in attempting — through several rejections by well-known publishers — to place the book before the public.[39] The whole event was embarrassing and traumatic. As G.H. von Wright has written of what he called "the long and troubled history of the publication of the *Tractatus*", "it is obvious that Wittgenstein was very anxious to publish his book. The many difficulties and obstacles must have depressed him deeply."[40] Monk has called 1919 "perhaps the most desperately unhappy year of [Wittgenstein's] life".[41] Frege's rejection of the *Tractatus*, root and branch, played a significant role in this. Two days after he received Frege's first letter reacting to his manuscript, Wittgenstein wrote to Hermine that Frege's reply "depressed" him.[42] As Monk has put it, "there are some indications that it was Frege's response to the book that Wittgenstein most eagerly awaited. If so, the disappointment must have been all the more great when he received Frege's reactions".[43]

In the long, tense period of several months Wittgenstein was in captivity waiting to hear from Frege, the tension must have been nearly unbearable. He had written to Russell (on 12 June 1919), having not yet heard back either from the second publisher to whom he had turned (Braumüller, with the aid of a prior letter he solicited from Russell) or from Frege (he was to hear from Frege shortly, on 28 June; Braumüller and Frege's contacts were to reject the idea of publishing the manuscript.) Wittgenstein was at last sending Russell (with Keynes's assistance) a copy of his manuscript, partly exercised by anxiety about its ultimate worth and fate, and partly in response to remarks Russell had made in his *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* (sent to him by Russell earlier in the spring). There Russell set forth in print

[38] His frequently suicidal state in the later summer and early fall of 1919 are described by Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, pp. 170ff.

[39] Again, compare von Wright's "The Origin of the *Tractatus*", especially pp. 77ff, and Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, p. 170ff for a discussion of Wittgenstein's initially fruitless efforts to have his essay published without subvention, which more than one person raised as a possibility (and he roundly rejected), and compare the discussion by McGuinness in *Wittgenstein: A Life, Young Ludwig 1889-1921*, pp. 267ff.

[40] Georg Henrik von Wright, "The Origin of the *Tractatus*", p. 78.

[41] Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, p. 181.

[42] Wittgenstein to Hermine Wittgenstein, 1 August 1919, *Briefwechsel*, makes clear that he received Frege's letter on 30 July 1919. On 3 August 1919 Wittgenstein had written back to Frege, a letter that Frege did not reply to explicitly, on grounds that "it set so much in motion in me that if I had followed up on every stimulating point I would have had to write a book rather than a letter" (Frege to Wittgenstein 16 September 1919).

[43] Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, p. 163.

an account of what he said were some of Wittgenstein's views about logic. Responding to this, Wittgenstein wrote to Russell in desperate frustration and anxiety that

> I'd very much like to write some things to you. — I should never have believed that the stuff I dictated to Moore in Norway six years ago would have passed over you so completely without trace. In short, I'm now afraid that it might be very difficult for me to reach any understanding with you. And the small remaining hope that my manuscript might mean something to you has completely vanished ... [The essay] is my life's work! *Now* more than ever I'm burning to see it in print. It's galling to have to lug the completed work round in captivity and to see how nonsense has a clear field outside! And it's equally galling to think that no one will understand it even if it does get printed!

And after receiving Frege's comments, on 6 October 1919 he wrote to Russell that

> I often feel miserable! — I'm in correspondence with Frege. He doesn't understand a single word of my work and I'm thoroughly exhausted from giving what are explanations pure and simple.[44]

As we know from correspondence surrounding later efforts to publish the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein considered the whole idea of subventing the publication of his own work, directly or indirectly, through anything but its perceived philosophical merits, utterly humiliating and inappropriate.[45] Certainly by the end of the First World War Wittgenstein's whole attitude toward the making of such gifts, and the handling of money in general, had changed markedly: committing what was described as "financial suicide", he insisted on giving up any access to his family's fortune.[46]

Was this attitude toward his family's fortune *merely* "sentimental" or monkish? Wittgenstein's sister Hermine suggests in her recollections of his life that his change in attitude reflected a religious conversion which took place during the war, but even if such an awakening of religious feeling did color Wittgenstein decision, other explanations may be offered.[47] On the matter of

[44] See *Briefwechsel* and *Cambridge Letters*, pp. 131-2.

[45] Compare Wittgenstein's outraged comments about the publisher Braumüller's suggestion that he pay for the publication of the manuscript in a letter to Ficker of c. 7 October 1919; these and the relevant surrounding correspondence with Russell, Engelmann and others about such "humiliating conditions" are translated and discussed in von Wright, "The Origin of the *Tractatus*".

[46] See McGuinness, *Wittgenstein: A Life*, p. 278 and Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, p. 171.

[47] See Hermine's contribution in Rhees, ed., *Recollections of Wittgenstein*, pp. 3-4. Her remarks should be compared with McGuinness's and Monk's biographical discussions, respectively, and with some remarks on asceticism in McGuinness's "Asceticism and Ornament", in his *Approaches to Wittgenstein: Collected Papers*.

money generally, we may see at work in Wittgenstein's decision a characteristic mixture of intellectual and practical motives. Given what we know of the vexations he faced in attempting to place his first manuscript, his decision to distance himself from the financial side of his life may also be viewed as a hardheaded and practical action, based as much on self-knowledge and an effort to quell and master anxiety as it was on an embrace of personal austerity, purity, and simplicity for their own sake. After all, had Wittgenstein retained any connection with the fortune and the family's decision-making regarding subvention of artists and intellectuals, he would have faced a constant stream, not only of distracting, anxiety-provoking and time-consuming administrative questions about the trust, but also public and private requests to help financially with bequests to particular intellectuals and institutions.[48] His family was, at his insistence, to protect him from this. Had they not done so, there would always have been questions, in his own mind and in others', about the extent to which his academic and intellectual recognition were a function of his family's position and notoriety. As Brian McGuinness has suggested (in conversation), had he stayed in Vienna, Wittgenstein faced the nearly certain fate of being constantly perceived and dimissed as nothing more than a wealthy amateur — and then facing his own reactions to this. In the end he escaped all this, severing to the greatest extent possible his connections to the family fortune and emigrating.[49] This did, at the very least, allow him more fully to concentrate on philosophy — even if it stoked the flames of a certain unhealthy vanity and self-isolation. Given his highly anxious nature, his nearly obsessive need to try to control how his thoughts were interpreted and received, and his equally obsessive counterbalancing struggle to let go entirely from concern with the fate and effects and perception of his writ-

[48] Here it is useful to compare the correspondence between Wittgenstein's sister Gretl and Ludwig regarding Waismann's request, after Schlick's assassination in 1936, that the Wittgenstein family endow a professorship in Vienna in Schlick's name. Mining's report to Ludwig (in a letter of July 11, 1936) is that she was made very uncomfortable about this request, and told Waismann that "we" (i.e., the Wittgenstein family) "would never do such a thing", that "we are not influential, and, even if we were, we would never apply ourselves to such a thing, and even if we did, you would kill us, and even if you didn't, you would never allow such a thing to be considered" (see *Briefwechsel*).

[49] He did not fully succeed, given subsequent events following the *Anschluss* of Austria in March 1938, for large-scale decisions about the handling of the family fortune required a unanimous vote of the siblings. Monk details Ludwig's entanglement in the harrowing family battle over whether to hand over foreign currency to the Nazis in exchange for Aryan papers in *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, p. 400. Compare Ursula Prokops's biography Margaret Stonborough-Wittgenstein: *Bauherrin Intellektuelle Mäzenin* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2003) as well as related correspondence in Wittgenstein *Familienbriefe*, eds. B. McGuinness, M.C. Ascher, O. Pfersmann (Vienna: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1996) and in *Briefwechsel*.

ings and work, this decision may well have been a necessary condition for his philosophical productivity.

Certainly in 1936 Wittgenstein would not have wanted the "personal" matter of his subvention of Frege — especially since it had occurred so near to the publication of his first manuscript — to be, as he wrote to Scholz, "set up in a public collection of Frege's work", especially given the criticisms of the *Tractatus* Frege documented in them. To move to the third reason he gave Scholz for not handing over the correspondence, this would have "perturbed" him. The public appearance of Frege's negative reactions to the *Tractatus* would have been likely to cost him time, trouble and emotional turmoil. His vanity and pride would have risked being set in motion knowing these letters to have been placed before the eyes of the public, thereby initiating a struggle, whatever actually transpired, with his own fears and anxieties about how his ideas and person were going to be received. He would have had to expect (or at least feared fearing to expect) that he would be asked to explain publicly why he had taken no account of Frege's criticisms in the *Tractatus* itself, but instead ignored them and pressed forward with the book's publication. This was especially sensitive for Wittgenstein in the 1930s, after he had changed his own thinking and yet continued to be perceived as an influential philosopher within the academy, constantly discussed and pressured for responses.

In early April 1936, at the time of the letter to Scholz and just before the assassination of Schlick (on 22 June), Wittgenstein was finishing the final year of his Trinity Fellowship. As Monk has described him, he had at this time

> ... little idea of what he would do after it had expired. Perhaps he would go to Russia — perhaps, like Rowland Hutt, get a job among 'ordinary people'; or perhaps, as Skinner had wanted, he would concentrate on preparing the *Brown Book* for publication. One thing seemed sure: he would not continue to lecture at Cambridge.
> ... [Wittgenstein had] doubts about his status as a philosopher, ... weariness of 'seeing queer problems' and [a] desire to start playing the game rather than scrutinizing its rules. His thoughts turned again to the idea of training as a doctor ... He suggested to Drury that the two of them might practice together as psychiatrists. Wittgenstein felt that he might have a special talent for this branch of medicine, and was particularly interested in Freudian psychoanalysis.[50]

At the time he wrote to Scholz, then, Wittgenstein was casting about in different directions for new paths in his life and thought, while at the same time still working up his philosophical ideas with an eye toward possible publication.[51] About the public appearance of any commentary or analysis of his ideas,

[50] Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, pp. 354 and 356.

[51] Compare Rhees's testimony, recounted in Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, p. 357.

Wittgenstein was, to put it mildly, extremely sensitive and liable to try to exert control where he could, especially when he was hard at work articulating and developing his views. The *Tractatus* had gained him his initial influence and reputation. But, at the same time, he had come to see it as flawed, both in its presentation of a conception of logic and also philosophically. He did not approve of its effects on the Vienna Circle, as he had repeatedly said to Schlick and to Waismann and indicated publicly in lectures such as the 1929 "Lecture on Ethics". As he had written in his diary in 1930,

> My book the *Log. Phil.Abhandlung* contains alongside good and genuine also Kitsch, that is, passages with which I filled up holes and so to speak in my own style. How much of the book consists of such passages I do not know and that is fairly difficult to assess.[52]

Feeling the continuing pressure and buzz about his reputation and ideas,[53] with an increasingly solid sense of how better to articulate his new philosophical ideas than in 1930, but aware that they were not yet formulated sufficiently well to be brought before the world in a book, Wittgenstein was at least honest with Scholz about his own emotional and intellectual state: he was neither intellectually nor emotionally prepared at this time to surrender these mementos to the eyes of the world.

From Wittgenstein's perspective, by retaining the letters with his papers, rather than Frege's, he would not be depriving the public of any useful ideas about his early works, though he would most certainly delay or perhaps ultimately suppress their publication. At the same time, this suppression would accomplish the not wholly unworthy aim of protecting him from being "perturbed" by public scrutiny and challenge, either of his work, his conduct in relation to Frege, or the publication of the *Tractatus*, a work he himself now considered to be flawed. By not destroying the correspondence, he would hold his cards and keep his options open, retaining it among his wider collection of correspondence. The cards and letters might or might not see the light of day later on, but Scholz's idea — publication and archiving of the letters in the context of Frege's scientific works — was not, in any case, the proper venue for them. How could Scholz, a theologian, philosopher and mathematical logician of a quite different stripe from himself, have been expected to understand what Wittgenstein had been attempting at the time of writing

[52] My translation; cf. entry of 16 May 1930 in *Denkbewegungen, Tagebücher 1930-1932/1936-1937 (MS 183)*, ed. I. Somavilla (Innsbruck: Haymon Verlag, 1997), p. 28 and in English, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Public and Private Occasions*, J.C. Klagge and A. Nordmann, eds. (New York, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), p. 39.

[53] On his philosophy of mathematics, this point is explained well in Ray Monk, "Bourgeois, Bolshevist or Anarchist? The Reception of Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Mathematics", in *Wittgenstein and His Interpreters*, eds. G. Kahane, E. Kanterian, and O. Kuusela (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), pp. 269-294.

the *Tractatus*?[54] Frege, after all, had not! As Wittgenstein made clear to Scholz, he did not believe that in retaining the letters he was suppressing any material that would be appropriate for an edition of scientific correspondence of Frege's writings. Moreover, on his judgment, whatever intellectual value the letters contained formed a proper part of his own intellectual and "sentimental" development, rather than Frege's development as a logician. Their true significance lay not in their scientific or philosophical worth, but in their relation to the then unfolding history of the *Tractatus* and his own earliest efforts to explain and publish that work.

II

We have looked at Wittgenstein's 1936 answers to our main questions. But this is not the only relevant point of view. Returning to more detailed consideration of Frege's criticisms of the *Tractatus* will help to better weigh their possible philosophical significance. In particular, as Janik suggested, we need to ponder the role of the concept of clarity as it figures, both in Frege's reactions to Wittgenstein and in Wittgenstein's to Frege, as well as in our understanding of how certain lines of thought emerged within early analytic philosophy.

Like Janik, I take the letters to provide us with an emblem or lesson about the difficulty of reaching agreement about what philosophical "clarity" in one's thought and expression requires, even and perhaps especially between thinkers who take themselves to be devoted in special measure to achieving it. The letters do confirm, it seems to me, that one of the most central and lasting formative impulses in early analytic philosophy was a preoccupation, not with positivism and verificationism about meaning and necessity, but rather with the complexity and unclarity of the notion of analysis itself, that is, with challenges facing philosophical accounts of what it is for thought and truth to be clearly expressed in language, and what the role, status, and contributions of logic and of symbolism are in meeting them. Frege and Wittgenstein do have different, perhaps even "utterly distinct" conceptions of how we are to view the outcome and goal of logical clarification, but we must remember that their devotion to the purposes and value of this kind of clarification, and their sense of the range of possible answers to questions about the basic notions of logic, is shared. Within their departures from one another lies then

[54] In a letter to Oskar Becker of August 13, 1954, Scholz writes that the pages of a sketch he had worked up about Wittgenstein's later writings "that went out in the same mail which I sent to you, have been returned. I will not be agonizing any more about it. These pseudo-sibylline pages have absolutely nothing in them for me". (The letter is in the Scholz archive at the University of Münster library, along with correspondence with von Wright in which Scholz is open about his inability to make headway with Wittgenstein's writings, or with any philosophy inspired by it.) Wittgenstein's 1936 brush-off may or may not have led to Scholz's later frustration.

a large region of overlap, as Frege's letters seem to attest: Frege repeatedly emphasizes his hope of reaching agreement with Wittgenstein in those areas — well realizing, after he saw the manuscript of the *Tractatus*, that there would remain a philosophical penumbra where there could be no meeting of minds.

A primary theme in the *Tractatus* is an investigation of what is involved in the idea of representation of reality — an investigation whose coherence Frege explicitly rejects as fundamental to logic, both in his letters to Wittgenstein and, more explicitly than in any other essay he wrote, in "Der Gedanke". Now quite apart from Frege's reading of the *Tractatus*, it must be said that gauging the ultimate aims of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* discussion of pictures and representation is a challenge. I believe that Wittgenstein is partly involved in a critical rethinking of the Idealist, i.e., Kantian tradition, in which the notions of *form*, *idea* and *representation* figured centrally. His conception of sentences as pictures also fashions a critical response and alternative to Moore's and Russell's (various) accounts of truth and propositionhood, each of which bypassed the notion of representation altogether.[55] More directly at issue in relation to the correspondence with Frege is the question of how far the *Tractatus* does and does not offer views consistent with, or at least coincident to, Frege's.

For some readers of the *Tractatus* (not myself, but perhaps for Frege, and certainly for some later readers of the book) Wittgenstein's conception of propositions as models of reality should be taken as a "theory", perhaps even a correspondence theory, of truth (or perhaps of meaning). Frege explicitly argues in the opening pages of "Der Gedanke" that any such theory is incoherent. Hans Sluga has gone so far as to claim that Frege wrote "Der Gedanke", in particular its criticisms of correspondence theory, "with Wittgenstein in mind", stimulated by the manuscript of the *Tractatus* "to give his views a final and definitive airing before Wittgenstein could lay out his related though distinct ideas".[56] And it is true that at the outset of the essay Frege criticizes the idea that truth is a property of representations or pictures or facts. ~~A~~ corollary of Sluga's view~~, however, is~~ that Frege failed to appreciate what Sluga also calls Wittgenstein's proceeding, after the early parts of the *Tractatus*, "to deconstruct all semantic theorizing" and to "conclude that all attempts to speak *about* logic are bound to fail".[57] This outcome, for Sluga, makes Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* views similar to Frege's own later views on the primacy of judgment, or recognition-of-truth, for logic.

An alternative or perhaps supplementary interpretation would emphasize that Wittgenstein's conception of sentences as pictures serves, not only as a

[55] This is discussed in Thomas Ricketts, "Pictures, Logic, and the Limits of Sense in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*", in H. Sluga and D. Stern eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 59-99.

[56] Hans Sluga, "Frege on the Indefinability of Truth", in E. Reck, ed., *From Frege to Wittgenstein* (op.cit.), pp. 75-95; quotations from pp. 89, 77.

[57] Sluga, "Frege on the Indefinability of Truth", p. 92.

Let us here set aside the interesting yet murky question of how the *Tractatus* might have influenced Frege's latest writings. This is possible, perhaps even likely, though difficulty to pin down. I note that it is a

But neither Frege nor Wittgenstein saw things this way.

theory or a preliminary step in deconstructing the correspondence theory of truth, but instead to tame and incorporate into Wittgenstein's way of thinking legitimate elucidatory talk of correspondence, facts and situations. Here the remarks treating sentences as pictures are intended to emphasize that sentences themselves are facts, understood as perceivable symbolic structures placed within a 'space' of form, i.e., a system of representation that we use. This brings out an holistic strand in Wittgenstein's philosophy of sentences that resonates directly with the Fregean context principle, a principle quoted in the *Tractatus* (at 3.3) and clearly of importance for Wittgenstein's philosophy of logic.[58] Of course, unlike Frege Wittgenstein refuses to see sentences as proper names of truth-values (their *Bedeutungen*) which simultaneously express a separate level of sense, or thought: his picturing conception is intended to avoid the dualism of levels of meaning, letting the sentence, like a picture, express is sense off its own bat, so to speak. On this reading a substantive correspondence theory of truth is never at issue between Wittgenstein and Frege, despite the concerns Frege expressed at the language of "facts" in his letters.

Whether the *Tractatus* conception of sentences as pictures as viewed as a theory or not, it is clear that it helps to set up Wittgenstein's own treatment of logical form as non-picturing, and logic as *non*-factual. Thus Wittgenstein's conception of sentences as models of reality does not undercut, but reinforces his central concern, not only with the importance and nature of symbolism to logic, but also with the need for the sorting out and distinguishing different dimensions or roles of expression in connection with our uses of symbolism in logic. This is indeed a Fregean, as well as a Russellian theme. But in the *Tractatus* the sorting out is framed by Wittgenstein's distinctive preoccupation with a question that neither Frege nor Russell had brought to the fore or pursued, viz., "What is the nature of the logical as such?"

No italics here.

delete highlighted phrase

For Frege the notion of recognition-of-truth in judgment is basic to a proper understanding of logic,[59] whereas for Wittgenstein logic's sole concern is with clarifying, through rearrangement of our expression, what it is for sentences to express senses, true or false. One of the chief philosophical aims of the *Tractatus* is to show how a marking off of that which distinctively belongs to the essence of logic requires clarification of the very idea of propositions as representations of reality, true or false — and vice versa, since on his view logic is an activity *rather than* a body of propositions, true or false.[60] There are no log-

[58] On the change between Wittgenstein's earliest writings up through the *Prototractatus* to the more 'holistic' use of Frege's context principle in the *Tractatus*, see Michael Kremer, "Contextualism and Holism in the Early Wittgenstein", *Philosophical Topics* 25, 2 (1992): 87-120.

[59] See Thomas Ricketts, "Logic and Truth in Frege", *The Aristotelian Society Supplementary* Volume 70 (1996): 121-140.

[60] On the importance of faithful representation of reality to ideas in the *Tractatus*, see Hintikka, "What Does the Wittgensteinian Inexpressible Express?", *The Harvard Review of Philosophy*. I reply to some of Hintikka's views in my "Wittgenstein

ical facts, according to the *Tractatus*, and no logical propositions: logic is not a science of any kind aimed directly at truth or facts, for the logic of the facts cannot itself be represented in the same sense as facts are. Wittgenstein thus required a distinctive conception of the factual and of representation to work out his distinctive conception. In the *Tractatus*, self-reflexively but fully consistently, he treated these notions and distinctions as themselves logical, what he called 'formal', conceiving of his remarks as elucidatory or exhortatory, rather than strictly speaking scientific. His conception of 'form' or symbolic structure as elucidated through possibilities of rearrangement of expression allowed Wittgenstein retain his ties to the logicist idea of logic as universally applicable, constitutive of our understanding of content. For 'formality' did not mean for him, as it had for Boole and the algebraists of logic, an emptiness of content and an open-ended conception of the reinterpretability of empty signs.

Frege's mature philosophy of logic — as expressed, for example, in "Der Gedanke" — also serves to attempt to liberate logic from the notion of *fact*, but differently, for Frege always viewed logic as a science. Frege's conception of logic rests on a primitive notion of recognition-of-truth, and in "Der Gedanke" he uses this conception to argue explicitly against the definability of truth, the correspondence theory of truth (whether framed in terms of facts or not), and more generally the idea of truth as a genuine property (e.g., of pictures or of sentences). By contrast, it is clear that in the *Tractatus* framework recognition-of-truth could play no role in logic at all — as opposed to the notion of sentences as symbols expressing senses or thoughts, i.e., sentences, true or false. Frege wishes to resist the reduction of thoughts to sentences; this is why he speaks of thoughts as inhabiting a "third realm" in "Der Gedanke", a realm whose structure we acknowledge and express in recognition-of-truth. (Already in his letter following his 9 November 1913 meeting with Wittgenstein Frege had complained that "W. places too great value upon signs".[61]) By contrast Wittgenstein, who had thought through Russell's emphasis on a theory of symbolism, takes the notions of sense and thought to belong to sentences as symbols, i.e., signs whose uses contribute to the expression of propositions, true or false. Wittgenstein's treatment of sense as expressed in the "bi-polarity" of sentences (their being true or false, depending upon how the facts are) is designed to reject Frege's two-tiered view of sense and reference, both for propositions and for proper names. It brings into view a notion of facts standing outside their particular form of representation (an anti-Idealist element) and presents a view of logic on which there are no logical laws.

of logic.

"understood as", instead of "and"

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and the Inexpressible" in A. Crary, ed., *Wittgenstein and the Moral Life: Essays in Honor of Cora Diamond* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), pp. 177-234.

[61] See my précis of the Scholz list comments in my Preface to the translations of the Frege-Wittgenstein correspondence in this volume.

What is thus most philosophically significant about the letters is that Frege focuses in the majority of his substantive remarks on the notions of 'fact' and 'atomic fact', especially on the idea that these *correspond* to a true sentence, or exist if a sentence of the appropriate form is true. Here he is concerned to question whether this language can contribute to useful elucidation of fundamental logical notions. His resistance to treating phrases such as "is a fact" and "what is the case" as informative explications of truth or as basic to our understanding of logic had been longstanding, but by the time he read the *Tractatus* manuscript, as he was finishing "Der Gedanke", the resistance was in full flower. Thus he repeatedly emphasizes to Wittgenstein the logical structure and role of definitions as replacing whole, complex expressions, finding the language of the opening remarks of the *Tractatus* connecting the notions of *fact*, *state of affairs*, and *atomic fact* lacking in "sufficiently detailed" explicit justification and elucidation of primitive notions through logical segmentation. (One is reminded, in reading Frege's questions to Wittgenstein about the notion of a 'constitutent' of a fact, of his earlier correspondence with Russell; it is tempting to surmise that he read Wittgenstein's remarks as simply rewarming old Russellian ideas, rather than reconceiving their role and significance.[62]) His remarks should therefore also be understood against the backdrop of his own development and the arguments he made against certain conceptions of "existence" and "truth" in his later writings, of which "Der Gedanke" is one.[63]

I remarked above that whereas the correspondence shows the *Tractatus* to have brought about essentially no evolution in Frege's views, philosophical parts of the correspondence do appear to have remained with Wittgenstein long after 1920. I turn next to this theme.

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[62] See Russell's letter to Frege of 12 December 1904 in Frege, *Philosophical and Mathematical Correspondence*, eds.,B. McGuinness, G. Gabriel et.al., trans. H. Kaal (Blackwell/University of Chicago Press, 1980), especially p. 169. Goldfarb ("Wittgenstein's Understanding of Frege", p. 188) says he knows of no evidence that Wittgenstein discussed Frege's work with Russell (nor do I). But it is difficult to imagine that the subject of Frege on sense and reference never came up.

[63] Readers may see Sluga, "Frege on the Indefinability of Truth" for an analysis of Frege's own evolution with regard to the notion of truth. With respect to Wittgenstein's development, Goldfarb argues persuasively that at least in the pre-*Tractatus* writings "the priority for Frege of the notion of recognition-of-truth to that of truth did not register on Wittgenstein, or at least there is no evidence that it did ... Frege elaborates the point only in "Thoughts" ... and in unpublished writings" ("Wittgenstein's Understanding of Frege", p. 192). What I am arguing here is that given Wittgenstein's views on the nature of logic, which were after all in place well before the manuscript of the *Tractatus* was written, it would not have been possible for him to agree with Frege's idea of recognition-of-truth as a basic logical notion. I fully agree with Goldfarb that Frege's conception cut off at the pass, as perhaps Wittgenstein's did not, the very idea of facts or configurations that render our propositions true, and the Frege-Wittgenstein correspondence seems to confirm this.

The final letter of the correspondence (3 April 1920) squares with an anecdote of Geach's recounted eleven years before its discovery in 1989. In "the final months" of Wittgenstein's life, Geach had written,

> [Wittgenstein] took a good deal of interest in the plan Max Black and I had for a little book of Frege translations; and it was through him that I was able to locate some rare works of Frege — the review of Husserl's *Philosophie der Arithmetik* and the essays 'Was ist eine Function?' and 'Die Verneinung' — in the Cambridge University Library. He advised me 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 he had 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.[64]

Wittgenstein's sharing his recollection with Geach had its effect: Geach and Black did not include a translation of "Der Gedanke" in their influential collection *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*, whose first edition appeared in 1952. (Geach's translation of "Der Gedanke" and his publication of Wittgenstein's testimony awaited the publication of Geach's much later 1977 edition of Frege's *Logical Investigations*, the Preface of which contains the above-quoted passage).[65] And it is surely relevant to the question of Wittgenstein's later attitude toward Frege's criticisms of the *Tractatus* that Wittgenstein insisted to Geach, just as he had to Frege thirty-odd years before, that "Der Gedanke" was an inferior work because it missed the *logic* of idealism — attacking it, Wittgenstein said, "on its weak side", thereby missing the "deeper grounds" of idealism, its "deep and true core", "an important feeling that is wrongly gratified, hence, a legitimate need" (cf. Frege to Wittgenstein 3 April 1920). Frege had asked in reply, "Of what sort is this need?", insisting that apparent grounds are not grounds at all, and that it was no part of his intention "to trace all ... disturbances of psychologico-linguistic origin" leading to philosophical error (cf. Frege to Wittgenstein 3 April 1920).

Geach suggests that

> ... in spite of Wittgenstein's unfavourable view of 'Der Gedanke', his later thought may have been influenced by it. It would not be the only time that Frege's criticism had a delayed action in modifying Wittgenstein's views after he had initially rejected the criticism.[66]

[64] Geach, Preface to Frege, *Logical Investigations*, ed. P.T. Geach, Trans. P.T. Geach and R.H. Stoothoff (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), p. vii.

[65] This point is made by Erich Reck, in his "Wittgenstein's 'Great Debt' to Frege", p. 27.

[66] Geach, Preface to Frege, *Logical Investigations*.

And Geach forwards two examples of this "delayed action". Let us consider them in turn.[67] First,

> Wittgenstein told me how he had reacted to Frege's criticism of the Russellian doctrine of facts — a doctrine still presupposed in the *Tractatus*. By this view, such a fact or complex as knife-to-left-of-book would have the knife and the book as parts — though Russell of course avoided the rude four-letter word 'part' and spoke of constituents. Frege asked Wittgenstein if a fact was *bigger* than what it was a fact about; Wittgenstein told me this eventually led him to regard the Russellian view as radically confused, though at the time he thought the criticism silly.

It is difficult to know how to weigh this suggestion insofar as it has a bearing on the *Tractatus* and Frege's correspondence about it with Wittgenstein; unlike the subsequent example we shall consider, Geach does not report Wittgenstein saying explicitly that the correspondence dealt with it. The difficulty is that it is unclear, at least for many readers, how and in what way (if any) the *Tractatus* is committed, as Russell once was, to a "doctrine of facts" that takes constituents of facts to be objects existing prior to any particular analysis of the language. Moreover, it is unclear when Frege made this objection to Wittgenstein, and when we are to suppose Wittgenstein became moved to think it something better than "silly". The objection as described does not explicitly occur in Frege's letters reacting to the manuscript of the *Tractatus*, and it is difficult to see how it could have had such a profound "delayed" reaction if Wittgenstein is supposed to have 1) thought so highly of it as a cogent critique of his book and yet 2) never once in his manuscripts (which often mention Frege) mentioned it. The objection would have had to be made *prior* to Wittgenstein's writing of the *Tractatus*, and Wittgenstein would have to be supposed to have ignored it altogether, but later on come to appreciate its force. But we have no record of this apart from Geach's anecdote.

The closest relevant remark in the correspondence is one in which Frege trots out a line of thought he must have associated with a *Russellian* view of constituents. For his example of Vesuvius reminds us of Russell's example of Mont Blanc, which Russell offered to Frege as part of an objection to the Sinn/Bedeutung distinction in a letter of 12 December 1904. Russell had written to Frege that

> Concerning sense and meaning, I see nothing but difficulties which I cannot overcome. I explained the reasons why I cannot accept your view as a whole in the appendix to my book [*The Principles of Mathematics*], and I still agree with what I there wrote. I believe that in spite of all its snowfields Mont Blanc itself is a component part of

[67] Both examples are from Geach, Preface to Frege, Logical Investigations.

> what is actually asserted in the proposition 'Mont Blanc is more than 4000 metres high'.[68]

Puzzled by Wittgenstein's adherence to the language of "facts", "states of affairs" and "atomic facts" in the *Tractatus* manuscript, in Frege's initial reply (the 28 June 1919 letter) he presses Wittgenstein on the question of what "binds" the constituents of a fact together, asking "Can this perhaps be gravitation, as with the system of planets?" This is a pointed question surely intended to be understood as a *reductio* of the whole way of thinking. Frege pursues the point, saying that without *examples* of atomic facts, facts, things and states of affairs, or some clarification of what corresponds linguistically to these notions,

> it appears that constituents of Vesuvius must also be constituents of this [atomic] fact [about Vesuvius]; the fact will therefore also consist of hardened lava. That does not seem right to me.

This conjures up the spectre of a view like Russell's, in which the parts of the mountain itself are parts of that which is (asserted) in a proposition. Frege is here asking Wittgenstein to clarify the status of his *Tractarian* distinctions. And it is possible that this is the criticism which Geach reports Wittgenstein having said had a "delayed reaction" on his thinking. For *if* it makes sense to say that the fact about Vesuvius is itself made partly of lava (Frege's question to Wittgenstein, inspired, he writes, by *Tractatus* 2.011), *then* it would make sense to ask whether "a fact was *bigger* than what it was a fact about" — whether, so to speak, whatever is predicated of Vesuvius is included in the fact as well, as a constituent or thing. Yet if Wittgenstein's whole point in the *Tractatus* is to show the 'formality' of the interrelated notions of fact and situation (the hopelessness of framing propositions about them, true or false), then Frege is missing his point. It is certainly true that Wittgenstein later on became highly disillusioned with the *Tractatus*'s willingness to truck in the Russellian language of facts, states of affairs and their constituents, and so on. In particular, he complained that he had failed to give *examples* of simple objects in his book, while insisting at the same that that *there must be such*.[69] Possibly, Frege's correspondence, in which the absence of examples is explicitly complained of, played a role here. Nevertheless, it is difficult to imagine that the question Geach reports Frege having posed to Wittgenstein had on its own a singularly powerful "delayed action" on Wittgenstein, even if we grant the full accuracy of Geach's and Wittgenstein's recollections: there were too many other difficulties for Wittgenstein (and for Frege) to have had with the book. Indeed, it seems just as likely, so far as I can see, that the objection Wittgenstein recalled Frege making was offered to him much earlier,

[68] See Russell to Frege of 12 December 1904, in Frege, *Philosophical and Mathematical Correspondence*, p. 169.

[69] This is reported by Norman Malcolm, in his *Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Memoir* (2nd edition, New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 70.

in their discussions before the war, and had already had its effect even before Wittgenstein wrote the *Tractatus*.

Geach offers a second example of the "delayed action" of a criticism of Frege's, this one contained in "Der Gedanke" and tied explicitly to the correspondence:

> ... In 'Der Gedanke' Frege lays down premises from which it is an immediate consequence that certain ideas he plays with in the essay — private sensations with incommunicable qualities, a Cartesian *I* given in an incommunicable way — are really bogus ideas, words with no corresponding thoughts. For Frege affirms (1) that any thought is by its nature communicable, (2) that thoughts about private sensations and sense-qualities and about the Cartesian *I* are by their nature incommunicable. It is an immediate consequence that there can be no such thoughts. Frege never drew this conclusion, of course — even though the passage about the two doctors, for whom the patient's pain can be a common object of communicable thoughts without their needing to *have* the pain, comes close to the rejection of pain as a private incommunicable somewhat. But though he never drew this conclusion, Wittgenstein was to draw it.[70]

Just how Wittgenstein supposed a truly *proper* critique of idealism was to proceed, as opposed to an attack on it "where it is weakest" — which is what he took "Der Gedanke" wrongly to offer — is a fascinating and, I believe, as yet still unresolved interpretive question about the *Tractatus*, not merely about Wittgenstein's later philosophy.[71] It is interesting that in his final letter to Wittgenstein (3 April 1920) Frege raises the issue twice, alluding to Wittgenstein's earlier remarks. Here I believe we learn something, not merely about the later, but also the early Wittgenstein. For we may infer at least this much from the exchanges and reports: not only in later life, but even in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein attempted, not merely to reject, but to represent and do justice to idealism, to show how and why the *logic* of idealism (or, equivalently here, scepticism) has a "deep and true core", rooted in "an important feeling that is wrongly gratified". As he was later to emphasize, one of the most important tasks in philosophy "is to express all false thought processes so characteristically that the reader says, 'Yes, that's exactly the way

[70] Geach, Preface to Frege, *Logical Investigations*.

[71] I have tried to engage the structure and text of *Tractatus* with systematic aspects of the Idealist tradition in my essays "Tautology: How Not to Use a Word" (with B. Dreben), *Synthese* 87 1 (April 1991): 23-50 and "The Uncaptive Eye: Solipsism in the *Tractatus*" in L. Rouner, ed., *Loneliness* (Notre Dame: Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Religion, 1998), pp. 79-108. See also David Pears, *The False Prison*, vol. I (New York: Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987) and Peter Sullivan, "The truth in solipsism, and Wittgenstein's rejection of the *a priori*", *European Journal of Philosophy* 4(1996): 195-219.

I meant it".[72] This, as Frege wrote in his reply, had been no part of Frege's task. But apparently it was acknowledged by both of them to form part of Wittgenstein's in the *Tractatus*.

Recent suggestions of Ray Monk, who has written an introduction to Wittgenstein's thought, contribute in a different way toward our understanding of the correspondence's specific philosophical significance. Monk emphasizes the intrinsically enigmatic and difficult, perhaps insuperable, difficulties facing any interpreter of the *Tractatus*. This is useful to bear in mind if only because we need to remember that Frege, back in 1918-1919, writing before the main developments in the tradition, may be forgiven for having had trouble understanding it. Has *anyone* made sense of the book — except by rejecting large portions of its letter and spirit? This is doubtful. Clear it is not, as Frege repeatedly points out to Wittgenstein in the final four letters of the correspondence. As Monk aptly writes, of Wittgenstein's famed invocations of showing vs. saying (controversy about which has surrounded the book from the very beginning),

> The ongoing debate about the saying/showing distinction and about whether or not Wittgenstein thought it was possible to show philosophical truths through nonsensical propositions is just one among many controversies that divide interpreters of *Tractatus-Logico-Philosophicus*. And these controversies do not concern details but the very fundamentals of the book. More than eighty years after it was published, and despite a vast secondary literature inspired by it, there is still no general agreement about how the book should be read. It is surely one of the most enigmatic pieces of philosophy ever published: too mystical for logicians, too technical for mystics, too poetic for philosophers and too philosophical for poets, it is a work that makes extraordinarily few concessions to the reader and seems consciously designed to elude comprehension.[73]

Was the *Tractatus consciously* "designed to elude comprehension"? The closing lines of the *Tractatus*, in which Wittgenstein wrote of the nonsensical status of his remarks, have suggested that in some way this is so:

> 6.54 My propositions are elucidatory in this way: he who understands me finally recognizes them as nonsense [*unsinnig*], when he has climbed out through them, on them, over them. (He must so to speak throw away the ladder, after he has climbed up on it.)
> He must overcome [*überwinden*] these propositions; then he sees the world rightly.
> 7 Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.

[72] See TS 213, pp. 405-35 of *The Big Typescript*, eds. and trans. C.G. Luckhardt and Maximilian A.E.Aue (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005).

[73] Monk, *How to Read Wittgenstein*, pp. 29-30.

But the route to this overcoming, its method, presuppositions, means, and purposes, remain a source of fundamental controversy, as Monk says, among readers of the *Tractatus*. This is not the place to survey recent twists in this controversy that have led to the debates between 'new' and 'old' readers of the *Tractatus* with regard to the topics of saying vs. showing, nonsense vs. sense, realism and idealism in the *Tractatus*. The Frege-Wittgenstein correspondence sheds little direct light on these issues, if only because Frege offered no sustained examination of Wittgenstein's *Tractarian* remarks about them.

McGuinness has suggested that Wittgenstein's aesthetic "asceticism" — his resistance to charm and ornament, whether in furniture, architecture, or literature, in his giving away of his money to live "simply", or in the unadorned structural organization of the *Tractatus*'s numbered remarks — reflects, at least in part, "the negative aim" of much of his philosophical work. This had implications, as McGuinness sees it, for the way Wittgenstein wrote and thought about himself:

> For him style, the way something was put, was of enormous importance, and that not only in the artistic sphere. He said once, it wouldn't matter what a friend had done but rather how he talked about it. Similarly he used to insist on a careful reading of the dictum, *Le style c'est l'homme meme*: the thought is that the real man reveals himself in his style. The meaning of the words, the content, is something secondary, and so likewise is the brute action performed. Of course, it is an important philosophical observation that actions cannot be separated from the way in which they are judged by him who performs them. Still there are dangers, if a feeling for style becomes the supreme commandment. It is not to be thought of that this was a risk for Wittgenstein in the moral sphere, but in aesthetics [as he himself suggested], he perhaps incurred it.[74]

Pursuing this thought in light of some of Wittgenstein's own self-criticisms, McGuinness points to what he takes to be "distortions" in Wittgenstein's later writings produced by his frequent (often alternative) draftings of his remarks, using multiple revisions of emphasis, underlining, and so on. For McGuinness, "the excessive frequency of accidentals in his manuscripts and typescripts"[75] reflects

> an almost pathological insistence on finding the correct distribution of emphasis in a sentence ... It is almost as if he regarded something as false as soon as it was written down ... It is not surprising, therefore, that Wittgenstein was profoundly dissatisfied with the accounts of his work that others gave ... Partly this is due to the negative aim of this work. It is intended to drive out the evil spirit from the reader

[74] McGuinness, "Asceticism and Ornament", pp. 21-22.
[75] McGuinness, "Asceticism and Ornament", p. 22.

> as from his pupils. False philosophy must be exorcized. But that is an operation best performed *viva voce* and through personal contact. One false notion is driven out, and immediately the next false notion that threatens to take its place must be corrected. A book or an article freezes what ought really to be a living flow of ideas.[76]

What resulted was a difficult question about which Wittgenstein himself at times worried: was he "merely reproductive" thinker, *merely* an improver or trimmer of other's ideas, *merely* redistributing emphases in his sentences? McGuinness asks, partly on Wittgenstein's behalf, an excellent question:

> Was his philosophy bare asceticism without positive content to make it worth the effort and the abnegation? This difficult question must be resolved in any attempt to assign Wittgenstein a place in the history of ideas.[77]

In his recent remarks on Wittgenstein, Monk's resolution of this "difficult" question is clear: he extracts something more positive, even from the *Tractatus*, and precisely on the basis of Wittgenstein's aesthetic concerns and aspirations. As Monk sees it, Wittgenstein's concern with proper expression represented a devotion to authenticity, to presenting his ideas in a way that would not be "counterfeit", rather than an excessive tendency to pick at emphases.[78] Moreover, at the heart of the *Tractatus* lies, according to Monk's reading, an important "insight", one that would be differently articulated, though retained, in Wittgenstein's later writing, namely, that "philosophy ought to be written only as a poetic composition".[79] He points out that Wittgenstein's first choice of a publisher for his manuscript, the firm of Jahoda, was "not an academic publisher but a literary one, best known as the publisher of the Viennese satirist Karl Kraus";[80] Frege was resorted to only after that route had been blocked to him.

By "poetic composition" Monk has in mind what he takes to be a Wittgensteinian contrast between the value and aims of poetry, art, music and philosophy, and the value and aims of science. Wittgenstein had, after all, written in the *Tractatus* that the purpose of his book is to give an "understanding" reader "pleasure", that philosophy is not one of the natural sciences — that is, it is not a body of doctrine but an activity consisting essentially of "elucidations". Its results are then "not 'philosophical propositions' ", but instead "the clarification (*klar machen*) of propositions" (see *Tractatus* 4.11-4.112). One of Monk's interpretive ideas is that the *Tractatus*'s primary failure, as a work, was its failure, within the form of its "icy rigor of numbered proposi-

[76] McGuinness, "Asceticism and Ornament", pp. 23ff.
[77] McGuinness, "Asceticism and Ornament", p. 24.
[78] See *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, p. 346.
[79] Monk, *How to Read Wittgenstein*, p. 65.
[80] Monk, *How to Read Wittgenstein*, p. 30.

tions",[81] to make this distinction between philosophical and scientific understanding clear. The book's overarching structure and basic ideas about logical form sinned against its best overarching strand, which was, at least for Monk, Wittgenstein's determination to resist scientism precisely by highlighting the integrity, autonomy and intrinsic value of non-scientific forms of understanding such as are found in philosophy and in poetry. Wittgenstein's insistence that the status of his own *Tractarian* remarks is that they are mere "elucidations", and "nonsensical" was, for Monk, "an obviously unsatisfactory evasion" of a central difficulty with his numbered style and method, a method that positively invited Waismann and others in the Vienna Circle (among others) to try to summarize its apparently theoretical doctrines about logic with a set of scientific-world-view "theses".[82]

While the "insight" into the value of non-scientific forms of understanding is not one I would want to deprive us of, and while I fully agree with Monk that the poetic qualities of Wittgenstein's writing are internal to its intellectual aspirations, it seems to me worth also emphasizing that at the time of writing the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein was possessed by a vision of a kind of unity between the activities of logic, philosophy and poetry — a vision that was, in one way or another, to continue to be reflected well into his later writings. Even if Wittgenstein's remarks about logical form in the *Tractatus* were later to dissatisfy him, it is important how it was that he conceived of the role of logic, for this conception stayed with him throughout his later life. Logic is depicted in the *Tractatus* as a way of coming properly to appreciate the importance of punctuation and/or syncopation in the presentation of thinking, an activity involving at its heart a progressive rearrangement of expressive elements of our language. Logical operations and even number words are explicitly held to be properly conceived of as expressed by punctuation marks, not constants (*Tractatus* 5.4611), not as elements of sentences having *Bedeutung* (Wittgenstein's *Grundgedanke* (5.4)). Logical axioms and laws are not necessary to logic's formulation: insofar as they clarify anything, they too are to be conceived as a style of presentation rather than an unearthing of fundamental representational truths or constants (6.127). Logic, philosophy, as Wittgenstein had come to stress early on, is not to be conceived of as part of natural science, but as a kind of activity of clarification, exposure of tautologousness and non-tautologousness, nonsense and sense. There is, as he had written earlier in his pre-war *Notebooks*, no need for a *theory* of symbolism, there is only symbolizing.[83]

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[81] Monk, *How to Read Wittgenstein*, p. 65.

[82] See Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, pp. 296-7. For remarks invoking a similar vision of what is most valuable in Wittgenstein's work, compare Putnam's remarks on the *Tractatus* in "Floyd, Wittgenstein and Loneliness", in L. Rouner, ed., *Loneliness*, pp. 109-114.

[83] I do not mean here that there was no development in Wittgenstein's views, as I make clear in my "Wittgenstein and the Inexpressible".

From this perspective, the most interesting point to note about the Frege-Wittgenstein correspondence is that Frege immediately turns a hostile ear to the very idea of logic (or philosophy) as empty, as if instinctively grasping that this is where his confusions with the *Tractatus* (and his differences with Wittgenstein) really lie. He is not deaf to Wittgenstein's poetic aspirations, but sees in them a profound difference between his self-conception and those of the author of the *Tractatus*

To see this, we should focus on the second of Frege's four letters on the *Tractatus*, that is, what he writes to Wittgenstein on 16 September 1919, in reply, not only to the *Tractatus* itself but to what must have been Wittgenstein's two rather desperate letters to him from Cassino (now sadly lost) attempting to clarify things. Frege's initial remarks on the manuscript (given in his letter of 28 June 1919, not received by Wittgenstein toward the end of July) had openly professed a lack of comprehension, and this had badly "depressed" Wittgenstein, as he had written to Hermine. We may surmise that in his initial two replies to Frege (the first of which was sent within forty-eight hours of receiving Frege's letter (see footnote 42)) Wittgenstein tried to set Frege straight about what his poetic aims and purposes had been, as well as his existential state. He seems to have expressed doubt that they would ever be able to understand one another.

Frege says that he will "not so easily surrender the hope of reaching agreement with you", aiming to quell Wittgenstein's desperation. He thus holds out hope for an ultimate understanding, and, mentioning explicitly "the consequences of everything you had to go through" (during the war), attempts to reassure Wittgenstein about how well he thinks of him philosophically (this leads us to suppose that Wittgenstein had, as in his earlier letter to Russell, expressed doubt about this). Frege makes it clear that he hopes to learn from Wittgenstein and for Wittgenstein to learn from him, that he wishes to enter into a debate in which Wittgenstein will be "won over" to his point of view.

At this point he confesses that

> What you write me about the purpose of your book strikes me as strange. According to you, that purpose can only be achieved if others have already thought the thoughts expressed in it.

We may plausibly assume that Wittgenstein had called Frege's attention to remarks to this effect in the Preface of the *Tractatus*. Frege continues:

> The pleasure of reading your book can therefore no longer arise through the already known content, but, rather, only through the form, in which is revealed something of the individuality of the author. Thereby the book becomes an artistic rather than a scientific achievement; that which is said therein steps back behind how it is said. I had supposed in my remarks that you wanted to communicate a new content. And then the greatest clarity [*Deutlichkeit*] would indeed be the greatest beauty.

Frege's last sentence quotes a line of Lessing's from *Das Testament Johannis*, well-enough known that it is likely Frege would have assumed Wittgenstein to have heard it: "The greatest clarity [*Deutlichkeit*] was to me always the greatest beauty". In Frege's typically acute way, he lays down a gauntlet: either the manuscript is written in the spirit of a philosophical contribution toward clarification, hence, furthering a cognitive advance, or it is not. If it is, then Lessing's aesthetic remark placing the emphasis on communication and interpretability would apply. If not, then another aesthetic might be appropriate. But the logical or scientific point of such an enterprise would then be opaque to Frege.

Here, right at the origin of analytic philosophy, in a debate between two of the tradition's most influential figures on the nature and purpose of analysis, we find one version of an explicit quarrel between philosophy and poetry — or between, if one prefers, two different conceptions of philosophical (perhaps also poetic) clarity: cognitively expansive (aimed at new truths) and cognitively reflective (aimed at the vivid rearrangement, the reconceiving and recommunication of old truths). An important division of perspectives within and outside the analytic tradition was thus set in motion first in the Frege-Wittgenstein correspondence, and the legacy of this quarrel was formative in the separation of analytic and continental philosophy that was to follow. There is, for example, more than one historical irony in the fact that Heidegger was later to copy the very same Lessing quote into the copy of *Sein und Zeit* he gave to Edmund Husserl in 1927, and write in his own *Holzwege* that "Lessing once said, 'Language can express everything we think clearly".[84] For by 1932, invoking the *Tractatus*'s letter and spirit of an "overcoming" (*die Überwindung*) of metaphysics, Carnap would apply to Heidegger's *What is Metaphysics?* more or less the same sorts of criticisms that his teacher Frege had made earlier of the *Tractatus* itself: the demand for sufficiently detailed communication of clear thoughts through the scientific use of a *Begriffsschrift*. One thing the Frege-Wittgenstein correspondence shows is that Wittgenstein never did try to meet that demand, even after Frege's explicit requests. This

[84] Thanks to Wolfgang Kienzler for pointing me toward the Lessing and Heidegger quotations in connection with the Frege letter to Wittgenstein of 16 September 1919 and to Kenneth Haynes, who had pointed me toward the Heidegger quote some years ago, in mind of Wittgenstein (a translation of this quote by Haynes (with J. Young) may be found *Off the Beaten Track*, trans. and eds. J. Young and K. Haynes, New York, Cambridge University Press on p. 255). Heidegger is said to have copied the Lessing quote into the copy of *Sein und Zeit* that he gave to Edmund Husserl in 1927 (see Husserl, *Psychological and Transcendental Phenomenology and The Confrontation* with Heidegger, T. Sheehan and R.E. Palmer, trans. and eds. (Dordrecht, Kluwer, 1997) pp. 21ff). (Daniel Dahlstrom has told me that that Heidegger might have learned of the Lessing source from Paul Lorentz ed. *Lessings Philosophie: Denkmäler aus der Zeit des Kampfes zwischen Aufklärung und Humanität in der deutschen Geistesbildung* (Leipzig: Meiner Verlag, 1909), p. 98.)

shows us something important about the conception of philosophy Wittgenstein held, both at the time of the *Tractatus* and afterwards.[85]

[85] I am grateful for conversations with Enzo De Pellegrin, Norma Goethe, Allan Janik, Wolfgang Kienzler and Brian McGuinness throughout the writing of this essay, as well as the students in my seminars on Wittgenstein and Frege at Boston University from 2000 to the present who provided me with helpful feedback on the ideas discussed here. A Fulbright research award to Austria gave me time and place to gather primary materials. Burton Dreben, W.V. Quine, G.H. von Wright and participants at the University of California Riverside conference on early analytic philosophy in 1998 (a conference organized through the good offices of Erich Reck) provided helpful encouragement at an early stage in the formulation of my thoughts.