
The *Logik* by Rudolf Hermann Lotze: the concept of *Geltung*

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Abstract: The subject of this paper is Rudolf Hermann Lotze's concept of *Geltung* as him outlines it in the second *Logik* (1874). This paper, through the notions of *gnoseological immanentism* and *anti-psychologism*, aims to shed light on the notion of validity (*Geltung*). The *Geltung*'s concept is very interesting not only for the role that it plays in Lotze's philosophy, but also for the importance that Lotze's *validity* has in the philosophical debate until the 1930s.

Keywords: Lotze, *Geltung*, *Logik*, Gnoseological Immanentism, Anti-Psychologism.

A brief introduction to the theme of «validity» in Lotze's *Logik*

This contribution aims to shed light on the concept of validity that Rudolf Hermann Lotze outlines in the second edition of his *Logik*. Lotze's concept of validity is very important for the Neo-Kantian Baden School, as well as for Frege, Husserl and the young Heidegger. After presenting the main coordinates of this general diffusion of Lotze's philosophy, we will focus on the concept of validity in itself. The introduction of this concept to philosophy was a response, according to Lotze, to a set of theoretical exigencies. Once the correspondence theory of truth had been rejected, the objectivity of knowledge no longer resided in the recreation of a world irremediably external to man; this objectivity became instead *immanent* in our inner world of representations. This inner world should not be understood as subject to the changeability of the psychological processes; rather it guarantees fixity and stability to the very structure of knowledge. As an *anti-psychologist*, Lotze had both to guarantee the intersubjectivity of our thought's contents, and at the same time defend the complete objectivity of cognition. The answer to these questions is, for Lotze, supplied by validity. Validity is the reality itself of our thought's contents, the famous 'third realm', a third path that positions itself between transcendent reality and the subjectivism of the psychological process which creates representations.

John Passmore describes Lotze as the most «pillaged» philosopher of the nineteenth century.¹ The widespread influence of his thought is the result of the second edition

of his *Logik*,² published in Lipsia in 1874. The original version, first printed in Berlin in 1843, merges completely into the first book of the 1874 edition and is entitled *Vom Denken*. The subject of this first part of Lotze's *Logik* is not new, dealing as it does with formal logic and the theories of concept, judgment and syllogism. However, the second (*Vom Untersuchen*) and the third (*Vom Erkennen*) books go on to discuss applied logic (*Angewandte Logik*) and the theory of knowledge. It was precisely this expanded version of *Logik*, the first part of a *System der Philosophie*, which Lotze never completed, that aroused such interest in so many academic philosophers.

The concept of validity (*Geltung*) is central to the entire 1874 work and it must therefore be analysed carefully so as to understand both its origin and its significance for academic philosophy. Importantly, Lotze argues that the concept of logical validity must be distinguished from the subjective psychological process. Though this idea is not entirely new in philosophy – earlier traces can be found in the works of Kant, Leibniz and Herbart – it was Lotze who gathered and synthesised earlier teachings into this succinct distinction and introduced the term *Geltung* to philosophy.

In *Logik*, Lotze argues against tendencies that reduce thought to a mere representative process, giving thinkers such as Frege, Windelband and Husserl strong arguments against Psychologism. Lotze's anti-psychologism does not exclude the role of psychology outright, it simply points out that there is a categorical difference between psychology and logic.

The concept of validity had a central role in logic and epistemology until the 1930s. If we turn our attention to the philosophical debate of the German philosophers, we see that the arguments of both the Neo-Kantians and the Phenomenologists were deeply rooted in Lotze's *Logik*. The Neo-Kantian Baden school – of which the prominent exponents were Windelband, Liebmann, Rickert, Bauch, and Lask – was clearly and explicitly influenced by Lotze. Franz Brentano as well was in regular contact with Lotze and Brentano's disciples Stumpf (Husserl's *Doktorvater*) and Marty often attended Lotze's lectures.

The work of Lotze that established his centrality and relevance within the philosophical context of his time was, as has been said, his second *Logik* and, in particular, its third book, which must be read with great attention. It

is here that Lotze introduces the concept of validity. In its second chapter, «The World of Ideas», Lotze reinterprets Plato's thought in light of the *Gelten* problem. Here Lotze affirms Plato's recognition that ideas have *validity* of their own which has nothing to do with the *existence* of things. Plato locates ideas in the *Hyperuranon*, a world of pure validity, in order to clarify, according to Lotze, that ideas do not belong to the real world. This interpretation allows Lotze to reconcile arguments in defence of Platonic thought with those of Kantian philosophy, arguing that the logical content of thought, according to Platonic doctrine, is independent from the subjectivity of the individual thinker, while at the same time reevaluating in a Kantian sense the role of the transcendental because the logical content's independence from the real world is not ontological but rather logical. This is more concerned not with existence, but with validity.

The categories by which logic proceeds are those based on the «distinction of value as that between truth and untruth»³. *True* and *False* cannot belong to simple subjective *psychological processes* but must instead refer to *contents*, which are always identical, of the thought itself. The condition of possibility by which a logical content can be recognised as *true* or *false* is one in which the mind can capture the same knowledge, regardless of any particular subjective psychological process, and thus discuss its same logical content. Thought, therefore, cannot be conceived as a simple subjective psychic process because, if that were the case, one could not grasp the same thought and the same content. Thought, therefore, has its intersubjective merit; it bears the truth value, and in this sense must be said to have no individual, psychological existence. Thought and its logical content do not exist in strict sense, but they do have validity; validity does not imply existence. The logical content of thought, as the bearer of truth value and that transcendental condition which allows one to speak about true and false in logic, is not however an ontological entity. To make this step in the argument clear, we must consider Lotze's conception of *validity* as a «form of Reality (*Wirklichkeit*)», in his own words:

We call a thing Real (*wirklich*) which is (*ist*), in contradistinction to another which is not (*nicht ist*); an event Real which occurs or has occurred, in contradistinction to that which does not occur; a relation Real which obtains (*besteht*), as opposed to one which does not obtain; lastly we call a proposition Really true (*wirklich wahr*) which holds or is valid (*gilt*) as opposed to one of which the validity is still doubtful. This use of language is intelligible; it shows that when we call anything Real (*Wirklichkeit*), we mean always to affirm it, though in different senses according to the different forms which it assumes, but one or other of which it must necessarily assume, and of which no one is reducible to or contained in the other. [...] The reality of a proposition means that it holds or is valid (*gilt*) and that its opposite does not hold.⁴

In this way Lotze lays the foundation for the distinction between logical and psychological inquiry. He attributes to thoughts, understood as the meanings of propositions (*Sätze*), the statute of objectivity⁵: that is, the independence of logical content from the individual subject who thinks them. Logical content is objective, but not real; it can acquire reality only through a psychological realiza-

tion, either as events or as the Really true, that is valid, as explained in the quotation above. The self-identity content of the proposition returns as *Gedanke* in Frege, *Sinngebilde* in Rickert, *Objectiv* in Meinong, *ideal identischer Inhalt* in Husserl⁶ and *logischer Inhalt* in Heidegger⁷.

The logical theory of validity was further developed by two alternative schools of thought: the Neo-Kantian Baden school and Phenomenology. The Baden school expanded Lotze's theory of validity (*Geltung*) beyond logic, constructing a theory which also includes ethics and aesthetics, with corresponding distinctions in the sphere of value. The phenomenological tradition, at least in the beginning was particularly attentive to logical-ontological problems. Husserl, on the basis of Frege's intuitions⁸, took Lotze's distinction between the objective contents of thought (unreal) and real thought events as the point of departure for his research in logic. Noteworthy, too, is the fact that in the same year that *Ideen I* was published, Husserl decided to add to a reprint of *Logische Untersuchungen* a long introduction about the problem of realizing logical ideality in the concreteness of *Erlebnis*⁹. Lotze's anti-psychologism was also of fundamental importance for Heidegger – as a student both of Husserl and the neo-kantian Rickert – as can be seen clearly in *Neuere Forschungen über Logik*¹⁰, in which Heidegger defines Lotze's *Logik* as the «fundamental book (*Grundbuch*)»¹¹ of modern logic. It is also important to remember that Heidegger recommended that his student Picht read Lotze's *Logik* as an introduction to philosophy¹². In *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger argues against the contemporary theory of validity, defining validity as a «verbal idol (*Wortgötze*)»¹³.

By the term “*logic*,” Lotze intended not just logic in the strict sense of the word, but also the theory of knowledge itself. It is not simply incidental that Lotze's theory of validity influenced the various theories of knowledge of his time. A useful example of this influence is the problem of *a priori*, discussed in the third chapter of *Logik*'s third book. Lotze says:

It is clear therefore that the attempt to derive the entire body of general knowledge from experience, that is to say from a mere summing up of particular perceptions, breaks down. We have invariably to help ourselves out by assuming at one point or another some one of those self-evident principles, some principle to which when once its content has been thought we at once concede with intuitive confidence that universal validity to which it makes claim.¹⁴

This conception so lucidly expressed by Lotze had, for example, direct influence on the concept of induction proposed by Liebmann and Frege. Arguing against empiricism, Otto Liebmann states that induction is impossible without «fundamental universally valid truths (*allgemeingültige Fundamentalwahrheiten*)»¹⁵. Frege, meanwhile, in complete agreement with Liebmann and Lotze, reaffirms Lotze's distinction between genetic-psychological issues and validity issues (*Genese und Geltung*). Logic, like epistemology, does not deal with the psychic process, but with the validity of propositions.

This example of induction demonstrates the importance of Lotze's thought for the philosophical debate of

the time. *Logik* is the «fundamental book», not only for logic, but also for the modern theory of knowledge. This, too is a confirmation of the importance of Lotze's thought, in which logical investigation must not be divided from the theory of knowledge. In addition, the import of this philosopher in the field of psychology must not be forgotten. As both medical doctor and philosopher, Lotze made a decisive contribution to both fields in the first half of the nineteenth century; by applying the scientific method to psychological analysis, he therefore increased *psychophysiological* analysis. This aspect of Lotze's thought had a fundamental role in the development of other great thinkers, in particular Charles Sanders Peirce and William James. In conclusion, it is not difficult to agree with Passmore when he describes Lotze as the most «pillaged» philosopher of the nineteenth century.

Gnoseological immanentism and the rejection of the correspondence theory of truth: the question of skepticism: an analysis

The third book of the second *Logik*, Lotze's most influential work in the development of the nineteenth and twentieth century philosophical debate, deals with logical-epistemological issues. This book is dedicated, as Lotze affirms in *Einleitung*, to «the general question of the logical methods with which a theory of the nature of thought (*die Lehre vom Denken*) ordinarily concludes»¹⁶. The real object of research (*Gegenstand der Untersuchung*) «is not to enquire into the content of the principles in question, but into the grounds upon which, in a subjective sense, their certainty rests; to ask not what is the truth, but what are the marks by which we recognise it and distinguish it from error»¹⁷. At the root of skepticism is the alleged impossibility of distinguishing truth from error. The human mind attempts a reflection upon the peculiar laws of its own activity and wonders why these laws bring with them a promise of true knowledge and, in spite of this, we are often attracted, seemingly inevitably, to error. If this apparent contradiction is not fully investigated, the conclusion to which it leads is skepticism.

The skeptic, professing the impossibility of certain knowledge on the one hand, cannot on the other hand deny every truth, inasmuch as that doubt is made possible only by the recognition of some form of truth. For Lotze, this truth, that skepticism cannot deny, consists in the fact that human thought has certain fundamental laws that affirm, for all events the impossibility of agreement between representation and truth¹⁸. The skeptic must admit the presence of truth because it is precisely through these laws of thought that doubt is produced and extended to all our investigations of knowledge. The fundamental question is whether or not it is precisely these laws of thought which are in error and which present each thing to us entirely differently from the way it is in reality. To the mere possibility of renewing doubt without any positive foundation, Lotze opposes the principle of *Selbstvertrauen der Vernunft*¹⁹. The principle of faith in reason in itself represents the premise of every knowledge inquiry. It affirms that reality and thought are in agreement with one another and that thought has limited access to reality, but that this does not render it misleading. This principle allows us to

discover that which necessarily appears through the necessary laws of thought, the truth. This achievement occurs through the continual verification of the results obtained, and has as its sole criterion the laws of logical-conceptual activity²⁰. For Lotze, the question of skepticism – which asks if things are in reality different from how they necessarily appear in our representations – is based on a profound prejudice which opposes being-in-itself (*Ansichsein*) with the way in which it is represented by the necessary laws of thought. Lotze clearly argues against the correspondence theory of truth: knowledge is not a «copy of a world of things (*Abbilden einer Sachwelt*)»²¹ nor an agreement of our ideas with the real condition of the things our ideas claim to reproduce²².

The task Lotze sets himself is not to demonstrate the reality of the world of things in itself – the systems of idealism and realism had already tackled this, coming to radically distinct conclusions – but rather «the recognition of the competence of thought». «Secondly», Lotze continues, «we have to show that nothing else, but the connection of our representations with each other can ever be made the object of our investigations»²³. One point must be clarified here: for Lotze, the subjective origin of our knowledge does not invalidate the results of knowing. Regarding the problem of the competence of thought, Lotze explicitly argues that it is the only door with access to the truth: «whatever is the truth can be discovered only by the reflective operation of thought (*Selbstbesinnung des Denkens*), continually trying and testing its single results by the standard of the universal laws of its activity»²⁴. In relation to the question regarding our representation as the sole object of inquiry, Lotze states that our representations of the external world are nothing more than simple subjective representations indifferent to the problem of the existence or non-existence of a world of things that goes beyond our consciousness. All our knowledge is subjective in nature and so cannot take a position on the existence of its object nor on the exactness of the representation by which we present it²⁵. Lotze's epistemology combines gnoseological immanentism with the irrefutable reality of the external world. By means of this combination, Lotze succeeds in setting aside both the supposed identity of *Gelten* and *Sein* of idealistic memory, as well as that unbridgeable hiatus which skepticism interposes between phenomena and the reality they depict.

Lotze credits the *Gedankenwelt* as the sole object of our knowledge. He does not ignore the value of the transcendent object, but excludes the metaphysical reality from the knowledge process. As he in fact points out, «this assumed external world of the Real does not come in here between our representations as the standard by which their truth is to be measured; the standard is always the representation of which we cannot get rid, of what such a world must be if it *does* exist, the representation that is to say of thought (*Gedanken*) in our own minds; this it is by which we measure the truth of other thoughts, whether they contain the evidence in themselves or require elucidation from without»²⁶. As we can clearly see, Lotze makes a distinction between the representational activity and its objective correlative, within the field of consciousness content. Starting with the recognition of the purely subjective nature of the mind, we are led to affirm that nothing can be said about the truth of the representa-

tions that come from it, but for Lotze this is not a proof of the non-validity does not prove the invalidity of the activity of thought. We cannot transcend, according to Lotze, the sphere of what is, for us, *denknotwendig* and, as a result, the search for truth is an investigation which takes place entirely within the sphere of our representations. Our knowledge originates from the representations within us and must search, within this current²⁷ of representations (*Vorstellungsverlauf*), for the legality and order that are revealed clearly through the general principles of thought. This is the process through which the truth is sought. Knowledge will never be a thing in itself but a *cognitio circa rem*, a complex of representations about the thing. Our mind is able to know things as they appear at the moment in which we perceive them and not as they are in themselves, independently of this perceptual relation. The skeptic, through the continuous reintroduction of doubt, seeks «knowledge which should be more than a perfectly connected and consistent system of representations about the thing, a knowledge which should actually exhaust of thing itself»²⁸; such a knowledge is, without a doubt, entirely unintelligible. The skeptic, formulating this type of request, which knowledge will never satisfy, does not want true knowledge about the thing (*die Erkenntnis der Sache*) but wants to be the thing itself. In the final analysis, skepticism, thinking that everything can be different from what it necessarily appears, is self-contradictory because it thinks about the possibility of the existence of a kind of knowledge that does not *apprehend* things, but which *is* itself a thing and on the basis of this prejudice, doubts that such impossible perfection is within the reach of our intellect.

For Lotze, having set aside the cognitive relevance of the transcendent object, there remains another way of investigation: «the endeavour to discover within the world of representations itself (*innerhalb der Vorstellungswelt*) what are the fixed points, the primary certainties, starting from which we may be able to bring the rest of the shifting multitude of its representations into something like orderly connection»²⁹. The *Vorstellungswelt* is the field «within» which we can construct our knowledge palace. Knowledge will consist of interrogations into the congruity which exists between the relation actually existing in the consciousness and the general assumptions of thought that we have to formulate for any relation. Lotze does not care about the origin of our representations, but he does attach much importance to the task of critically evaluating their content, so that – as its only possible aim – we can make sure our reason corresponds to itself and to the facts to which it is applied³⁰. The error will therefore lie in the inner contradiction within our *Vorstellungswelt* and therefore, correspondingly, the knowledge of truth will be the discovery of the laws which all connection in the world of representations must absolutely observe. This procedure will be an inexhaustible task, the whole truth constituting a difficult and improbable goal to which we must nevertheless constantly aspire. Ultimately, declaring the world of representations the only object of the process of knowing means that the basic argument of Lotze's theory of knowledge can be summarized as the idea that an apprehending intelligence can not grasp the truth in itself, but «can only see things as they look to it when it perceives them»³¹. True knowledge does not arise

from the correspondence of the connections of representations to the «exact coincidence of the impressions», but to their arrangement in the order resulting from the «relations among the represented contents»³². The distinction referred to is that between represented content (*vorgestellten Inhalt*), with its peculiar significance, and the simple *impression* (*Eindruck*) that derives from subjective experience.

Using this distinction, Lotze defines the primary function of thought: the objectification of the subjective (*Objectivierung des Subjectiven*). Representations invariably impose on every mind, not according to the empirical frequency with which certain relations manifest themselves, but based on a principle of coherence that thought identifies in them. The relations among our representations, therefore, do not represent connections that we suppose to exist in external reality. They have their objective foundation in the contents among which they occur. The relations do not exist in themselves: they exist as they are thought, they are part of our *Vorstellungswelt* and they, therefore, do not concern elements going beyond thought, being as they are only «representable contents»³³. The *validity* in itself or the *objectivity* of such relations derives from the nature of the content which, as «representable contents», cannot be independent from thought in general. The validity of such content cannot therefore be separated from thought, only from its individual manifestations. The distinction between representational activity and objective content is also determined within the *Vorstellungswelt* and, to avoid the conclusion that the significance of logical activity is only subjective or formal, one must underline the relationship between the forms of thought and the content those forms find to be already in existence.

This problem raises questions about the real significance of logical acts. This significance cannot be thought of as immediately valid in relation to what is real, but proves merely that thought, through its own subjective and formal operations, is able to coincide (*zusammen trifft*) with the nature of the objective content (*sachlicher Inhalt*)³⁴. To such operation of thought (*Denkhandlung*) a merely subjective significance should be attributed; to the logical result (product) that it achieves, should be attributed an objective value. This value derives from the fact of its independence from individual thinking minds and – in its manifestation which is always identical – is counterposed to every mind that represents it. The operations of thought are not only subjectively and formally valid, but they also belong to the *sachliches Verhalten* of the contents. These operations of thought constitute:

... one of the different ways in which the variously ramifying systems of the world of fact (*Sachenwelt*) makes it possible for us, by reason of its universal interconnection, to arrive by a process of movement from point to point within that world, at a determinate objective relation (*sachliches Verhalten*), although the particular movement chosen neither is nor yet copies the way in which this relation itself arose or now obtains (*Bestehen*).³⁵

For Lotze, it is impossible to extend our knowledge beyond the *Vorstellungswelt*; all of our effort of knowing must be concentrated upon the search for those “fixed points” and “first certainties” which constitute the logical connection of the changing set of our representations. The

search for truth only takes place in the world of representations connected by thought and, by eliminating every reference to a metaphysical reality, it takes on the physiognomy of a double relationality: both with the connections among representations and with the respective objective content. The truth, so constituted, would be a process by which the first relationality conforms to the second. In phenomenological language, one can say that the search for truth consists in bringing to completion the coincidence between the representational connection and objective content³⁶. The elimination of the knowledge relevance of transcendent reality does not reduce the validity of knowledge itself; rather, in Lotze's logical-epistemological construct, an inversion of roles between knowledge and things occurs. Reality itself is no longer the limit to which our knowledge must adapt. The thing is no longer the end of knowledge but the means and the cause that awakens in us, «in all its details, the spectacle of the world of representations (*das ganze Schauspiel der Vorstellungswelt*)»³⁷. The objective of knowledge does not lie, according to Lotze, in the unattainability of the world of things (*Welt der Dinge*), but in the discovery of the connections and laws governing our *Vorstellungswelt*. Lotze's logical-epistemological system clearly recognizes that the problem of the opposition between the world of representations (*Vorstellungswelt*) and the world of things (*Welt der Dinge*) is not cognitively relevant; instead, it is clearly a problem for metaphysics.

Anti-psychologism in Lotze's thought: the role of thought's contents.

Before going on to consider the concept of *Gelten* (understood as the true form of the reality of thought's contents), it is appropriate to detail briefly the fundamental points of Lotze's anti-psychologism. The idea at the base of Lotze's anti-psychologism is that of drawing a clear distinction between the realm of logical thought and that of the psychological mechanism (process) of representations. From the time of his 1843 *Logica minor*, Lotze consistently maintained his conviction that it was impossible to think of as united the psychological mechanism (process) of representations and the logical content of thought. In the same *kleine Logik*³⁸, the intent to argue against Herbart and Hegel is evident. Lotze criticised Herbart for limiting himself to the consideration of concepts and judgments as secondary aspects of psychological processes by which the connections between representations are produced.³⁹ Lotze disagreed with Hegel as well, especially criticising his affirmation of the absolute coincidence between *Denken* and *Sein* and that immediate unity between thought and being caused Hegel to assign a *real* significance to the forms of thought that thus cease to be *only* forms of thought and become *as well* moments of the essence of things⁴⁰. In Lotze's opinion, Hegel's greatest oversight is that metaphysical reality lies outside of logical-epistemological analysis.

At the same time, it is important to remember that in the *kleine Logik* of 1843 Lotze also presented his own interpretation of Kantian transcendental schematism. Through schematism, Kant established a nexus between intellect and sensibility, but according to Lotze his short-

coming lay in having related too closely the categories of the intellect to the knowledge of the real, the empirical realm⁴¹. Lotze did not believe thought to be anchored in the knowledge of experiential reality but rather that it is free from any kind of relation with metaphysical reality, and yet this does not mean that it is misleading or that it does not guarantee any kind of objectivity. Together these concepts constitute the premise on which Lotze's anti-psychologist arguments are based. The same idea is emphasized by Lotze in *Die Lehre vom Urtheil*, contained in the first book of the second *Logik*. According to Lotze, even Aristotle based his logic on rigidly anti-psychologism foundations. Aristotle never described the predicative connection between two terms (logical operation of *katēgorein*) as a simple psychological event (occurrence) between representations associated in our consciousness. On the contrary, judgment, which consists of this specific logical operation, expresses an objective relation (*sachliches Verhältnis*) between the two contents of the representations.

Lotze believed that judgment, like any other reactive activity of thought, is born as a result of stimuli which come from the world of representable contents, and therefore expresses a relation between contents of representations and not between the representations themselves⁴². The «objective correctness (*sachliche Richtigkeit*)» of a judgment does not lie, according to Lotze, in the logical form in which it takes on a certain content, but in the relations which exist among the elements of that content. So that the form of judgment can give them a certain validity, these elements are already as the form of judgment must assume that they are⁴³. The mere psychological connection between representations is resolved only with the inclusion of one representation in the extension of another, while the logical function of judgment is to show the various relations that take place between the contents represented and which form the basis of the judgment through the meaning of the copula. The significance of the various forms in which a judgment can be reached lies in the indication of the formal conditions that provide apodictic validity to a certain content that already satisfies those conditions. Lotze writes:

I have maintained the opinion throughout my work that Logic cannot derive any serious advantage from a discussion of the conditions under which thought as a psychical process (*psychischer Vorgang*) comes about. The significance (*Bedeutung*) of logical forms is to be found in the meaning and purport (*Sinne*) of the connections into which the content (*Inhalt*) of our world of representations (*Vorstellungswelt*) ought to be brought.⁴⁴

While it is true that Herbart and Kant had already distinguished between the psychical process of concept formation (*Genese*) and its logical significance, it is also true that Lotze was the philosopher who first introduced the term *Geltung* into the philosophical vocabulary. This concept attained its full philosophical significance in Lotze's interpretation of Plato's doctrine of ideas. In his interpretation, validity becomes the specific form of reality that the contents of thought must obtain. These contents go beyond the mere psychical process of formation of representation and present themselves in all their validity as

«objectively given (*sachlich gegeben*)»⁴⁵. The objectivity outlined by Lotze is something very different from real existence (*wirklichen Daseins*), understood both as existence-of-things and as the existence of psychical processes. In defining the concept of *Objectivität*, Lotze affirms that it is not possible to attribute to it that «real existence (*wirklichen Daseins*) which would subsist even though nobody had thought of it»⁴⁶. Such claims were criticized by anti-psychologists⁴⁷ because they deemed them to be ‘psychologistic’ motives in Lotze’s philosophy. However, these criticisms were not well-founded as Lotze, in addition to having given the greatest importance to logical activities and to processes of knowing, also attached great importance to the object of knowledge⁴⁸. Lotze attempted to justify the complementarity between the subjective and objective aspects of knowledge without using metaphysical reality as a term of comparison. We can affirm that Lotze’s ideas do not in fact fall into psychologism in the strict sense. For Lotze neither attempts to identify the concept of *Geltung* with the purely empirical plan of the psychological formation of representation, nor does he espouse the excesses of subjectivism, which would reduce all knowledge to abstract formalism. The attribution of an objective validity to our representations’ contents does not signify the attribution of such validity to the psychic process that presides over the formation of the representation. In other words, such an attribution does not indicate the real mental event that takes place in time – for this could indeed be called true psychologism. It rather affirms the sense of immanence within which our knowledge is constituted. Lotze, entirely in keeping with what he had affirmed with regards to the problem of skepticism, i.e. that it is necessary to neutralize any reference to the thing-in-itself that transcends the consciousness, now affirms that in the search for truth we cannot rely on a notion of validity which is in itself transcendent. Obviously this does not mean, however, that one must abandon the idea of objective knowledge. We can conclude, therefore, that validity is immanent in the ‘logical’ and in the ideality of the contents of the representations.

The concept of *Geltung*

Once has defined the *Vorstellungswelt* as the sole object of knowledge, Lotze must then take on the problem of defining its fixed points of certainty and its unique nature. Lotze’s response to these questions is the concept of *Geltung*. According to Lotze, Plato’s *Ideenlehre* is «the first and most characteristic attempt to account for the truth which belongs to the world of our representations in itself (*die unserer Vorstellungswelt innerhalb*), without regard to its agreement with an assumed reality of things outside its borders»⁴⁹. Plato, with his «doctrine of ideas», in fact highlights the truth that belongs to the inner world of our representations. Lotze, with his interpretation of the platonic theory of ideas, wants to investigate the true «way of being» of such truths. Lotze chooses the term *Wirklichkeit* to define the nature of the world of representations. For Lotze, there are four different ways in which the concept of Reality can be understood: the reality of a thing which *is*, the reality of an event which *occurs*, the

reality of a relation which *obtains* and the reality of a proposition which *holds* or is *valid* (*gilt*).

The concept of validity (*Gelten*) first appears in paragraph 316 of *Logik*. The concept of *Gelten* is evidently more limited than the *Wirklichkeit* concept because the latter goes far beyond the domain of being. Reality, besides being the domain of being and validity, also includes the event which occurs and the relation which obtains. In addition, Lotze affirms that none of the forms of reality which he has distinguished can be derivable or contained by another. For example, if we can predicate a relational subsistence of a content of a proposition the unique form of reality which concerns the proposition itself is only that of validity. The form of reality Lotze calls validity has no temporal connotation. The temporal dimension belongs to other forms of reality, such as that of being and of occurring. In relation to this we can confirm that:

the representations, in so far as they are present in our minds, possess reality in the sense of an Event. They occur in us, for as utterances of an activity of presentation they are never a Being at rest but a continual Becoming. On the other hand, so far as we regard it in abstraction from the mental activity which we direct to it, their content can no longer be said to occur, though neither again does it exist as things exist: we can only say that it possesses Validity.⁵⁰

Representative content remains clearly self-identical whether consciousness thinks about it or not. Entirely consistent with these arguments is Lotze’s assertion that the act of representation (*das Vorstellen*) is not coincident with that which it represents, nor is the idea coincident with what gives it meaning. This indicates that both the act and the content are different from the object represented and that the simpler representations do not possess their content in the form of a predicate; in short, the representation of yellow is not yellow and that of the triangle is not triangular⁵¹. By virtue of all that has been said, validity does not derive from a weakening of the being-of-things nor from a structuring of the changing nature of our representations. Validity is a concept that denies the contents of thought any reality of being and affirms the independence of these contents from our thought. Validity manifests to the thinking subject in the form of what needs to be acknowledged and affirmed. Lotze does not hesitate to affirm that:

as little as we can say about how it happens that anything is or occurs, so little can we explain how it comes about that a truth has Validity. The latter conception must be regarded as much as the former as ultimate and underivable (*beruhenden Grundbegriff*, or rather a fundamental concept that reposes on and is based entirely upon itself). It is a conception of which everyone can know the meaning, but which cannot be constructed out of any constituent elements which do not already contain it.⁵²

The *Logik* by R. H. Lotze constitutes, in the final analysis, an important point of reference for much of the academic philosophy - German and otherwise - between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although Lotze’s importance in the philosophical debate of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is evident, his philosophy was certainly not well-studied, or its study was rather

of 'secondary interest', aimed at understanding other philosophers⁵³. Recent works are reversing that trend⁵⁴. Rudolf Hermann Lotze has returned to the center of a 'primary interest', aimed at demonstrating its relevance and centrality in both the European and American philosophical debates of the 19th and 20th centuries.

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Notes:

- ¹ J. Passmore, *A Hundred Years of Philosophy*. (London: Duckworth, 1966): 49.
- ² H. Lotze, *Logik. Drei Bücher vom Denken, vom Untersuchen und vom Erkennen*. (Leipzig, 1874; hrsg. und eingeleitet von G. Misch, Leipzig, 1912). English translation: *Logic: In three books: of Thought, of Investigation, and of Knowledge (1874)*, ed. and trans. B. Bosanquet, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1884; 2nd edition, 1887.
- ³ H. Lotze, *Logik II*, cit. p. 4.
- ⁴ H. Lotze, *Logik II*, cit. pp. 499-500.
- ⁵ H. Lotze, *Logik II*, § 3.
- ⁶ E. Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, Halle, Max Niemeyer, 1900-1901.
- ⁷ It is important to remember that these concepts have their forerunner not only in Lotze, but also in the *Satz an sich* of Bolzano.
- ⁸ See: G. Frege, *Die Grundlagen der Arithmetik: eine logisch-mathematische Untersuchung über den Begriff der Zahl*, Breslau, 1884. In this work (§ 3 and the paragraphs about 'induction') it is very important the distinction between genetic-psychological issues and validity issues. Frege, in this book, applies the distinction to the concept of 'induction'. This idea is very important for Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen*, see the next note. On the relationship between Frege and Husserl see also: S. Centrone, *Logic and Philosophy of Mathematics in the Early Husserl*, Synthese Library (Vol. 345), Springer, Berlin 2010.
- ⁹ Husserl E., *Logische Untersuchungen. Ergänzungsband. Erster Teil. Entwürfe zur Umarbeitung der VI. Untersuchung und zur Vorrede für die Neuauflage der Logischen Untersuchungen (Sommer 1913)*. [Logical investigations. Supplementary volume. First part. Draft plan for the revision of the 6th Logical Investigation and the foreword of the Logical Investigations (Summer 1913).], Husserliana, 20/1, Edited by Ulrich Melle. The Hague, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002.
- ¹⁰ M. Heidegger, *Neuere Forschungen über Logik*. (in Gesamtausgabe, Frankfurt a. M., Klostermann, vol. I, 1978): 22.
- ¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 23, n. 9.
- ¹² G. Picht, *Die Macht des Denkens*, in *Erinnerungen an Martin Heidegger*, (by G. Neske). (Pfullingen, Neske, 1977): 201.
- ¹³ M. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*. (Tübingen, M. Niemeyer, 1927): 155.
- ¹⁴ H. Lotze, *Logik II*, § 330, p. 528.
- ¹⁵ O. Liebmann, *Zur Analysis der Wirklichkeit*. (Strassburg, K. J. Trübner, 1876, third ed. 1900): 208.
- ¹⁶ H. Lotze, *Logik II*, p. 465.
- ¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 471.
- ¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 475.
- ¹⁹ On the principle of faith in reason itself see: H. Lotze, *Logik II*, pp. 477 sgg; *Die Philosophie in den letzten 40 Jahren*, in *Logik II*, 1912, p. CII; *Metaphysik II*, p. 183; G. Misch, *op. cit.*, p. LXXIX; Ed. von Hartmann, *Lotze's Philosophie*, Leipzig, 1888, p. 51; G. Malantschuk, *Die Kategorienfrage bei Lotze*, Berlin, 1934, pp. 33-34; H. Pöhlmann, *Die Erkenntnistheorie Rudolph Hermann Lotzes*, Erlangen, 1897, p. 54; W. Moog, *Logik, Psychologie und Psychologismus. Wissenschaftssystematische Untersuchungen*, Halle a. S., 1919, p. 71; E. W. Orth, *Rudolf Hermann Lotze: Das Ganze unseres Welt- und Selbstverständnisses*, in (hrsg. von J. Speck) *Grundprobleme der grossen Philosophen, Philosophie der Neuzeit*, IV, Göttingen, 1986, pp. 9-51, cit. p. 26; F. Fellmann, *Phänomenologie als ästhetische Theorie*, Freiburg-München, 1989, pp. 101 sgg.
- ²⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 478-482; *Die Philosophie in den letzten 40 Jahren*, in *Logik II*, 1912, p. CXI.
- ²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 478.
- ²² This is Thomas Aquinas' definition of truth as 'adaequatio rei et intellectus' (see Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 1 a. 2 sc. 2).
- ²³ H. Lotze, *Logik II*, p. 479.
- ²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 480. It is clear that the principle of the *Selbstvertrauen der Vernunft* means faith in the possibilities of thought, and of thought only, to access the truth. Any other possible access is discarded, for example the historical-hermeneutic approach. This would confirm the criticism Heidegger had about the Cartesian ascendancy in Lotze's thought.
- ²⁵ H. Lotze, *Die Philosophie in den letzten 40 Jahren*, pp. CVIII-CIX.
- ²⁶ H. Lotze, *Logik II*, p. 482.
- ²⁷ B. Bosanquet translates the term *Verlauf* with *current*.
- ²⁸ H. Lotze, *Logik II*, p. 485.
- ²⁹ H. Lotze, *Logik II*, p. 487.
- ³⁰ H. Lotze, *Die Philosophie in den letzten 40 Jahren*, pp. CXII-CXIII.
- ³¹ H. Lotze, *Logik II*, p. 485.

³² *Ibidem*, *Einleitung*.

³³ G. Misch, *op. cit.*, p. LXXVII.

³⁴ H. Lotze, *Logik II*, pp. 536 sgg.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 558.

³⁶ One can note the continuity between Lotze's and Husserl's theory of truth. Both visions reject the correspondence theory because they admit the incommensurability between *thought* and *thing*. Lotze conceives knowledge as the attempt to achieve the conformity of the necessary connections between the elements of our *Vorstellungswelt*. Husserl conceives knowledge as the attainment of a «synthesis of identification» between the different ways in which an object is presented to consciousness.

³⁷ H. Lotze, *Logik II*, p. 491.

³⁸ H. Lotze, *Logik*, Leipzig, 1843.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 15.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 20.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 28.

⁴² *Logik II*, p. 57.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 54.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 531; in this passage Lotze affirms the real identification between the significance (*Bedeutung*) of logical forms and their meaning (*Sinne*) that show the connections into which the content (*Inhalt*) of our world of representations (*Vorstellungswelt*) ought to be brought. For this reason we are led to favor Dummett's assertion of Lotze's irrelevance regarding Frege's distinction between *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 558.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 15.

⁴⁷ See Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, vol. I, p. 407.

⁴⁸ See Bruno Bauch, *Lotze's Logik und ihre Bedeutung in deutschem Idealismus*, in «Beiträge zu Philosophie des deutschen Idealismus», I, 1919, pp. 45-58, cit. p. 46.

⁴⁹ H. Lotze, *Logik II*, p. 494.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 500. The content of representations is the thought that is 'valid'. The 'third realm' of Validity of thought is neither metaphysical nor real as contingent things; his *Wirklichkeit* is intersubjective with *Gültigkeit*. See on this point the argument between Sluga and Dummett. On Lotze's distinction between representation and content of representation see also Herbart and Bolzano (*Wissenschaftslehre*, Bd. I, pp. 216 sgg.; Bd. III, pp. 5 sgg.)

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 541. Regarding the distinction between an act of representation and content, we can find traces of Cartesian patterns in Lotze's thought. See Lotze, *Die Philosophie in den letzten 40 Jahren*, pp. XCVIII sgg; see Heidegger, *Logik. Die Frage nach der Wahrheit* (Wintersemester 1925-1926) Frankfurt a. M., 1976; see Descartes, *third Metaphysical meditations and the replies to the second and the fourth objections*.

⁵² *Ibidem*, p. 501.

⁵³ There are exceptions: Luigi Ambrosi (*Ermanno Lotze e la sua filosofia*, Milano-Roma-Napoli, 1912; *Il mondo della realtà secondo Lotze*, in «Cultura filosofica», X, 1916, pp. 32-49; *Metafisica dello spazio e del tempo secondo Ermanno Lotze*, in «Annali dell'Università di Toscana», VII, 1922, pp. 1-61; *Per una monografia italiana su H. Lotze*, in «Cultura filosofica», III, 1909, pp. 226-246), Paul Grimley Kuntz (*Rudolf [sic] Hermann Lotze: Philosopher and Critic*, in *Lotze's System of Philosophy*, Bloomington, 1971), Herbert Schnädelbach (*Philosophie in Deutschland 1831-1933*, Frankfurt a. M., 1983), Stefano Poggi (*I sistemi dell'esperienza*, Bologna, 1977; *Philosophie der Neuzeit, vol. IV: Positivismus, Sozialismus und Spiritualismus im 19. Jahrhundert*, München, 1989), Robin Rollinger, Phillip Stambovsky, Ernst Wolfgang Orth (*Dilthey und Lotze. Zur Wandlung des Philosophiebegriffs im 19. Jahrhundert*, in «Dilthey-Jahrbuch», II, 1984, pp. 140-158; *Rudolf Hermann Lotze: Das Ganze unseres Welt- und Selbstverständnisses*, in (hrsg. von J. Speck) *Grundprobleme der grossen Philosophen, Philosophie der Neuzeit*, IV, Göttingen, 1986, pp. 9-51), Nikolay Milkov, Alejandro Vigo, Reinhardt Pester.

⁵⁴ Beiser F. C., *Late German Idealism. Trendelenburg and Lotze*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013; Boccaccini F. (ed.), *Lotze et son héritage. Son influence et son impact sur la philosophie du XX siècle*. Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2015; Woodward W. R., *Hermann Lotze: an Intellectual Biography*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015.