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LOTZE'S CONCEPT OF STATE OF AFFAIRS AND ITS CRITICS

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Summary

State of affairs (*Sachverhalt*) is one of the few terms in philosophy which only came into use for the first time in the twentieth century, mainly via the works of Husserl and Wittgenstein. This makes the task of finding out who introduced this concept into philosophy, and in exactly what sense, of considerable interest. My thesis is that the term was introduced by Lotze in 1874 in the sense of the objective content of judgements, which is ipso facto the minimal structured ontological unit. I would argue against authors such as Michael Dummett and Barry Smith, who have tried to prove that Lotze's theory of judgement, and so of states of affairs, was advanced in the wake of psychologism.

1. Hunting States of Affairs

State of affairs (*Sachverhalt*)¹ is one of the few terms in philosophy which only began to be widely used in the twentieth century, mainly in the works of Edmund Husserl and Ludwig Wittgenstein: Husserl employed the term extensively in *Logical Investigations* (1900–1),² as well as in *Formale und Transzendente Logik* (1929), and Wittgenstein in *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* (Wittgenstein 1922). This has meant that the task of finding out who introduced the concept into philosophy, and in exactly what sense, has become one of considerable interest. Indeed, many attempts have been made so far to clear up this point.

The first 'hunter' to try to track down term's origins was Carl Stumpf. In 1924 he suggested that it was introduced by Franz Brentano (see Stumpf 1924, p. 240). Some two decades later Paul Linke asserted that it was Carl Stumpf himself who did so (see Linke 1946, p. 46). But as we have just seen, Stumpf himself knew nothing about this.

In recent years, the term's history has been further investigated by Barry Smith. He did this with great persistence, but also frequently changed his view. At first he accepted that it was introduced by Stumpf in lectures in 1888, "and its first appearance in philosophical print had been in 1900 in Husserl's *Logical Investigations*" (Smith 1978, p. 33).³ A dozen years later he claimed that the term was introduced by Julius Bergmann in his *Allgemeine Logik*, published in 1879 (Smith 1990, p. 128). Next Smith discovered that as a philosophical term, state of affairs was mentioned

¹ Usually so is translated the German term in English. See on the problems with this translation § 7.

² See on this Mulligan 1989, Rosado 1991.

³ The same is also accepted in Mulligan 1985, p. 145.

for the first time in Rudolf Hermann Lotze's *Logic* (1874);⁴ however, only in Bergmann's *Allgemeine Logik* (1879) did it become a central concept, meaning the objective element which corresponds to the judging mind (Smith 1992, column 1104). In 1996 Smith was convinced that "the term is introduced by Stumpf to designate the immanent content of a judgement. ... The earlier use of state of affairs by Lotze and the German logician Julius Bergmann did not, it seems, have any influence." (Smith 1994, p. 87 n.; see also Smith 1996, pp. 324–7)

In what follows, I shall try to demonstrate that the term and the concept of state of affairs were introduced by Lotze in his *Logic* (1874) and by nobody else. I shall also show that Lotze used this term with a meaning which laid the foundations for the later use of the term by Stumpf, Husserl and also by Wittgenstein. It is true that Stumpf, Husserl and other phenomenologists made an additional requirement of it: it came to denote the specific ontology of judgements as opposed to facts. However, as we are going to see in section 5.2, this modification was not essential to the authentic meaning of the concept of state of affairs as introduced by Lotze. What is more, the phenomenologist notion of state of affairs has a meaning reducible to that of Lotze's notion.

2. States of Affairs as the Objective Content of Judgements, Grasped through Background Thoughts

But what did Lotze understand by state of affairs? In order to answer this question, we should first track down its history in his thought.

From the very beginning of his career as a philosopher, Lotze's task was that of Plato in *Theaetetus*: to secure knowledge which is to be extracted, and separated, from appearance, above all from perception. He accepted that the main characteristic of knowledge is that it is valid and so is true. This means that only it grasps things as they really are – and, in fact, that is what is expected of thinking as a result. The difference between perception and knowledge can be set out this way. Whereas knowledge asserts two or more ideas which belong together (*zusammengehören*), by perception, as well as by imagining, daydreaming, etc., ideas are added to one another by accident: they *geraten zusammen*.

Let us try to put this point in other terms. The perceiving mind, so Lotze, presents 'kaleidoscopically' a multiplicity of contingent pictures (*Bilder*) (Lotze 1843, p. 72). In parallel, the mind goes through the ideas which perception finds together for a second time, producing in this way *Nebengedanken*, or background thoughts. The latter connect only those ideas which the mind has found to intrinsically belong together, that is, which are connected this way in reality. This is how knowledge comes about.

⁴ Barry Smith mistakenly claimed (Smith 1996, pp. 326–7) that, under the influence of Bergmann, "in the second edition of *Logic* of 1880" Lotze allegedly made some changes in his understanding of states of affairs. In fact, where he spoke of states of affairs (e.g. p. 57 n.) the two editions are identical.

But how can it be that the judgement connects ideas in the same way in which objects are connected in reality? In order to answer this question, we should bear in mind that Lotze's judgement does not denote an interrelation of ideas (*Vorstellungen*) in the conventional sense of the world, but rather an interrelation of things. So his state of affairs is nothing but the objective (*sachliche*) interrelation of real things as presented in the judgement (Df.1).⁵ In turn, the minimal (atomic) objective interrelation of things is considered by him as nothing but a possible content of judgements. In other words, Lotze accepts here the identity theory of truth, according to which the truth of a judgement consists in the identity of the judgement's content with the fact (see Baldwin 1991, 35).

To sum up. For Lotze, thinking consists of producing justifiable thoughts which are *Nebengedanken* – background thoughts. These are satellite thoughts which accompany the kaleidoscope of the stream of consciousness, making part of it knowledge. Knowledge is nothing but presenting things as they are in reality, in our judgements.

3. The Structure of States of Affairs

3.1. *The Composition of the Ontological Glue: The Reciproca Tantum Relation of the Elements of States of Affairs.* According to Lotze's ontology, the world consists of relations and elements (or contents of possible judgements). The elements (contents) are related in states of affairs (substances, wholes). In other words, states of affairs – and this is the second definition of this term – are the minimal composite unity of the world (Df.2).

The elements of a state of affairs stay in a reciprocal relation C to one another, and in a certain order (*Folge*) F, which excludes all other orders. If we call the whole of the state of affairs (the substance) M, and its elements A, B and R, we can denote the substance with the formula $M = \phi[A B R]$, where ϕ stands for the connection between the elements, A and B are determinate elements, and R is an endless element (see Lotze 1879, § 70).

The elements of the substance (the whole, the state of affairs) effect themselves reciprocally. They are in a *reciproca tantum* relation to one another.⁶ Lotze expressed this point with the words that the elements of the whole mutually produce *effectus transeunt* – which is the opposite of *effectus immanens* – on one another. In other words, all the elements of the whole produce a kind of cursory effect on one another. It does not change their character, but at the same time the minimal change that it causes in them produces that ontological glue which keeps the elements of the state of affairs together, making the state of affairs something more than the simple mereological sum of its parts.

⁵ The sign (Df.n), printed in bold/fett, signals the next definition of the states of affairs given in this paper.

⁶ This concept of being in *reciproca tantum* relation is often used in constructivist ontologies (e.g. in Smith 1998, pp. 524, 533, 539), but never explicitly and theoretically developed in full. This is a realm of ontology which still waits its elaboration.

⁷ On the term 'ontological glue' see Armstrong 1978, i. pp. 113-16; as well as Vallicella 2000.

Here are some elucidations on this point. In introducing the terms *effectus transeunt* and *effectus immanens*, Lotze follows Ammonius 28,1,14. Lotze's terms in German here are *transeuntes Wirken* and *immanentes Wirken*. Now, *transeuntes Wirken* is usually translated (for example, in Lotze 1885) as 'transeuter action'. Russell, in turn, calls *effectus immanens* and *effectus transeunt* 'immediate' and 'mediate action' (see Russell 1903, p. 452). This translation is, of course, incorrect. To be sure, 'action' in German is *Handlung*. This is scarcely what Lotze had in mind, though. What he has in mind here is apparently neither *Handlung* nor *Verursachung* (causing), but rather effecting, which does not lead to physical changes in the objects of the substance but to some kind of minimal internal changes which, nevertheless, are essential for the substance. In short, *effectus transeunt* (or 'action in passing', 'cursory action') is the minimal cursory effect A has on B in the substance M, and B on A, thanks to which they stay in M. Through it, the isolated, autonomous elements of the substance became interdependent.

3.2. *States of Affairs as a Particular Case of States-of-something*. The main idea of Lotze's ontology is that there are different systems of relations, every one of which gives rise to what might be called different states-of-something. Indeed, he was convinced that what *exists* are relations, and used to repeat: "It belongs to the notion and nature of existence to be related." (Lotze 1885, ii. p. 587) The systems of relations in the world are of miscellaneous kinds, every one of which has its idiosyncratic co-ordinates and parameters. Here are two of them:

- the system of geometrical relations;
- the system of colours.

To them we can add systems which were not discussed by Lotze but which can be comfortably added to his ontological scheme.

- the system of sounds (developed in full by Peter Strawson, in his *Individuals*);
- the system of smells; etc.

All these nets of relations are necessary to the world of the real, but not to the world of art, or to the spiritual world of men, or to other forms of life (to the lion's form of life, for example). In correspondence with this, Lotze assumes that there are also other kinds of relation-nets (see Lotze 1856 iii. pp. 461–2; Lotze 1885 ii. p. 575). Thus, merely from the perspective of the subject, Lotze's universe has at least two further relation-nets:

- that of perception; this net is the universe of what he calls *Localzeichen*,
- that of judgements and concepts; this net is the universe of the *sachliche Verhalten* (object relations).

Here we see that the state of affairs (*Sachverhalte*) is only one element in a particular net of relations – that of judgements and concepts (Df.3).

The *sachliche Verhalten* are of different types too. There are:

- relations of extension (*Raumverhältnisse*, Lotze 1879, §§ 114, 132);
- Lotze often speaks relations of places of (*Lagenverhältnisse*) (§ 77);
- of relations of weight.

— But we can add to them other *sachliche Verhalten* (co-relations of chunks of reality): *Wunschverhalt*, for example (Mulligan 1985, 145). Etc.

3.3. *Lotze's States of Affairs in Comparison to those of Wittgenstein, Russell and Armstrong.* In 1874-9 Lotze accepts state of affairs as a basic concept in logic and ontology. He defines it as 'a concatenation (*Verkettung*) of objects' (Lotze 1879, §§ 117, 176) (Df.4). This understanding closely resembles that of Wittgenstein, who defines state of affairs as 'a combination of objects [... that] fit into one another like the links of a chain [*Kette*]' (Wittgenstein 1922, 2.01, 2.03).⁸

Wittgenstein, of course, did not learn this understanding of the atom of both ontology and logic directly from Lotze. Rather, here he followed aspects of Russell's theory of complexes, as well as an aspect of Russell's theory of judgement, understood as the subject correlating two or more elements in a certain way.⁹ Indeed, the main point of Russell's ontology was that it is based on the complex, relating two or more individuals, and not the *particular & universal* pair, which is expressed in logic in the subject-predicate relation. For Russell, the subject-predicate logic can be presented as a branch of the relational logic; and the *particular & universal* ontology as a branch of the ontology of complexes.

It was in an effort to better express these ideas that Wittgenstein introduced the idea of states of affairs in his ontology. Indeed, the very name of it – *Sachverhalt* – denotes the kernel of the ontology of complexes, with individuals which stay in reciproca tantum relation; it signals that the things in them 'stand', or 'hang', together (see Garver 1994, 134 ff.), in a certain way. Even the connection between particular and universal can be presented in this way.

Note that the simple relation between *particular & universal* does not hint at two or more individuals standing or hanging together in a certain way. Rather, it is what David Armstrong called the 'thick' particular (see Armstrong 1997, 123-6); or what we could call, in analogy, the 'tin' universal. In other words, it is one thing. In contrast, true states of affairs are complexes, composed of two or more things which relate to one another in such and such a fashion.

Unfortunately, in the intensive discussion of states of affairs in the last decade, the great majority of authors embraced their non-relational character (see Armstrong, 1997, Kraml 1998, Smith 1992). Only a few accepted (see Vallicella 2000) the old Lotzean conception – supported by Husserl and Wittgenstein too – that states of affairs are nothing but relations of different items.

4. Non-structural Characteristics of Lotze's States of Affairs

Besides their extensional (structural) characteristics, Lotze's states of affairs also have typical intentional (non-structural) traits. What are they?

⁸ On the similarities between Lotze and Wittgenstein see Milkov 2000, pp. 146-50.
⁹ We must have in mind here, however, that in other aspects, Wittgenstein's Tractarian understanding of complexes and judgements differs from that of Russell of the time.

4.1. *Judgement as Examining its Content.* Lotze's background thoughts already discussed in part 2 are nothing but a critical stand towards a combination of ideas (Df.5). They were understood that way also in Julius Bergmann's *Allgemeine Logik*. The same is stated in the interpretation by Lotze's pupil Windelband, who would stress that the background thought "is not merely an expression of a relation of presentations, but rather a critical attitude of the consciousness to such [a relation]" (Windelband 1884, p. 170).

Some German authors have noted that this idea is nothing but a further transformation of Hegel's method of dialectical self-development (*Selbstentwicklung*) of the truth (see Misch 1912, p. xxvii). My suggestion here is different: I recommend that Lotze's background thoughts are to be seen as an incorporation into logic of the old practice of Plato-Aristotle of examining (peirastic) of the subject or the fact under scrutiny. Indeed, the art of peirastic, as practised by Plato and Aristotle, examines (or 'tastes') the beliefs of our partner-in-dialogue, with the aim of finding which of them are right and which wrong: i.e. which fit the facts and which do not fit them. This examination is conducted by exercising a special capacity to judge aright.

I am inclined to argue here that, similarly, the kernel of Lotze's idea of background thoughts lies in the conviction that we somehow have in mind, in a vague form, what we intend to find in our perception. Indeed, "this inner regularity of the content sought-after, being unknown yet, is not open to us in specific realistic definitions of thought. However, being present in the form of opinion, it really has [...] the defensive force to negotiate what is not suitable to her." (Lotze 1841, p. 33) Thanks to this ability, we can say – in our background thoughts – the connection of the ideas that lie before us – in our perception – is true, or false.

The only difference between the peirastic of Plato-Aristotle and Lotze's background thoughts is that the former is a capacity that is used when examining theories, or theses, or arguments, whereas the background thoughts work every moment we apprehend something in the stream of life.

4.2. *Two Other Intensional Characteristics of Lotze's States of Affairs.* There are two other dimensions of Lotze's concept of content of judgement (*Urteilsinhalt*) which have nothing to do with their structural characteristics.

(i) Lotze identified the states of affairs with affirmation of judgements. He used to say that the being of judgement consists in its affirmation (*Bejahung*), or positioning (*Setzung*) (Df.6). This understanding was connected with a variant of the context principle: "The affirmation of a single notion has no meaning which we can specify; we can affirm nothing but a judgement in which the content of one notion is brought into relation with that of another." (Lotze 1856, iii. p. 469; Lotze 1885 ii. p. 582.)

(ii) Lotze's concept of content of judgement can be also defined correlatively: as the counterpart of the concept of value (Df.7) – this is another term introduced to logic by this philosopher. To be more specific, he accepted that whereas the idea (*Vorstellung*) happens,¹⁰ the content of judgement is valid (Lotze 1874, § 316). Ideas

¹⁰ Other things that happen are changes: events, actions, processes.

have meaning (*Bedeutung*), but not value: they can attain a value only through the proposition in which they occur (*ibid.*, § 321). Further, besides things that happen and things that are valid, there are also things which *are*. Such things are the data or the given. The transition between these three – what happens, what is valid, and what is – is impossible. Lotze further connected the given (*das Gegebene*) with the idea of 'experienced content of perception', as opposed to the content of judgement.

5. Two Critiques of Lotze's Judgement

5.1. *States of Affairs as Objective Content of Judgement.* In the preceding sections we have already seen that Lotze's judgements secure knowledge and so are of an order that superstructures the world of perception. Unfortunately, some authors would almost appear to deliberately neglect this point. For example, Barry Smith asserts that Lotze stuck to the old Cartesian 'combinatory theory' of ideas.

The fact, however, is that this theory was abandoned not only by Lotze but even by Kant. Lotze, of course, knew this. Thus he wrote in his *Logic* (1843): "Already Kant noticed that judgement is such only when its segments belong together, thanks to the necessary unity of apperception by the synthesis of multiplicity." (Lotze 1843, p. 87) Starting from Johann Friedrich Herbart, and passing further to Adolf Trendelenburg, this was a standard argument in anti-naturalistic theories of knowledge. The latter was also accepted by Christoph Sigwart and Wilhelm Wundt, among others. All of them "accuse empiricism of a genetic fallacy, of trying to substitute a historical account of the origin of some belief for a reasoned justification or proof of it" (Sluga 1980, pp. 55, 56).¹¹

The difference between ideas which 'meet at random' (*sind zusammengeraten*) and ideas which 'belong together', or 'tie together' (*sind verknüpft*) is so radical in Lotze that it is difficult to understand why Smith refuses to acknowledge it. A possible explanation is that Smith, who accepts that states of affairs are not relational, was misled by the fact that Lotze's states of affairs are.

Perhaps we can rightly guess his motives for doing so if we call to mind that there is another philosopher who tries to prove that Lotze was not the man who invented the 'logic of knowledge' – Michael Dummett. To be sure, in a sense, Smith and Dummett try to demonstrate the same thing: that a philosopher who, in fact, has his roots in Lotze, started from scratch. Barry Smith was anxious to demonstrate this in regard to Brentano and his pupils, and Michael Dummett in regard to Frege.

Dummett, more specifically, is convinced that Lotze failed "to make any distinction between what occurs in a stream of consciousness and what occurs in thinking" (Dummett 1991, p. 71). Lotze, allegedly, didn't realise that thoughts are nei-

¹¹ Incidentally, the same idea of presenting good as a natural object was also criticised by George Edward Moore in *Principia Ethica* as 'naturalistic fallacy' (see Moore 1903, pp. 13–14). This is to be explained with the fact that Moore began his career in philosophy as Kant's scholar. Indeed, his two Dissertations, of 1897 and 1898, had as a theme Kant's moral philosophy.

ther ideas nor combinations of ideas. In fact, though, nothing could be further from the truth. Lotze introduced the term 'state of affairs' in his second *Logic* (1874) precisely in order to denote the objective content of thought. According to him, a judgement expresses a relation (*Verhältnis*) between the content of two presentations; i.e. a(n inter)relation between two objective chunks of reality. To understand a sentence is to understand a 'material relation of presented contents' (*sachliche Verhältnis der vorgestellten Inhalte*). Apparently, the content of Lotze's judgement is at least as objective as Fregean thoughts are.

Perhaps Dummett was misled by addressing this point of Lotze's on the basis of Bernard Bosanquet's translation in the English edition of Lotze's *Logic* (1874) of *Nebengedanke* as 'auxiliary notion', which Dummett ameliorates to 'auxiliary thought'. In truth, *Nebengedanken* are not thoughts which are 'auxiliary', i.e. helping ideas. Rather, they are 'second wave' ideas which check whether the first ones conform to reality or not. They are background thoughts which convert ideas into knowledge.

Dummett insists that in the first of Frege's "Seventeen Key Sentences on Logic" – "The tyings up [of ideas] [*Verknüpfungen*] which make out the nature of thinking are in fact different from the associations of ideas" – he tries to rectify Lotze on this point (Dummett 1981, p. 523). In fact, here Frege merely echoes Lotze. Apparently, this interpretation of Dummett's is again due to incorrect translation: this time of *Verknüpfen* of ideas as 'combination of ideas'. This German term however means 'tying ideas up'.

All this can be supported by the fact that to Lotze, ideas which are only connected – not tied up – pertain to the 'psychological *Tatbestand*' and so are radically different from states of affairs. Indeed, for him there was nothing worse than using psychological concepts in logic. From the very beginning, Lotze exercised a "logical critique of the psychological" (Lotze 1843, p. 85). Later on he used to say: "Psychology cannot be a foundation of metaphysics; the latter can be only a foundation of the former." (Lotze 1879, § ix.)

Incidentally, what Barry Smith and Michael Dummett failed to see – that it was Lotze who introduced the objective content of judgement in logic – was a commonplace among German philosophers of the 1910s. For instance, Bruno Bauch – a professor in Jena at the beginning of the century, who taught Rudolf Carnap there and was a colleague of Frege's and one of his first admirers – was absolutely convinced that it was Lotze who introduced the concept of objective (*sachliche*) content to logic (see Bauch 1918, p. 48).¹² Another philosopher of this period well acquainted with Lotze was Georg Misch. He too held the belief that Brentano followed Lotze in accepting that judgement refers – through objects (*durch die Sachlichkeit*) – to reality (see Misch 1912, p. xvii).

5.2. *The Motives of Smith's Misunderstanding: His Theory of Truth-Makers.* Apparently, Smith's motive for assuming that the term state of affairs wasn't introduced by Lotze, nor even by Julius Bergmann, but by the phenomenologists – Stumpf,

¹² It is of interest to mention here that despite Bauch's sympathy with Frege, and in spite of his good knowledge of Frege's logic, he was convinced that "in the realm of logic since Hegel, nothing has surpassed in value Lotze's contributions" (see Bauch 1918, p. 45).

Husserl and his pupils – who some 100 years ago tried to substantiate a specific ontology of judgements as different from that of the facts, seems to be this. The phenomenologists embraced the understanding that to all different judgements upon one and the same fact different entities, or essences, correspond; precisely and exclusively these entities are to be called states of affairs (Df.8). Smith and friends accept further that states of affairs thus understood are nothing but the 'truth-makers' of the judgements.¹³ He reminds us that this conception was clearly formulated for the first time in works by Husserl's student, Adolf Reinach. Now, Smith is among those who revive and adopt Reinach's theory, and it would appear that this is his motive for knocking Lotze's theory of judgement.

In contrast to Reinach-Smith, according to Lotze's authentic conception of state of affairs there is no need to accept a special ontology of judgement as different in kind from the ontology of facts. It is true that the same factual material can be apprehended differently, so that different judgements can be made about one and the same fact. Thus the following three judgements:

- (1) 'this rose is red',
- (2) 'redness inheres in this rose',
- (3) 'this rose forms the substrate of this redness'

are based on one and the same fact.¹⁴ These judgements, however, haven't specific ontologies different from the ontology of the fact about which they are made. The reason for this is that in the judgements, on the one hand, and in factual material, on the other hand, *one and the same* set of individuals (objects) are concatenated with one another but in different arrangements (relations, *Verhältnisse*). What is most important is that the possibility that the individuals of the factual material have to make up different ensembles (complexes, states of affairs¹⁵) lies in the individuals themselves.¹⁶ This means that the different ontologies of the judgements are implicitly contained in the factual material on which the judgements are based. (In our case, the fact that this rose is red contains in itself the ontology of the judgement (1), (2), and (3). So, in a sense, the latter can be reduced to the ontology of the fact.) Indeed, this material – the fact – can be called a quasi-complex state of affairs, which is nothing but a conjunction of the all possible atomic states of affairs (the ontology of judgements) that can be built on its basis.

Now, since the elements of this quasi-complex state of affairs reciprocally relate to one another in the whole, the whole is different every time. This explains why the same factual material, which we have just presented as a quasi-complex state of affairs, appears in different judgements differently. Despite these changes, however, the underlying ontology is one. It consists of the elements of the quasi-complex

¹³ See Mulligan, Simons, Smith 1984.

¹⁴ This example is suggested in Smith 1987, p. 201, from which he, indeed, made the contrary conclusion.

¹⁵ Arguments for that the complexes and states of affairs are not different in type were advanced in Simons 1985.

¹⁶ See on this Milkov 2001. Cf. with Wittgenstein from the *Tractatus*: "Objects contain the possibility of all situations" that they make up (Wittgenstein 1922, 2.014).

state of affairs which already possess in themselves the possibility to reciprocally relate this or that way: i.e. to make up this or that Smithian state of affairs. This is the sense in which Lotze's words are to be understood, when he asserts that: "The existence of everything [individual] presupposes the existence of some other [thing] to which [it] must be related." (Lotze 1856, iii. p. 471; Lotze 1885, ii. p. 584)

6. Lotze Abandons the Term State of Affairs: Inscrutability of Logical Forms

One difficulty in investigating the real meaning of Lotze's concept of state of affairs is the fact that after its introduction in *Logic* (1874), he used it only once – in his *Metaphysics* (1879), § 107. In *Logic* (1874) itself he used the term only twice: in § 138 and in § 327. In another two places in the book, § 36 and § 345, 'sachliches Verhalten' (objective relations) is referred to as being the content of judgements. In *Metaphysics* (1879) Lotze spoke of 'sachliches Verhalten' of the content of judgement in §§ 75, 181, and of 'Verhältnisse der Dinge' (relations of things) in judgement in §§ 101, 131. Why should this be?

The answer to this question lies in Lotze's productive use of the method of eclecticism. His slogan was: "When we can not join one of the dominating parties, we want ... to stay in the middle via free eclecticism." (Lotze 1843, p. 1) Following this maxim, he adopted a policy according to which he would "use the [old] terminology of different systems, after we had given their foundations a common meaning" (*ibid.*, p. 25). New terms are hardly ever introduced in philosophy. The only excuse for doing so is when a totally new concept has been found. Now, for reasons set out above, Lotze was sure that he had found a concept which deserved to be assigned a new name – 'state of affairs' – only in *Logic* (1874) and in *Metaphysics* (1879).

Soon, however, he realised that the reciprocal relation (*Verhältnis*) between the contents of a judgement can be only defined negatively; we cannot articulate anything positive about what keeps the contents together. The problem is that the very composition of the whole has no multiplicity (see Lotze 1879, § 73). Consequently, this relation cannot be put into words; we can only grasp it via intuition. The mutual reciprocity of the elements in space, time and in the causal relation is also inscrutable.

This makes any attempt to express what is meant, for example, by 'copula', doomed to failure. "Since what in fact we want to say when we put together two contents of presentation [*Vorstellungsinhalte*], S and P, as subject and predicate ... cannot be expressed or constructed" intuitively (§ 75), we can never express the way in which the *Verhältnisse* adhere (*haften*)¹⁷ to individuals. In all events, copula must not be apprehended as the 'bald copula' of the logical schemata used widely in the textbooks on formal logic. In fact, the relation of copula is different every time.

Following all these considerations, after briefly mentioning it in 1874 and in 1879, Lotze stopped using the term state of affairs altogether. In *Grundzüge der Logik*

¹⁷ An expression often used by Frege.

(Lotze 1883, for example, on p. 115) he put the expression *Verhältnis* in quotation marks since it neither refers to things, nor to properties, nor to events.

Today it is well-known that the problem of logical inscrutability has a central place in Wittgenstein's logic. The latter assumed that "a proposition shows its sense" (Wittgenstein 1922, 4.022); it cannot be expressed. It is also well-known that on this point Wittgenstein followed Frege. In the literature there were justified comments that "the Frege-Wittgenstein notion of what comes on out but cannot be asserted is almost irresistible, in spite of its paradoxical nature, when we reflect upon logic" (Geach 1976, p. 56). What went unnoticed, however, was that it was Lotze who first realised this principle. The task remains to find out to what extent Frege followed Lotze on this point.

7. Considerations on How to Translate *Sachverhalte* into English

Philosophers feel characteristically uncertain about how to translate the German term *Sachverhalt* into English. Thus in *The Principles of Mathematics* (§ 429) Russell translates Lotze's *Sachverhalte* as 'states of things'. In Ogden's translation of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* (1922) – approved by the author himself – *Sachverhalte* are rendered as 'atomic facts' and *Sachlage* as 'states of affairs'. In the translation of the *Tractatus* by McGuinness-Pears (1961) *Sachverhalte* are rendered as 'states of affairs' and *Sachlagen* as 'situations'. At the only place where Wittgenstein suggested a definition of states of affairs (2.01), they add a second translation: 'states of things'. Conversely, in 1979 Elisabeth Anscombe translates *Sachverhalte* from *Notebooks* 1914–16 as 'situations' and *Sachlage* as 'states of affairs' (see Wittgenstein 1979).

Perhaps we can better understand how to translate Wittgenstein's, and also Husserl's *Sachverhalte* into English if we review the context in which the term was introduced by Lotze. Lotze understood 'things' (*Sachen*) as something alive, something that has 'sensitivity', that can be influenced, etc. This explains why George Santayana translated Lotze's *Verhältnisse* – an element of the states of affairs – as 'behaviour' (Santayana 1971, p. 182). These *Verhältnisse* – the way in which the things 'hang together' with other things – are the result of the "immediate inner interaction that things ceaselessly exchange" (Lotze 1879, § 82). Indeed, as already seen in 3.1 above, things mutually exercise a transient, minimal effect on one another; they stay in a relation of *reciproca tantum* all the time. The concept state of affairs denotes precisely that 'relation and behaviour' (*Verhalten und Benehmen*) (Lotze 1856 iii. p. 465; Lotze 1885 ii. p. 578) which things exhibit in certain situations in the whole which they make up.

Apparently, the literal translation of Lotze's state of affairs is a *minimal intercourse-of-things* (or contents), or a *minimal reciprocal relation of things*. Above all, it shows that this concept is a product of an elementary judgement in which two or more simple contents are tied up together. And, as we have already seen in 2 and 3.1, Lotze considered states of affairs the minimal composite unity of the world. Unfortunately,

the phrase 'a minimal reciprocal relation of things' is so baroque that is wholly impractical – it can scarcely be used in a technical discourse.

Be this as it may, it is certain that *Sachverhalt* does not mean *status rerum*, as some authors have suggested (see Smith 1992, columns 1102–4). Indeed, the term *status rerum* is translated in German as *Tatbestand* and, as already mentioned (in § 5.1), the latter concept has no place in Lotze's logic – it is instead a concept from his psychology. That *Sachverhalt* does not mean *status rerum* is also clear from Lotze's insistence that things have content, state (*Zustand*), quality and nature (Lotze 1856, iii. p. 479; Lotze 1885, ii. p. 592). Thus *status* (state, *Zustand*) is not something pertaining to the whole (the substance, the state of affairs), but to the individual. This is plain when considering such individuals as institutions, persons, etc., which characteristically have a *status*. In contrast, the substance has form, *Verhältnis* and order (Lotze 1856, iii. p. 493; Lotze 1885, ii. p. 606).¹⁸

Another factor that indicates that Lotze's *Sachverhalte* are neither *status rerum* nor situations is that he differentiates between *Relationen*, *Beziehungen* and *Verhältnisse*. Now, whereas *Relationen* are formally logical, *Beziehungen* are also ontological and epistemological, and *Verhältnisse* are a panpsychical notion.

All the above supports, first, the belief that Charles K. Ogden's translation of the Tractarian *Sachverhalte* as *atomic facts* is more appropriate than the Pears-McGuinness translation as *states of affairs* (see Nelson 1999). Above all, the atomic fact is precisely that minimal material element that serves as the content of the elementary judgement. Secondly, we already have seen (in 5.2) that there is no intrinsic difference between facts (factual material) and content of judgement. So there is no reason to introduce a new term to denote that the latter is different from facts. And third, the term 'states of affairs' scarcely communicates the sense of mutual interrelatedness of the objects of judgement's content that the German term *Sachverhalt* does, and thus does not constitute any gain from the stylistic point of view over the term 'atomic fact' either.

¹⁸ Incidentally, Wittgenstein himself considered the introduction of *status rerum* in the translation of the *Tractatus* in English. He, however, pondered on to translate thus *Sachlage*, not state of affairs – despite the fact that he was unsure about the correctness of this translation (see Wittgenstein 1973, p. 21).

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