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Wittgenstein and Folk Psychology

Yi Jiang

Various writings by the later Wittgenstein on the philosophy of psychology, published posthumously, express his basic critical attitude toward certain concepts and issues in the philosophy of psychology. His attitude towards folk psychology is negative in principle, leaving him opposed to the foundation of current psychological research. This critique of folk psychology and of the philosophy of psychology in general is in accord with the general method of his later philosophy, that is, dealing with philosophical problems by dissolving them. However, his critical attitude towards folk psychology has been less influential in the development of contemporary philosophy, and is in opposition to the philosophy of psychology and folk psychology as practiced today. In this paper I will analyze Wittgenstein's understanding of the concept of psychology, offering a different interpretation from that of other scholars, and explain why and how contemporary philosophers of psychology misunderstand Wittgenstein.

Special Issue: Concepts of the Psyche: Wittgenstein on Mental Phenomena

Edited by Stefan Majetschak and Yi Jiang

Wittgenstein and Folk Psychology

Yi Jiang

Wittgenstein left behind various notebooks on the philosophy of psychology at the time of his death, which his students compiled into volumes entitled *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* and *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*. In these notebooks, Wittgenstein expresses his basic ideas concerning certain fundamental concepts and issues in the philosophy of psychology, very severely criticizing ordinary psychological terms. However, in present research on the philosophy of psychology and mind, Wittgenstein receives few mentions, and his ideas make no real contribution at all. Peter Hacker has claimed that philosophy after Wittgenstein has betrayed his way of thinking (Hacker 1996, 2–3). John Benjafield also observed that Wittgenstein’s criticism of psychological terms has been overlooked in recent developments of psychology (Benjafield 2008, 111). This could explain, in part I think, why Wittgenstein’s ideas have few resonances in contemporary philosophy. But it does not explain why Wittgenstein criticized psychological terms, the Gestalt psychology for instance, in his comparison of psychology with physics on their first stages of developments. In this paper, I will argue that Wittgenstein was not concerned with any specific approach in psychology, but with the general conception of psychology, and especially that which relates to psychological understanding. First, I will clarify Wittgenstein’s ideas by examining his attitude towards folk psychology and his criticism of ordinary psychological terms. Then I will argue that Wittgenstein rejects folk psychology as a confusion of two language games. Finally, I will analyze the reason why and how Wittgenstein’s ideas about psychology remain under-appreciated in both contemporary psychology and philosophy.

1. The Concept of Psychology in Wittgenstein

Joachim Schulte pointed out in *Experience and Expression* that Wittgenstein tried to figure out the map of psychological terms but failed because his understanding of these terms, and of psychological phenomena, are sharply distinct from ours (Schulte 1995, 24–28). In fact, Wittgenstein explains his research plan in *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, where he tries to sort out psychological terms and phenomena in his own distinct way, especially for such terms as “sensation”, “imagination”, and “emotion” (Wittgenstein [1947]/1980a, §63; §148; hereinafter cited as RPP I). However, it seems that his understandings of these terms are not so much distinct from ours as understood in his own particular way, for his own particular purpose. Some scholars have suggested that the reason there is no unified criterion for sorting psychological concepts in Wittgenstein’s ideas, is that his focus is on the specific analysis of every concept with an eye toward clarifying similarities and differences among them, rather than on identifying their types (Hacker 1996, 192; Tu 2005, 125; Racine and Müller 2009, 113). But, according to Wittgenstein’s writings, he did not identify the types or carefully analyze them. In contrast, he attempted to show our misunderstanding of psychology, and the misguidedness of our ordinary language in psychology and philosophy. Others have argued that the difference between Wittgenstein’s understanding of psychological terms and ours, is that he coined a new, non-scientific way to describe language usage (Bennett and Hacker 2003, 74–81; Wang and Guo 2004, 3–4). But, in fact, there is no such way defined by Wittgenstein. If there were, he would signal it as the mark of his philosophy of psychology. Wittgenstein attempted to describe the everyday usage of psychological terms in our ordinary life in order to show that the psychological and philosophical usages of these terms misguide us in all sorts of ways.

These are, to my knowledge, the main misunderstandings of Wittgenstein’s philosophy of psychology that have arisen to date.

How then can we look at his philosophy of psychology in practice? Or, what real situations arising in his philosophy can be explained as we go? Before solving this problem, we need to ask whether there is indeed such a philosophy of psychology in Wittgenstein's notebooks. In other words, do the problems Wittgenstein discusses in his notebooks belong to the realm of philosophy of psychology? The further question is how Wittgenstein deals with psychology, namely what is his basic attitude toward psychology in his later thought. These are the first steps for us to clarify Wittgenstein's ideas regarding psychological terms and phenomena.

To begin, let us look at what the philosophy of psychology consists of. In Wittgenstein's later notebooks he did not use this term, but he did discuss psychological terms and phenomena. In his early *Logical Notebooks* and the *Tractatus* he said that epistemology is a kind of philosophy of psychology, but his claims evidently denied the significance of the philosophy of psychology, which accords with his negative attitude towards epistemology. For him, psychology has no closer relation to philosophy than it has to other natural sciences. If epistemology is just a part of the philosophy of psychology, it is not part of the foundation of philosophy at all. It is well-known, however, that Wittgenstein did not discuss the concept of the philosophy of psychology in his later philosophy, instead discussing psychology itself and psychological terms and phenomena.

His later writings on psychology have been termed philosophy of psychology, but the editors of those writings compiled them for the purpose of presenting Wittgenstein's discussions of psychology, rather than as a Wittgensteinian philosophy of psychology or as his contribution to philosophy (Editors Preface, [Wittgenstein \[1949–51\]/1992](#), iv; hereinafter cited as [LW II](#)). According to his understanding of the concept of philosophy in this later phase, this type of philosophy of psychology should be a form of therapy for psychology, or a description of the uses of psychological terms and phenomena, and not a philosophical

study on psychological research ([Margolis 1984](#), 1), or an analysis of psychological concepts through the observation of their similarities and differences ([Tu 2005](#), 118). It is evident that, in his later notebooks, the term "philosophy of psychology" refers to his philosophical criticism of psychology, and his critical examination of then-current psychological theories and methods, such as Gestalt psychology and experimental psychology ([Wittgenstein \[1948\]/1980b](#), §350–51; hereinafter cited as [RPP II](#)).

According to his notebooks, Wittgenstein's criticisms include the following: first, he criticizes then-current psychological theories and methods by complaining that they are not presentations (or manifestations in Wittgenstein's word) of our mental states. But rather, these theories misguide us and inhibit our understanding of those mental states. To describe mental states, Wittgenstein explains depression, excitement and pain as psychological states. He does not attribute these states to be invisible or ineffable, but to be expressible in language. As he says in *Remarks*, understanding a word is not a mental state in one's head but a sentence that one expresses in one's language ([RPP II](#), §149–50). Based on this conception of mental states, he describes presentations or manifestations of mental states as a grammar of language which expresses ordinary uses of language explicitly and correctly. For instance, if we use the word "know" in a sentence like "I know you were absent last time", the sentence does not express one of my mental states when I use the word "know"; but expresses my knowledge of what happened to you last time. It means that there was no mental state that I had when I said the sentence "I know you were absent last time", but only the sentence in which I used the word "know".

The confusion common to philosophers and psychologists when they are talking about mental states is that they use the words "conscious" and "unconscious" as states of consciousness and dispositions. For Wittgenstein, however, the confusion is on the grammatical level in the sense that they confuse uses of the words "conscious" and "unconscious". But in a deeper

interpretation, Wittgenstein criticizes the phenomena that psychologists use observable dispositions to explain mental states. For instance, in his criticism psychology attempts to relate our conceptual contents or mental states to facts in the outside world, and to explain the significance of mental states by this relation. This attempt, however, is just a misguided use of the scientific method in explaining those mental states.

For Wittgenstein, we can use the scientific method via observations and experiments to explain the course and the causes of changes in things by analyzing what we observe of phenomena and the results of experiments. But we cannot use this method to explain mental phenomena in our ordinary life. As Wittgenstein shows us in his *Philosophical Investigations*, when we explain our conscious activities by our interpretation of facts, we become involved in an odd trap wherein it seems that we are attempting to explain invisible conscious activities inside of us by visible behaviors outside of us. However, we in fact cannot trust or understand these results, for we cannot know whether our attempts are accurate or not. And yet, this is the usual method of psychology. In our ordinary lives, we cannot understand our mental activities in this way. For example, when I say that I have an idea and I then speak it aloud, this does not mean that I have the idea when I say that I have it. I have it only when I speak it aloud in detail. Similarly, when I say that I believe that an individual is not a robot, this is not an expression of any valuable information. It does not mean the same as the expression that he is not a robot. It is just an expression, and not an interpretation.¹ In the *Philosophical Remarks*, Wittgenstein says with much certainty that we can become sure of certain psychological phenomenon via experiment, but we cannot account for the phenomenon in an articulated way (Wittgenstein [1930]/1991, §24). The reason why

¹Compare §§13 to 23 from the formerly so-called part II of the *Investigations* which is nowadays published as *Philosophie der Psychologie—Ein Fragment / Philosophy of Psychology—A Fragment* in Wittgenstein ([1953]/2009). Hereinafter cited as PI.

we cannot account for the phenomenon in this way is not because we are unable to articulate it, but rather the fact that the result of doing so will mislead our understanding of psychological phenomena. For Wittgenstein, however, psychology is just such an account of the phenomena. In *Philosophical Grammar*, he points out that the mistake in psychology is that psychologists discuss “unconscious thinking” according to a mind-model by which thinking is like “an electrical process in physics” (Wittgenstein [1933]/1974, §65). It is this mind-model, which Wittgenstein rejects, that makes the development of psychology different from our understanding.

Second, Wittgenstein does not only criticize contemporary psychology, but also shows with certainty that his descriptions of psychological terms and phenomena are just usages of these terms rather than commitments to certain inexplicable psychological phenomena. In the second part of *Philosophical Investigations*, he points out clearly that the ordinary attitude toward the usage of psychological terms does not mean commitment to the existence of the phenomena to which these terms refer, but rather just an attitude toward the phenomena. For instance, religious beliefs always claim that the spirit will be immortal after the body disappears, but our attitude to this claim, whether we accept or reject it, does not mean that we believe in the truth of the claim. We can understand the claim simply because we can express it in different ways, in language or in image. In this sense, Wittgenstein said that the “human body is the best picture of the human mind” (PI §25).

But another problem arises from this: can we ask if the object of psychology is behaviour rather than mind? Or, what if the psychologists’ research is reporting human behaviors viewed from the outside? This sounds reasonable, but for Wittgenstein, it is the very reason why we accept psychological research as reasonable. Using many examples, he shows us that we accept this because we (apparently) think that what the psychologists

report is our behaviors or our expressions of them, but this is not true. For instance, when I say that he is depressed today, am I reporting his behaviors or his mental state? We might say both, but not at the same time. We might say that we are reporting his mental state by reporting his behaviors, but not say that we are reporting his behaviors while reporting his mental state. The mistake here is that we wish to interpret the psychological phenomena we are facing using a single model, as we do when we discuss the relation of physical objects and sensational impressions.

For Wittgenstein, we are playing different language-games here (PI §34). It is obvious that Wittgenstein criticizes the investigation of psychology just for its model of comparison of mental states with some observable external behaviors. It is clear that this is the model and paradigm which psychological theories accept and use to probe into the relationship between the inward and the outward aspects of the mind. Psychologists and physicians also welcome this model in order to learn how one's mental states function in one's head. But Wittgenstein rejects the model as a confusion of language games, games which express different conceptions of grammar or the word "mental state".

Moreover, Wittgenstein clearly rejects psychology as a descriptive science of behaviors, and the psychological method as a way to interpret our ordinary usage of psychological terms and mental phenomena. In *Zettel*, he says,

The psychological verbs to see, to believe, to think, to wish, do not signify [appearances of] phenomena. But psychology observes the phenomena of seeing, believing, thinking, wishing (Wittgenstein [1929–48]/1967, §471).

He also explains the role of psychological verbs by the distinction of the first person and the third person:

Psychological verbs characterized by the fact that the third person of the present is to be verified by observation, the first person not. Sentences in the third person present: information. In the first

person present: expression. ((Not quite right.)) The first person of the present akin to an expression (RPP I, §472).

He further abolishes the notion of psychology as epistemology:

The connexion of our main problem with the epistemological problem of willing has occurred to me before. When such an obstinate problem makes its appearance in psychology, it is never a question about facts of experience (such a problem is always much more tractable), but a logical, and hence properly a grammatical question (RPP II, §590).

In *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, Wittgenstein rejects psychology as a descriptive science:

So if I want to say that our 'utterances', with which psychology has to do, absolutely are not all descriptions of experience-contents, I must say that what are called descriptions of experience-contents are only a small group of these 'indisputable' utterances. But what grammatical features mark off this group? (RPP II, §693)

He says too,

I would like to say: Psychology deals with certain aspects of human life. Or: with certain phenomena.—But the words "thinking", "fearing", etc., etc. do not refer to these phenomena (RPP II, §35).

It is evident that Wittgenstein rejects psychology in a novel way, but his rejection is not based on psychological experiments but rather on its research methods. Methods which attempt to explain our usage of psychological terms in a scientific way.

2. Wittgenstein's Critique of Folk Psychology

In a general sense, folk psychology is the theory in which the psychological terms of ordinary life are theorized and conceptualized. In contemporary philosophy of psychology, the most authoritative definition of this term is from Stephen Stich, who published his influential book *From Folk Psychology to Cognitive*

Science (1983). The average person has a rich belief system about the thoughts and motives of people. From antiquity to the beginning of this century “folk psychology”, as Stich points out, was employed in systematic psychology as there were: “Those who theorized about the mind shared the bulk of their terminology and their conceptual apparatus with poets, critics, historians, economists, and indeed with their own grandmothers” (Stich 1983, 1). In his book, Stich puts forth the radical thesis that the notions of believing, desiring, thinking, preferring, feeling, imagining, fearing, remembering, and many other common-sense concepts that comprise the folk psychological foundations of cognitive psychology, should not—and do not—play a significant role in the scientific study of the mind. And further, he highlights accusations claiming that mentalistic vocabularies are pre-scientific.

But this situation has changed in contemporary philosophy of psychology. More philosophers are attempting to interpret fundamental philosophical problems in folk psychology by borrowing research from neuroscience and cognitive science, including metaphysics, the mind-body problem, and the expression of consciousness. Some say that one of the important targets of contemporary philosophy of psychology is how different concepts of mind actualize in scientific research on the mind. In other words, folk psychology can interpret our mental states and behaviours, which is different from scientific research in experimental psychology, cognitive science, and cognitive neuroscience (Bermúdez 2005, 1).

From the perspective of contemporary philosophy of psychology, we cannot simply view folk psychology as a pre-scientific phase, even though it is the first period in the development of scientific psychology. Contemporary philosophy of psychology attempts to reconstruct folk psychology via psychological interpretations and explorations of related issues. These interpretations are based on higher individual-level interpretations, which are different from the lower-level interpretations constructed in

cognitive science and neuroscience. But in the current situation, scholars making these interpretations are separate from each other and express themselves without any communication or dialogue between them. Thus, the fundamental and crucial problem in the philosophy of psychology is the question of how to integrate various interpretations in psychology to form a unified framework for interpretations of the mind. This problem also joins folk psychology with cognitive science and neuroscience at the lower level, which is called the interface problem (Thornton 2009, 33–38). In this sense, contemporary philosophy of psychology has not rejected folk psychology completely, but has accepted it in a limited way.

Wittgenstein’s attitude towards folk psychology, however, is totally negative. For him, we do not presuppose some universal principle when we use common psychological terms, by which we can interpret the usage of these terms. We also are not constructing some popular theory when we use these terms in order to provide reasons for their use. But these opposite inclinations are reasons for the formation of folk psychology. According to these reasons, our psychological vocabularies reflect our basic attitude towards mental phenomena, and our ordinary use of psychological terms presupposes the existence of those mental phenomena. In other words, folk psychology takes our common use of psychological terms as the key reason for an ontological interpretation: when we use our psychological terms such as “believe”, “wish”, “feel”, and so on, we are making a commitment to a link of causal interpretations. But for Wittgenstein, there is no such link, and he gives at least three reasons for why this is so.

First, the psychological terms we use do not refer to any particular mental phenomena. When we use “believe” or “wish”, we are not describing certain processes that happened in our mind, but expressing those of our behaviors which are performed by these terms. For instance, when I say that I believe he will come tomorrow, I am not saying that there is such a state of believing

in my mind, but am reporting to others what I believe, or expressing my belief. In this way we cannot insist that the use of psychological vocabulary must refer to some mental state. According to Wittgenstein, we are playing a particular language game when we use parts of our psychological vocabulary as other terms. There is no particular mental state serving as the object to which these words in our vocabulary refer.

Second, we do not use these vocabularies to search for a ground of interpretations for some psychological phenomenon. Accordingly, the purpose of psychological interpretation is to provide an acceptable model of interpretations for our psychological phenomena. The common model is a scientific one which considers the causal link as the ground of interpretations. Namely, that psychological phenomena are taken as the result of certain behaviors so as to interpret the causes of the phenomena. But this model is evidently not suitable for interpretations of psychological phenomena. According to Wittgenstein, it is a misleading stereotype to interpret psychological phenomena as physical-like behavior. He says,

Seeing, hearing, thinking, feeling, willing, are not the subject matter of psychology in the same sense as that in which the movements of bodies, the phenomena of electricity, and so forth are the subject matter of physics. You can see this from the fact that the physicist sees, hears, thinks about and informs us of these phenomena, and the psychologist observes the utterances (the behavior) of the subject. (Wittgenstein [1953]/2009, §571; hereinafter cited as PI).

Due to many criticisms of behaviorism, which is based on the observation of the agent's outer behaviors to interpret inner mental activity, some critics have argued that Wittgenstein's understanding of psychology can be accused of being a kind of behaviorism (Cook 1994, 131; Overgard 2013, 18–20; Luckhardt 1983, 319–20; Bloor 1999, 329–60). However, according to his writings, he does not simply interpret observed outer behaviors to be expressions of inner mental activities. In contrast, he argues that psychology deals with some aspects or phenomena of human

life, but that the psychological vocabularies we use do not refer to those phenomena. He says,

So if I want to say that our 'utterances', with which psychology has to do, absolutely are not all descriptions of experience-contents, I must say that what are called descriptions of experience-contents are only a small group of these 'indisputable' utterances (RPP II, §693).

This shows that our uses of psychological vocabularies do not presuppose any inner mental activity, nor any causal interpretation of that mental activity. They are part of our language games. Every language game has its own purpose, and there is no purpose common to all language games or all psychological vocabularies. Thus, it is unnecessary to reduce the language games to inner mental activity.

Last, our use of psychological vocabulary does not merely refer to the descriptions of normal mental activities. According to the normal understanding, as Miller describes in his recent book, descriptions in psychology are not explanations of normal but of abnormal psychological phenomena (Miller 2015, i–iii). In this sense, the object of psychology, at least in part with respect to abnormal psychology, should be abnormal mental states. In Wittgenstein's example,

The description of the phenomena of color-blindness is part of psychology: and therefore, the description of the phenomena of normal vision, too? Psychology only describes the deviations of color-blindness from normal vision (LW II, §16).

Folk psychology, however, attempts to interpret our common psychological phenomena by using ordinary psychological vocabulary. What Wittgenstein intends to show, is that our use of psychological vocabulary is not different from our use of other vocabularies. And these vocabularies are part of our language games and do not have any priority in our expression of mental activities. Moreover, any attempt to interpret our common psychological vocabularies to be outer expressions of particular

mental activities is a wrong interpretation of these vocabularies. In this sense, the philosophy of psychology is the result of wrongly interpreting our ordinary use of psychological vocabulary, which deliberately interprets our use of this vocabulary to be the result of some theory, principle, or contingent cause.

Up to now we have seen that Wittgenstein's criticism of folk psychology is based on his criticism of psychology, which is why he termed his criticism philosophy of psychology. In a sense, the concept of philosophy of psychology is a negative term insofar as it is an investigation into mental illnesses conducted in a psychological way. Or, psychology is just a consequence of mental illness. This accords with the understanding of the nature of philosophy in Wittgenstein's later thinking. He says, "Philosophy is a struggle against the bewitchment of our understanding by the resources of our language" (PI §109). Furthermore,

The problems arising through a misinterpretation of our forms of language have the character of depth. They are deep disquietudes; they are as deeply rooted in us as the forms of our language, and their significance is as great as the importance of our language.—Let's ask ourselves: why do we feel a grammatical joke to be deep? (And that is what the depth of philosophy is) (PI §111).

And,

The results of philosophy are the discovery of some piece of plain nonsense and the bumps that the understanding has got by running up against the limits of language. They—these bumps—make us see the value of that discovery (PI §119).

On the other hand, philosophy does not interface with the actual use of language. Philosophy leaves things as they are. He says,

Philosophy just puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything.—Since everything lies open to view, there is nothing to explain. For whatever may be hidden is of no interest to us. The name 'philosophy' might also be given to what is possible before all new discoveries and inventions. The work of the philosopher consists in marshalling recollections for a particular purpose.

If someone were to advance theses in philosophy, it would never be possible to debate them, because everyone would agree to them (PI §126–28).

From these quotations, we can see that, for Wittgenstein, psychology as well as folk psychology is the same as philosophy, and all are subject matters deserving criticism; the philosophy of psychology is the result of this criticism.

3. Analysis of the Reason for the Under-appreciation of Wittgenstein in Contemporary Philosophy of Psychology

As we have seen, Wittgenstein severely criticizes psychology as well as folk psychology, and he also provides many insights on the philosophy of psychology. It is odd, however, that there are few hints of Wittgenstein in contemporary philosophy of psychology. Even in the popular *Handbook of Psychology and Cognitive Science*, Wittgenstein is not mentioned by name (Thagard 2007, 226–32). The journal *New Ideas in Psychology* published a special issue in 2009 on Wittgenstein's influence on contemporary psychology. Although there are many controversial debates on this influence, two points of view are worthy of attention. One is the view that psychology implies research on the ordinary uses of psychological vocabularies. This means that research in psychology relies on operational definitions, which is just what Wittgenstein reveals in his writings and is helpful for us to interpret our ordinary vocabularies. The other is the view that Wittgenstein is right to reject the claim that there is a single activity underlying the ordinary uses of psychological vocabulary, for they have different uses for themselves (Racine and Müller 2009, 107–17).

Unfortunately, these two points of view have no actual influence whatsoever on contemporary philosophy of psychology. Benjafield analyzes the reason for the under-appreciation

of Wittgenstein in psychology today, and does so by observing some examples, such as a recent study of the development of children's understanding of revisable figures using a version of the duck-rabbit as a stimulus (Benjafield 2008, 111). Further, according to Benjafield and Neisser, the emergence of cognitive psychology is viewed as a result of folk psychology (Benjafield 2008, 112; Neisser 1967, 50–51). But, in my view, we could also explain the reason why Wittgenstein is under-appreciated in contemporary psychology by simply understanding folk psychology and understanding the philosophy of psychology.

First, Wittgenstein clearly rejects two dispositions in psychology. One disposition overlays the experiments and technology by which psychological vocabularies and their significance are interpreted especially in cognitive psychology. This disposition, however, has been marginalized in contemporary psychology. In fact, the conceptual analysis Wittgenstein proposes has been abolished due to its methodological ineffectiveness, and replaced in psychology with the operational definition. The other disposition Wittgenstein rejects is the confusion in how concepts are applied, that being, how the concept of psychology in the ordinary sense is confused with its scientific sense, and some theory or principle is used to interpret the uses of psychological vocabulary. This disposition has been evident in contemporary philosophy of psychology, and perhaps has even gotten worse. For instance, many concepts philosophers use in the philosophy of psychology have overlaps in their uses, such as “believe”, “wish”, “feel”, and “know”. This means that contemporary philosophers do not care about what Wittgenstein warns against regarding the concepts' uses.

Second, Wittgenstein does not mention the term folk psychology or commonsense psychology in his writings, but he aims his criticism of psychology at the folk psychology which attempts to interpret ordinary uses of psychological vocabularies as though they are controlled by some inner principle or as simulating mental activities. Two approaches in contemporary folk psychology

illustrate this attempt, namely “theory” theory and simulation theory. The former highlights folk psychology as a theory which presupposes that commonsense sensations like pain, happiness, excitement, and anxiety in our ordinary life can be interpreted as principles for the explanation of mental states. When our commonsense view of mental states is interpreted as a commonsense theory of mind, it becomes the “theory” theory. This theory of mind based on our commonsense can be explained as having two forms: externalism and internalism (Stich and Ravenscroft 1994, 447–68). It is clear that this “theory” theory is precisely the scientific or experimental approach that Wittgenstein rejects.

The simulation theory seems much like a theory of mind-reading, claiming that when we need to anticipate some mental state, we try to simulate or re-experience the state in order to understand what we believed, felt, or anything else (Goldman and Mason 2007, 267). It is, however, precisely what Wittgenstein tries to reveal in the crucial problem of the philosophy of psychology. For Wittgenstein, psychology attempts to relate what we experience with physical things, but in fact, we are just relating what we experience with experiences themselves. It is impossible for us to understand what we experience with physical things, so the only thing we can do is to understand what we experience with our experiences, meaning that we leave everything there as it is without any interpretation (PI §126–28). In contrast, the simulation theory or the theory of mind-reading attempts to understand other minds with some interpretation, to understand others in their own ways. It is evident that this is not something psychology, in any event, can do, and it is not what Wittgenstein tries to do.

In conclusion, what contemporary philosophy of psychology and folk psychology concern themselves with, is that which Wittgenstein rejects in his writings. Contemporary philosophers abstractly affirm, but concretely deny, Wittgenstein's influence on contemporary philosophy, which ultimately contradicts Wittgenstein's thinking. This is why Wittgenstein has little influ-

ence on contemporary philosophy and why, indeed, it is hard to find mention of him in contemporary philosophy of psychology, cognitive science, and philosophy of mind.

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