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Fregean Themes in the *Tractatus*: Context, Compositionality, and Nonsense

Eduardo Pérez-Navarro

RESUMEN

El propósito de este artículo es argumentar a favor de la afirmación de los nuevos wittgensteinianos de que Frege y Wittgenstein comparten una actitud *contextualista* con respecto a la individuación del contenido y, como resultado, una *concepción austera del sinsentido*. Para ello, ofrezco interpretaciones alternativas de los pasajes del *Tractatus* en los que Wittgenstein parece comprometerse con la actitud opuesta al contextualismo: el *composicionalismo*.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Wittgenstein, Frege, contexto, composicionalidad, sinsentido*.

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to argue for the new Wittgensteinians' claim that Frege and Wittgenstein share a *contextualist* attitude with respect to the individuation of content and, as a result, an *austere conception of nonsense*. To do this, I offer alternative interpretations of the passages of the *Tractatus* in which Wittgenstein seems committed to the attitude opposed to contextualism — *compositionalism*.

KEYWORDS: *Wittgenstein, Frege, Context, Compositionality, Nonsense*.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the preface to the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein acknowledges the debt that his thinking owes to “the great works of Frege and the writings of my friend Bertrand Russell”. While Russell’s influence on Wittgenstein has been considerably documented, though, in Frege’s case it is rather more difficult to specify the weight that his thinking had in the writing of the *Tractatus* [Goldfarb (2002), p. 185; Reck (2002), p. 3], even if one can find in it numerous explicit references to the German philosopher [see Macbeth (2002), p. 201]. There have been, however, authors who have tried to reconstruct the connection between Frege and the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* [for instance, Ricketts (1985), (2002); Reck (1997); Conant

(2000), (2002); Diamond (2010)]. These authors, most of whom fall under the label “new Wittgensteinians” [see Cray and Read (2000); Read and Lavery (2011)], think that a theoretical affinity can be established with respect to certain substantive issues between Frege’s work and the *Tractatus*. The aim of this paper is to argue for this position. Since I am going to focus, as I have just said, on the *thematic* connection between Frege’s and Wittgenstein’s positions, I will leave aside the historical influence that the former may in fact have had on the latter, something that has also been dealt with in the literature [Goldfarb (2002), p. 187]. All that will concern us is whether Frege and Wittgenstein share the same attitude with respect to the *individuation of content*.

I will distinguish two attitudes in this respect, which I will understand as associated either with the *principle of context* or with the *principle of compositionality*. The principle of context, on the one hand, holds that words only have meaning in the context of a sentence. The attitude associated with this principle is *contextualism*, according to which the meaning of the sentence takes precedence over the meanings of its component words. According to the principle of compositionality, on the other hand, the meaning of a complex expression is a function of the meanings of the expressions that compose it and their mode of combination. The attitude associated with this principle is *compositionism*, according to which the meanings of words have priority over that of the sentence in which they appear. From adopting the attitude associated with one or the other principle, furthermore, different conceptions of nonsense are derived. Compositionism allows us to distinguish between *substantial nonsense*, such as “Socrates is identical”, and *mere nonsense*, such as “Socrates is asdf”; thus, a *substantial conception of nonsense* can be said to follow from it. Contextualism, by contrast, has an *austere conception of nonsense* that precludes it from distinguishing substantial nonsense from mere nonsense [Conant (2000), pp. 176–177].

The authorship of the principle of context and the principle of compositionality has traditionally been attributed to Frege [Janssen (2001), p. 115], and Wittgenstein too seems to commit to both of them in certain passages of the *Tractatus*. However, the attitudes with respect to the individuation of content that we have related to these two principles seem incompatible with each other, and it has been discussed to what extent someone could hold both at the same time [see, for instance, Bronzo (2011), p. 85]. The new Wittgensteinians, in particular, claim that both Frege and Wittgenstein are committed only to contextualism and reject compositionism. As a result, these authors will attribute to the two

philosophers an austere conception of nonsense. I will argue that Wittgenstein can be read in this way, and that the propositions of the *Tractatus* in which he seems to commit to compositionality can be given alternative interpretations.¹

The structure of this paper is as follows. After fleshing out the principles, attitudes, and conceptions of nonsense that will play a role in the paper (section II), I survey the passages in which Wittgenstein seems to defend either contextualism or compositionality (section III) and offer a reading that makes him committed only to the former (section IV). Finally, I rely on the new Wittgensteinians to discuss the relation between Wittgenstein's contextualism and Frege's and briefly comment on some responses to them (section V).

II. CONTEXTUALISM, COMPOSITIONALISM, AND NONSENSE

Part of my aim is to establish the side of the debate between contextualists and compositionists where Wittgenstein stands. Before discussing Wittgenstein's commitment to contextualism or compositionality, though, I will characterize these attitudes succinctly, along with the principles with which they are associated. I will also show that different conceptions of nonsense follow from these attitudes.

I will use the following as a standard formulation of the principle of context:

Principle of context: Words only have meaning in the context of a sentence.

We can interpret the principle of context in at least two different senses. In the first sense, the principle simply means that words in isolation are meaningless. In the second sense, what the principle says is that only complete sentences can be assigned meaning; thus, words are meaningless *even if they are embedded in a sentence*. But the latter is not a literal reading of the principle. If we are required to read it literally, we can say that words have meaning whenever we find them in the context of a sentence. This meaning will be the contribution that the words make to the meaning of the sentence in question [Janssen (2001), p. 116].

Associated with the principle of context is a particular attitude regarding our way of individuating content — contextualism [Bronzo (2011), p. 87]:

Contextualism: The meaning of a sentence is prior to that of its parts: first we understand the sentence as a whole, and then we segment it to obtain the meanings of its various components, i.e., of the words that make it up.

When, in presenting this position on our way of individuating content, we use the word “prior”, we are not referring to a temporal priority, testable in empirical terms, but to a conceptual priority — we cannot understand a word if we do not understand the sentence in which it appears [Bronzo (2011), pp. 90–91]. For instance, a contextualist would say that one cannot understand what the word “sitting” means in the sentence “Socrates is sitting” if one does not understand what the sentence as a whole means.

Once we have introduced the principle of context, let us turn to the principle of compositionality. I will use the following as a standard formulation of it:

Principle of compositionality: The meaning of a sentence is a function of the meanings of its constituent words and their mode of combination.

It follows from the principle of compositionality, in its standard interpretation, that words have meaning by themselves [Janssen (2001), p. 116]. That is to say, under this principle it is possible to assign meanings to isolated words, as opposed to what the principle of context tells us.

What do we do with those meanings that we assign to isolated words? One answer to this question is given by compositionism. Just as contextualism is associated with the principle of context, the principle of compositionality has compositionism as its associated attitude [Bronzo (2011), p. 87]:

Compositionism: It is the meaning of parts of speech that takes precedence: first we understand the meaning of each word taken in isolation, and only once this is done can we, by observing the way in which the words combine to give rise to the sentence, understand the meaning of the latter.

Again, when we use the word “precedence” in this definition we are talking about conceptual priority — what we mean is that we cannot understand a sentence if we do not know the meaning of the words that compose it [Bronzo (2011), pp. 90–91]. Therefore, it would be impossi-

ble for the compositionalist to understand what the sentence “Socrates is sitting” means if one does not know the meaning of the word “sitting”.

Here, I will not question the compatibility between the principle of context and the principle of compositionality as such. Formally, they are not incompatible. In contemporary semantics, the principle of compositionality is used as an axiom, while context-dependency is taken to be one of the phenomena occurring in natural languages that the theory tries to accommodate. Although my position is compatible with this *modus operandi*, the attitudes regarding the individuation of content that can be related to these two principles are opposed, and therefore incompatible. Contextualism is governed by the principle of propositional priority [see Frápolli and Villanueva (2015), p. 3], according to which the understanding of sentences takes precedence; compositionism, by contrast, gives priority to the understanding of words. Thus, although we can say that Wittgenstein is committed to both the principle of context and the principle of compositionality, we cannot say that he is equally committed to the two attitudes towards the individuation of content derived from them — one has to choose one of them when characterizing his position. The new Wittgensteinians, in particular, will opt for contextualism.

Contextualism and compositionism are both compatible with standard compositional semantics, but they force us to choose between different ways of understanding what we do when we do semantics. Inasmuch as it focuses on these attitudes and not on the principles with which they are associated, thus, this paper does not belong to the realm of semantics, but to the realm of *metasemantics* [see Pérez Carballo (2014)]. However, metasemantic theses also have theoretical consequences. Taking one or another side in the debate with respect to the individuation of content will yield different answers to various questions. One of them is whether there is an ultimate analysis of the proposition. Another is whether two logically equivalent propositions can be said to be really distinct [see Frápolli and Villanueva (2015)]. A third one, on which this paper is going to focus, is whether different kinds of nonsense can be distinguished. Consider (1) and (2):

(1) Socrates is identical.

(2) Socrates is asdf.

Both (1) and (2) are clearly nonsensical. According to what we will call a “substantial conception of nonsense”, moreover, each one is an example of a different kind of nonsense — (1) is substantial nonsense, while (2) is

mere nonsense. (1) is substantial nonsense, according to this conception, because it is composed of words all of them meaningful but combined in an illegitimate way, while (2) is mere nonsense because it contains among the words that compose it a combination of signs devoid of meaning, namely “asdf”. According to the substantial conception of nonsense, therefore, there are two different kinds of nonsense [see Conant (2000), p. 176].

Being able to distinguish these two types of nonsense requires taking the compositionalist rather than the contextualist side. If we were to embrace contextualism, we would have to recognize that “identical” does not have meaning in (1) either, since a word can only have meaning in the context of a sentence, understood as a *meaningful* sentence. The conception of nonsense compatible with contextualism, opposed to the substantial one, is the austere conception of nonsense. According to this conception, there is only one kind of nonsense: what we previously called “mere nonsense”. All nonsense is mere nonsense [see Conant (2000), pp. 176–177].

Once we have characterized contextualism and compositionism and the conceptions of nonsense that follow from them, the question arises in which of these ways does Wittgenstein individuate content. The next section offers some textual evidence needed to answer this question.

3. CONTEXT AND COMPOSITIONALITY IN WITTGENSTEIN

The new Wittgensteinians hold that Wittgenstein has an austere conception of nonsense motivated by his commitment to contextualism. In this section, I survey the passages in which Wittgenstein seems to express a commitment to contextualism or compositionism. However, in the next section I will argue that, although he does commit to the former, no true commitment to compositionism can be attributed to Wittgenstein.

There are several sections of the *Tractatus* in which Wittgenstein (who arguably uses the word “proposition” as equivalent in this context to “propositional sign”, which is what we call “sentence”) seems to commit to the principle of context:

It is impossible for words to occur in two different ways, alone and in the proposition. [2.0122]

(O)nly in the context of a proposition has a name meaning. [3.3]

An expression has meaning only in a proposition. [3.314]

3.314 is, except for the use of “expression” instead of “word”, the same formulation of the principle of context that we have chosen; 3.3 is in principle nothing but an application of 3.314 to the case of proper names, and 2.0122 tells us that the meaning of a word cannot be anything but the role that the word plays in the context of a sentence.

As to the principle of compositionality, it is in 3.318 that Wittgenstein seems to state it most explicitly:

I conceive the proposition – like Frege and Russell – as a function of the expressions contained in it. [3.318]

In other words, the meaning of a sentence is a function of the meanings of the words that compose it. This is how we have formulated the principle of compositionality.

4.024, for its part, is where Wittgenstein seems to commit most explicitly to compositionality:

One understands [a proposition] if one understands its constituent parts. [4.024]

That is, the meaning of a word has conceptual priority over the meaning of the sentence in which the word figures, because one cannot understand the latter if one has not understood the former. This is the thesis that we used to characterize compositionality in the previous section.

Wittgenstein also seems to give in the *Tractatus* some classical arguments in favor of compositionality. One of them can be found in 4.027 and 4.03:

It is essential to propositions that they can communicate a *new* sense to us. [4.027]

A proposition must communicate a new sense with old words. [4.03]

The proposition, in order to be a proposition, must be able to communicate a new meaning [4.027], i.e., it belongs to the essence of language that we are able to understand sentences that we have never encountered before. We can do this thanks to the fact that these sentences are composed of “old” expressions, that is, of expressions whose meanings we already knew [4.03]. What Wittgenstein seems to be stating here is the argument based on the *learnability* of natural languages [see, for instance, Davidson (1967), p. 304]. This, again, is evidence that Wittgenstein shares compositionalist concerns. But the compositional character of

natural languages also seems to explain for Wittgenstein the possibility of translating from one to another:

The translation of one language into another is not a process of translating each proposition of the one into a proposition of the other, but only the constituent parts of propositions are translated. [4.025]

That is, in the same way as the compositionality of language allows us to understand sentences that are new to us, it also allows us to translate sentences from another language that were previously not known, provided that we know how to translate the words that compose them. This is the same argument that we can find in Dummett (1987), p. 308: if a person knows that a certain sentence in Basque means “The pigeons have returned to the dovecote”, but does not know a single word of Basque, we would not say that she understands the sentence in question. The natural thing to say would be that she knows what the sentence means, but does not understand it. Thus, it makes no sense to call a system of communication in which compositionality plays no role “language”.

Wittgenstein also seems to refer in the *Tractatus* to the *systematicity* of natural languages, often associated with compositionality [see Fodor (1987), pp. 147–150]:

A characteristic of a composite symbol: it has something in common with *other* symbols. [5.5261]

It is natural to wonder whether Wittgenstein is really committing to compositionality in these fragments, and whether he was committing to contextualism in the ones we quoted above. If the answer to both questions is yes, furthermore, the question arises whether we can still treat the *Tractatus* as a coherent book. If the answer is that Wittgenstein is a contextualist, though, he will agree with Frege in his attitude with respect to the individuation of content, which is the main claim in this paper. In the next section, I argue that all the quotations above are compatible with Wittgenstein being a contextualist rather than a compositionalist.

IV. WITTGENSTEIN AND THE INDIVIDUATION OF CONTENT

According to the new Wittgensteinians, Wittgenstein has an austere conception of nonsense that follows from his commitment to contextualism [Conant (2000), p. 177; Bronzo (2011), p. 87]. It is by virtue of the

latter that Wittgenstein could hold that neither “identical” nor “asdf” have meaning in (1) and (2); it is this attitude that requires a word to appear in the context of a meaningful sentence in order to have itself meaning. Wittgenstein’s commitment to contextualism is reflected in some of the quotations we have shown in section 3. However, in the same section we have also seen passages in which Wittgenstein seems to be committed to compositionality, which would have to lead him to have a substantial conception of nonsense. How can we interpret these quotes in such a way that Wittgenstein is committed to the austere conception of nonsense?

Bronzo (2011) considers the same question. His answer, like mine will be, is that Wittgenstein is committed to both the principle of context and the principle of compositionality, but that neither of these commitments makes one either a contextualist or a compositionist [Bronzo (2011), p. 88]. Let us though analyze which version of these principles Bronzo thinks Wittgenstein is committed to. There are authors who think that Wittgenstein commits only to a weak version of the principle of context [Glock (2004), p. 229]. Against them, Bronzo (2011), p. 101, argues that Wittgenstein assumes the principle as we have stated it: words only have meaning in the context of a sentence. However, the version of the principle of compositionality that Bronzo attributes to Wittgenstein is not the one we have given: all his version of the principle says is that the meaning of sentences is complex, that is, that it consists of parts that contribute to the total meaning [Bronzo (2011), p. 104]. This is not equivalent to saying that the meaning of a sentence depends exclusively on the meanings of the words that compose it and the way they are combined. This is why I believe that we can classify Bronzo as one of the authors who defend that Wittgenstein privileges the principle of context over that of compositionality. Moreover, since the principle of context that Bronzo attributes to Wittgenstein is exactly the one we have given, I think that, despite what Bronzo (2011), p. 90, himself says, we can still call Wittgenstein a contextualist according to his interpretation.

I also think that Wittgenstein is a contextualist rather than a compositionalist. Unlike Bronzo, however, I believe that his commitment to the principle of compositionality should not be watered down. There is no contradiction in saying that Wittgenstein embraces the principle of compositionality but not compositionism, for, as I have said, the latter does not necessarily follow from the former. Instead, compositionism is an attitude with respect to the individuation of content *inspired* by the principle of compositionality. To see that the attitude does not necessarily follow from the principle, consider how one could be committed to

the principle of compositionality and still be a contextualist. To say that the meaning of a sentence is a function of the meanings of its constituent words means to say that, if two sentences differ in meaning, at least one word must appear in one of them that differs in meaning from every word in the other.² But this is exactly what happens in a contextualist model of the individuation of content. If we have obtained the meanings of the words that compose a sentence by segmenting that of the sentence as a whole, the latter should obviously be a function of the former, as we would not be able to assign the sentence a different meaning without that of at least one of the words that compose it changing as well. Thus, 3.318 does not pose any problem for an interpretation of Wittgenstein that attributes to him an austere conception of nonsense, since it is compatible with a commitment to contextualism.

A similar answer can be given to those who see a commitment to compositionality in 4.024. Despite appearances, it is not compositionality that is being stated here. All Wittgenstein is saying, I contend, is that, if one understands the meanings of the words that compose a sentence, one understands the meaning of the sentence. It cannot be that one understands the words but not the sentence. But this will just the same be the case if one is committed to contextualism — if one understands the words, it is because one understands the *role* they play in the sentence, and one cannot do this without understanding what the sentence as a whole means.

We have seen that Wittgenstein also seems to give some traditional arguments for compositionality in the *Tractatus*. In particular, his arguments resemble those based on the learnability [4.027, 4.03], translatability [4.025], and systematicity of language [5.5261]. But, again, the fact that we are capable of constructing new propositions from components that we already had does not preclude that those components have as well been obtained from other propositions. This makes Wittgenstein's remarks about the learnability and translatability of language compatible with a contextualist reading of the *Tractatus*. His remarks about systematicity, for their part, are especially easy to integrate into a contextualist picture, as they do not pertain to meaning, but to linguistic expressions themselves. In 5.5261, Wittgenstein is not even saying that different propositions share components, which could also be made compatible with contextualism along the lines depicted above. All he is saying is that what makes complex expressions complex is that they share components with other complex expressions. Thus, a reading of allegedly compositionalist passages of the *Tractatus* is available that makes the work coherently contextualist.

V. THE NEW WITTGENSTEINIANS

Inasmuch as he is committed to contextualism rather than compositionality, Wittgenstein shares with Frege his attitude with respect to the individuation of content [see Klement (2004), p. 1]. Those who argue that there is in Frege a commitment to contextualism rely on the introduction to the *Grundlagen* [Frege (1884/1980), p. x], which, in fact, is where the historical origin of the principle of context is usually located [Janssen (2001), p. 115]. Frege states the principle of context in four different places in the *Grundlagen* [see Reck (1997), p. 146]. The first, as already mentioned, belongs to the introduction; two others belong to the body of the text [Frege (1884/1980), pp. 75, 77], and the last one is found in the conclusion of the work [Frege (1884/1980), p. 116]. All these statements will serve as a starting point for many authors when discussing Frege's possible commitment to contextualism [Baker and Hacker (1984), p. 194; Reck (1997), p. 140; Janssen (2001), p. 5; Kim (2011), p. 193; Barth (2012), p. 27].³ If we see Frege under this light, it will be possible to say that Wittgenstein inherits from him his commitment to contextualism. In this section, I survey some of the authors who have defended something along these lines.

One of the first authors to put Wittgenstein's contextualism in relation with Frege's is Ricketts (1985). Ricketts considers that Frege individuates the meaning of proper names through Leibniz's law: "Proper names are terms whose intersubstitution is licensed by the assertion of simple equations from which generality is absent" [Ricketts (1985), p. 5]. According to this, proper names are individuated by the role they play when they appear in sentences. For Ricketts' Frege, thus, the meaning of the sentence has conceptual priority over the meaning of the expressions that compose it, because the meanings of the terms can only be understood once the meaning of the sentence in which they are involved has been understood. Wittgenstein, while rejecting that the meaning of proper names is individuated precisely in the way Frege proposes, agrees with him on this: whether a proposition has meaning cannot depend on the truth of any other proposition [Ricketts (1985), p. 9]. That is, that a sentence has meaning cannot depend on how the world gives meaning to its constituents — if the sentence has no meaning, neither do its constituents (and not the other way around). We can see that Wittgenstein is clearly a contextualist in this interpretation, as was Frege.

Another author who stresses this similarity, although from a different point of view, is Reck (1997). Reck thinks that both Frege and Wittgenstein turn metaphysics upside down through the principle of context.

According to Reck, if we think that individual terms denote by themselves and that we use them to construct meaningful sentences, we will have trouble determining the truth or falsity of those sentences when the terms involved are, for instance, numerals. There may be a realm of numbers (which is in itself problematic) and we may refer to them through numerals, but how do we have access to the truths in which those numbers are involved? To answer this question, we would have to postulate a metaphysical doctrine about our epistemic access to the truths of mathematics [Reck (1997), pp. 129–131, 135–136]. The novelty of Frege’s and Wittgenstein’s position consists, according to Reck, in starting from the sentences and identifying the meanings of terms through the role they play in them. By doing this, all the aforementioned problems dissolve — the truth or falsity of mathematical propositions becomes dependent on whether or not they conform to the laws of reason, which are the only thing we take as primitive. We no longer need to postulate a realm of numbers or a new epistemic access route [Reck (1997), pp. 157–159]. Reck argues on several occasions that this is the strategy followed by Frege and that Wittgenstein inherits it from him [Reck (1997), pp. 144, 171]. That is, Wittgenstein inherits Frege’s contextualism.

Gerrard (2002) too points out the similarity between Frege and Wittgenstein, a similarity that is based, again, on the fact that both philosophers are contextualists. In particular, Gerrard argues that “(t)he right interpretation of Frege (...) sees Frege as holding a judgment-based metaphysics” [Gerrard (2002), p. 60]. Starting from the judgment (or the sentence) rather than from its components is, as we already know, what characterizes a contextualist. And Wittgenstein too is a contextualist for Gerrard [Gerrard (2002), p. 61]; thus, this author joins those who maintain that it makes more sense to relate Wittgenstein to Frege than to Russell, since Frege and Wittgenstein are united by contextualism, while Russell is not a contextualist [Gerrard (2002), p. 60].

Other authors have not focused so much on Frege’s and Wittgenstein’s contextualism, but rather on showing that Frege and Wittgenstein share the austere conception of nonsense. In contrast to those who attribute to Frege a substantial conception of nonsense, Conant (2002) argues that Frege understands it in an austere way. Moreover, Conant finds textual evidence to support the thesis that Wittgenstein sees his own conception of nonsense as a lesson he has learned from Frege [Conant (2002), pp. 420–421]. Finally, Diamond (1991), (2010) too argues that a parallel can be drawn between the austere conception of nonsense that she attributes to Frege and some central passages of the *Tractatus* [Diamond (1991), p. 112].

Diamond ascribes this conception of nonsense to Frege because she considers him a contextualist [Diamond (1991), pp. 77–80], and argues that Wittgenstein inherits his contextualism from Frege [Diamond (2010), p. 551].

Of course, not everyone agrees in classifying Frege and Wittgenstein as contextualists, as the new Wittgensteinians do. The authors who do not have told the story relating Frege and Wittgenstein as follows: Frege has as his guide with respect to the individuation of content the principle of context, and Wittgenstein is his wayward “disciple” who decides to set aside the principle of context in favor of that of compositionality.⁴ Of this opinion are, for instance, Goldfarb (2002) and Macbeth (2002) [see also Klement (2004)]. According to Goldfarb, while Frege starts from the judgment, Wittgenstein turns Frege’s approach around and decides to start from the objects to see how the combination of these gives rise to the proposition. For Macbeth, for her part, Frege is an inferentialist, while Wittgenstein is a truth-conditional theorist. Frege and Wittgenstein have, according to this, completely different ways of individuating content. For Frege, content is individuated by its inferential properties. Thus, it is sentences that are the primary bearers of meaning, since inferential relations are established between them in the first place. For Wittgenstein, on the contrary, we individuate the meaning of a sentence by specifying the state of affairs it describes, and to do this we need to know beforehand the meaning of the words that constitute it.

VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this paper, I have defended a contextualist reading of the *Tractatus* by offering an interpretation of the passages in which Wittgenstein seems to commit to compositionism that is in fact compatible with contextualism. By doing so, I have highlighted the similarities between Frege and Wittgenstein as regards their attitude with respect to the individuation of content and, *a fortiori*, their conception of nonsense. This work thus adds up to that of the new Wittgensteinians, who, as I have shown, have also stressed these similarities.

Department of Philosophy I
University of Granada
Campus Universitario de Cartuja s/n
18011 Granada, Spain
E-mail: edperez@ugr.es

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NOTES

¹ I will not discuss, but rather assume, Frege’s commitment to contextualism, although in section IV I will refer the reader to the relevant passages in Frege’s work. Thus, I will consider it enough to prove Wittgenstein’s commitment to contextualism to establish the theoretical affinity between the two philosophers.

² To keep things simple, I will ignore here the part of the principle that concerns the mode of combination of the words.

³ There are also places throughout Frege’s work in which he seems to commit, in a more or less explicit form, to compositionism [Frege (1893/1964), §32; Frege (1914/1979), p. 225; Gabriel *et al.* (1980), p. 79; Frege (1923–1926/1984), p. 390; see also Heck and May (2011), p. 128]. For a watered-down interpretation of these passages, see Pérez-Navarro (2020), pp. 239–242.

⁴ I leave aside here authors who hold that Frege is the compositionalist and Wittgenstein the contextualist, such as Dummett (1973) or Baker and Hacker (1980), (1984). I do so because these authors, while also differing from the new Wittgensteinians, do not write in response to them.

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