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Respect for Thought

Jan Smedslund’s Legacy for Psychology
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The idea for this anthology on Jan Smedslund’s legacy was born after a meeting between the editors in Erik Stänicke’s office at the early spring of 2016. Two days later, in his contribution to a seminar held by Jaan Valsiner at the University of Oslo, Smedslund emphasized the importance of the notion of respect so strongly that the early working title for the book popped up in Valsiner’s mind: *Respect for Thinking: Jan Smedslund’s legacy for Psychology*. Almost exactly 3 years later, the title of the book was slightly changed for the better, and the reason why will be clear by further reading.

The book was originally thought to be one possible output from a larger research project, the main aim of which was to clarify the prospect of a priori psychological knowledge. As part of this was to discuss the possibilities for advancing psychological knowledge through deductive reasoning, as suggested by Smedslund (1988, 1991a, 1995), and by abductive reasoning, as suggested by Valsiner (e.g. 2012), a second option for the title of the book came to mind: *Respect for Reasoning*. Unfortunately, despite the repeated overall positive feedback from the Research Council of Norway, the research project has not (yet) been funded. Part of the reason seems to be the controversial status of Smedslund’s bold claims that do not only challenge the empirical foundation of psychological science, but that also scream for the need to advance a constructive alternative with ground-breaking consequences for psychotherapy research and clinical practice. Funding is good to have, but for advancing ideas of relevance for real science it is not mandatory. Human thinking about relevant issues never stops and the lack of funding did not stop us from analyzing Smedslund’s ideas and then present the discussions to a wider public. We started editing this book in June 2016, and for 4 years we have spent our time in...
a creative and constructive reviewing of psychology in light of Jan Smedslund’s seminal suggestions.

In some respects, the editing of this anthology has been a rather lengthy process. Part of the reason is that the main editor had to do the respective work on top a full-time work as a clinician, and also that the process was interrupted for almost a year due to illness and hospitalization. Moreover, the process of finding contributors to the book that do not only have the relevant interest for Smedslund’s work, but who also have the courage to assess it from their perspective, is relatively hard. However, we are also happy that the process was less difficult than expected, and as such it has been a pleasure to discover that Smedslund’s work has gained the reputation it deserves to a greater extent among scholars working outside of Norway, than within the stipulated borders of his home country. As such, we would like to express our gratitude for the positive responses from those scholars who have had to decline from contributing to the book; and of course, we are no less grateful for the valuable contributions provided by the authors of the chapters of this anthology. For those scholars who managed to finish their chapters rather quickly, we are sorry that they had to wait to see their chapters published, and we are grateful for their patience. On the other hand, we are also grateful to the scholars who patiently maintained their interest even though they could not complete their contributions other than being late in the process. Moreover, it has been great fun that some of the contributors also jumped on the train after having heard rumors about the upcoming book!

Last but not least, we are grateful to Smedslund for his willingness to contribute to the book and for having had the patience to wait to see it published. We had really hoped to see the book completed before his 90th birthday in the springtime of 2019. However, it brings some consolation that it was possible to present and discuss themes from the book with Smedslund and other contributors to the book at the conference of the International Society for Theoretical Psychology (ISTP) in Copenhagen the same year. Relatedly, and as mentioned, we would like to share the little story about how the title of the book was changed for the slightly better. In the celebration of Smedslund’s 90th birthday, to which we are honored to have been invited, the main editor gave a speech, and when he was about to mention the title of the book, he simply could not remember which of the two above-mentioned proposals we had landed on: Was the title supposed to be *Respect for Thinking* or *Respect for Reasoning*? At that fateful moment, he landed on the first original option even though the second was the updated version at that time. Apparently recognizing this stumbling manoeuvre, Smedslund asked whether a final decision was made on the title. When he heard that it was not, he expressed his momentary opinion that *Respect for Thought* might be more in line with his concerns, as it better accounts not only for reflective reasoning and explicit, declarative thinking, but also for unreflective, implicit, and unconscious thought. The reader is referred to the chapters of the book to see that his suggestion is very much to the point. However, except from this apt proposal and his own contributions, Smedslund has had no impact on the content of the book.

As editors, we have done our best not to express any agreement or disagreement with the viewpoints advanced by the contributors, and have rather tried to contribute
to highlight, raise, and sharpen their voices. Part of this has also been to avoid misrepresentations of Smedslund’s viewpoints as far as it is possible from our perspectives. In some respects, this threefold strategy is part of an overall aim of avoiding the difficulties and dilemmas described by Smedslund (2020) in the latter paragraph of his first contribution to this volume:

Looking back, I can see that my work both has profited and suffered from the loneliness of my undertaking. With one exception, I have published around 150 articles and 7 books as single author. This relative isolation has enabled me to avoid being smothered by immediate counterarguments, and, has left me undisturbed to develop some relatively original perspectives. On the other hand, the loneliness has prevented me from profiting from closer cooperation with able colleagues. Only after having already stabilized my own position, have I been able to profit from debates. p. 33.

Our aim as editors has not been to smother any of the ideas of the contributors, but rather to bring their ideas into fruitful debate with Smedslund’s ideas. As such, the chapters to follow critically evaluate Smedslund’s legacy not only by expanding upon the possibilities opened up by his ideas, but also by exploring the limitations of his work, as well as putting the questions raised in the relevant historical and interdisciplinary context. Our mission with the book can be well expressed by borrowing some words expressed by Henderikus Stam (2020) in his contribution:

Even for those of us who disagree with elements of the structure of psychologic however, the depth and breadth of Smedslund’s efforts to create a psychologic have opened up discussions and possibilities to address the serious shortcomings of the discipline that many of us have called home for the length of a career. p. 146–147.

The discipline that Stam speaks of is psychology, and for those of you who wonders about what psychologic is about, you have chosen the right book and that one good place to start reading is the next chapter (Chap. 2). Here, Smedslund provides a prehistory of his current conclusions that largely relates to his efforts to advance the project of psychologic (to which various authors in the book refer by using the abbreviation “PL” or the more nuanced hyphenated name “Psycho-logic”). Indeed, though there are other significant ideas of Smedslund that are discussed in the book, it should be no secret that his work on Psycho-logic is center stage, and most of his other ideas seem to relate to this project in one way or another.

Thus, though Smedslund’s (1963) most cited work to date is a seminal paper from the early 1960s, triggering the influential heuristics-and-biases program of Kahneman et al. (1982), from the late 1960s, Smedslund (1970, 1990) challenged the foundation of this program, as well as any other research strand of psychology presuming to be dependent on statistical empirical evidence (1991a, 1995, 2016a). As such, for the growing number of psychologists who have raised concerns about the one-sided emphasis on inductive generalization from accumulations of empirical data in scientific journals, research institutions, and practice guidelines, and that this narrow research paradigm cannot ever pay apposite respect to human mind and experience, Smedslund’s work has been, and will be, prominent. Particularly important is the notion of pseudo-empirical research denoting investigations in which assertions are put to empirical test that can allegedly be known without it,
introduced as part of Smedslund’s (1978) seminal critique of Bandura’s (1977) influential social learning theory. However, Smedslund’s (1988, 1991a, 1995, 1997, 2012c) related efforts to advance the project Psycho-logic, and the descendent proposal of a *bricoleur model* (2009, 2012b, 2016b) of psychotherapy, have not gained the needed attention. This book exists to contribute to provide exactly that.

### Organization and Content of Chapters

In what follows, the chapters of the book are shortly presented, and their ordering explained. It should also be noticed that the presentation is based on abstracts written by the contributing authors themselves. To the extent that the abstracts are altered, it is only for combining them with transitional text. Though the main aims and contents of the respective chapters cluster into the overall themes of the four parts of the book, many of the chapters also deal with themes that are relevant for one or more of the other parts. When they do so substantially, we have attempted to point it out. All sections, except for the third, which is very much an extension of the second, starts out with a respective chapter by Smedslund.

### Part I: Smedslund’s Work in Historical Perspective

All the four chapters in the first part of the book contribute in various ways to put Smedslund work into historical context. In Chap. 2, *A Prehistory of My Present Position*, Jan Smedslund’s first contribution to the book, Smedslund in fact saved the editors for much work when writing this editorial introduction as it provides no less than what its title says that it does provide. Hence, there is no need to present the prehistory of Smedslund’s views here, but only to refer the reader to his chapter.

First, I describe the early development of my position, influenced by, among others, Piaget, and leading to the formulation of a circular relation between logic and understanding. I, then, describe three debates with Stanford psychologists: I tried to show that Albert Bandura’s theory of self-efficacy is necessarily true, whereas Bandura maintained that it was empirical. I still think that the core hypotheses are necessarily true, but that the concrete predictions from the theory are empirical, in so far as they always involve auxiliary hypotheses. I criticized Tversky and Kahneman’s distinction between fallacy and misunderstanding because the concepts mutually presuppose each other, and we cannot understand the illogical (fallacy). I still think that errors must always be understood as misunderstandings, but in some contexts (e.g., teaching) they may, for practical reasons, be treated as fallacies. Against Lee Ross, I argued that, for many reasons, practitioners cannot profit from empirical research. I still maintain that this is generally the case, but concede that one can find exceptions, notably when it comes to large-scale interventions. Finally, I summarize the content of recent formulations of my position, notably why psychology cannot be an empirical science, and why the practitioner has to work as a *bricoleur* (maximally open-minded and creative).
Interestingly, from the perspective of the editors of this book, though Smedslund’s arguments and conclusions, and also his style of writing, have undoubtedly been developing, his present position still seems to be in line with the title of his early publication from 1969, *Meanings, implications and universals: towards a psychology of man*. However, in a recent e-mail correspondence with the main editor Smedslund explained that in 1969 he had not yet experienced three aspects that have had decisive impact on the further development of his thoughts: (1) The meeting with clients as a clinician, (2) Anna Wierzbicka’s work on clarifying the semantic primitives and lexical universals of a purported Natural Semantic Metalanguage (Wierzbicka 1996; Goddard and Wierzbicka 2014), and (3) his efforts to advance Psycho-logic by explicating a purported structure of psychological common sense (Smedslund 1978, 1988, 1991a, 1995, 1997, 2012c).

In the first full version of Psycho-logic, Smedslund (1988) did not only acknowledge the work of Peter Ossorio as something he has profited from reading, but he also argued that his project is related to Ossorio’s (e.g., 1985) work with explicating the knowledge and competency of persons living in a world of persons as part of a discipline Ossorio called Descriptive Psychology (Schwartz 2019). In the third chapter, *Mary K. Roberts* discusses the extent to which these projects really are as similar as they may appear to be under the apt title *A Place for Persons: The Formal Systems of Smedslund and Ossorio*. This chapter does not only discuss Smedslund’s work in relation to one of his relevant historical contemporaries, but also the extent to which their respective work differs and/or are relevantly similar because of their various sources of inspiration from earlier scholars.

Jan Smedslund of the University of Oslo, and the late Peter G. Ossorio of the University of Colorado, both created innovative conceptual systems for use by behavioral scientists. Smedslund named his system “Psycho-logic” and described it as an axiomatization of “what persons take for granted about every person.” Ossorio called his system the “Person Concept” and characterized it as a formal system providing access to all the facts and possible facts concerning persons and their behavior. My aim is to show the similarities and differences between these systems with respect to methodology, primary concept, and universality, and to place them in a wider, historical context. Hopefully, the paper will contribute to an appreciation of the value of systematic delineation of fundamental concepts in behavioral science, as well as an understanding of two different ways of going about the task.

In the fourth chapter, *Karl Halvor Teigen* writes that a discussion of Jan Smedslund’s legacy to psychology would be incomplete without a presentation of his by far most famous paper. We agree. Here is Teigen's abstract for the chapter *The Concept of Correlation in Adults Comes of Age*:

Jan Smedslund’s most cited publication is a landmark study of illusory correlations published in 1963. In two experiments, nurse students received decks of patient cards featuring the presence or absence of a specific disease along with the presence or absence of a specific symptom. Nearly, all participants reported that the symptom was associated with the disease, so that the symptom would be useful for diagnostic purposes, although it occurred equally often in patients with and without the disease. Smedslund concluded that lay people’s concept of correlation was severely deficient as the participants of his studies attended mainly to the present-present cell of a $2 \times 2$ contingency table. The finding was widely cited
by Smedslund’s contemporaries as an instance of human irrationality in lay statistical thinking. Later research has modified these conclusions by showing that perceived correlations are also dependent on expectations, cell frequencies, and the way data are presented to subjects. We find it perhaps ironical that Smedslund, who has later claimed that human rationality is a basic assumption for psychological research, and that fallacies in thinking cannot be empirically established, was among the first to demonstrate a basic shortcoming in people’s ability to perceive statistical independence in a series of observations.

In the last chapter of the first historically oriented section, Line Joranger boldly argues that Smedslund’s work embodies the spirit of a well-known historical fore-runner that might have had no smaller academic ambitions than Smedslund. In Chap. 5, The Socrates of Modern Psychology: A Historical-Socratic View on Smedslund’s Common Sense Perspective, she...

...highlights the intellectual relationship between Smedslund’s work on Psycho-logic and the ancient philosopher Socrates’ “dialectic method,” as well as the notions of “virtue” and “know thyself.” Like Socrates’ dialectic, Smedslund’s method is divided into a negative and a positive part. The former invokes a process of reasoning to show that the discussed issues are in a state of confusion, inconsistency, and/or contradiction. The positive side of this method is that one should study people by systematically clarifying psychological common sense. Moreover, virtues emphasized by both Socrates and Smedslund, such as courage, piety, and self-control, are incessantly relevant in our societies and embody some of the key attributes we continually strive for. But of importance is also their emphasis on knowing yourself. To truly know yourself means self-possession and independence. It may enable a person to come to terms not only with his/her limitations but also with his/her potentials, which then can lay the groundwork for realistic therapeutic goals. If a person, be it a psychologist or a patient, does not keep watching over himself/herself, (s)he may impulsively do wrong towards himself/herself or others. To help another person to gain the relevant self-understanding may therefore be an ethically relevant goal in a therapeutic setting. However, to get the relevant kind of self-understanding are also of relevance for the psychological researcher; if psychologists neglect clarifying what they know about being a person, the scientific discipline of psychology, may run the risk of being unethical.

As mentioned, even more chapters discuss Smedslund’s work in relation to historical developments in psychology, as well as to historical developments within other disciplines, such as various fields of research in philosophy and the social sciences. However, the focal aims of these chapters make it more appropriate to group them into the following sections.

**Part II: Psychology as Science: Concepts and Epistemology**

The chapters in the second part of the book can all be read as responses to and extensions upon how Smedslund has recently modified and developed his position. As such, they may be read as responses to Smedslund’s chapter in the former part of the book. Like several of Smedslund’s earlier critics (e.g., see responses to Smedslund 1991a, 1999a) all authors of these chapters comply with Smedslund’s call to avoid pseudo-empiricism. However, they do not agree about in what the alternative could and should consist, nor about how it can be explained. Probably, this reflects various academic backgrounds and interests. However, it could also be but a sign of aptly
critical voices within a promising, but hitherto unestablished, research field in progress. Thus, as editors of this book we do not only believe that further conciliatory work needs to be done, but we suggest that the clarification and grounding of alternatives to pseudo-empiricism ought to be recognized as a significant psychological research field of its own. As such, the next eight chapters of the book could be thought of as representing the current state of the art of this research field, continuing the inquiries that started with earlier exchanges between Smedslund and his previous critics, and as argued by Lindstad (Chap. 12), Ekeland (Chap. 19), and Stānicke and Lindstad (Chap. 22), the implications of this research for psychotherapy research and mental health care services are profound.

In the later decades of the last century, several scholars engaged in critical dialogue with Smedslund (e.g., 1991a, 1999a), and many (e.g., Parrot and Harré 1991; Shotter 1991, Harré 1999; Gergen and Gergen 1999) shared an interest in Wittgenstein’s work. Though Smedslund (1991b) first rejected the relevance of their critique, he (e.g., 1997, 1999b, 2012a) later modified his standpoints to accommodate to it or circumvent it. The question remains, however, to which extent these modifications were steps in the right direction and/or whether they have been taken far enough. In Chap. 6, Meanings of Words and the Possibilities of Psychology: Reflections on Jan Smedslund’s Psycho-logic, Michael McEachrane builds on his earlier critique (2009) and argues that Smedslund’s more recent statements (2011, 2012a, 2012c, 2016a, b) are still open for Wittgensteinian critique:

This chapter is on the methodology and philosophy of psychology as a science. By reflecting on Jan Smedslund’s critique of the empirical research paradigm of scientific psychology as tending towards pseudo-empiricism and lacking sufficient grounding in conceptual analysis and definitions—the chapter investigates the import of meanings of words and reflecting on these to the practices and possibilities of psychology as a science. Specifically, the chapter investigates the role of scientific psychology of reflecting on the meanings of words (i.e., conceptual investigations or analyses); the need in psychology to distinguish conceptual from empirical investigations; the nature of the meanings of psychological terms and statements; and the method of analyzing the meanings of psychological terms and statements. The chapter ends by pointing to ways in which Jan Smedslund’s system of Psycho-logic reveals the importance for psychology of reflecting on the meanings of words—but misleads on the nature and implications of such reflections.

In the seventh chapter of the book, The Case for Psychological Quietism: Wittgensteinian Propaedeutics in Smedslund’s Writings, Martin B. Smedlund, suggests a somewhat more charitable reading of Smedslund’s recent work inspired by the philosopher John McDowell’s (2009) work on Wittgensteinian quietism. Noticeably, he also projects this understanding to aspects of relevance for the fourth part of the book, that is, psychotherapy. This is the abstract:

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1 Like ourselves, the historically interested reader may perhaps like to know that we have been informed by Smedlund (without any “s” in the middle of his name) that at the Department of Psychology in Iceland, from the late 1970s till at least 2017 focal publications of Smedslund (now with the “s”) was put on the reading lists for the students on an undergraduate level, and that they are still central for discussion on the master’s level. Of course, as editors of this book we cannot help to suggest that any psychology department should consider following the lead of the Icelanders.
In what follows, I present Smedslund’s and Wittgenstein’s different ways of conducting conceptual analysis as reflecting two different conceptions of language. I argue that when it comes to the nature of language, Smedslund has it wrong and Wittgenstein has it right. However, due to what appears to be an instrumentalist shift in Smedslund’s thinking, it seems possible to adjust his conceptual approach to Wittgenstein’s conception of language. Likening conceptual analysis to cartography, I suggest that we view the two as using different methods of projection. I then go on to argue that the project of mapping psychological concepts has a claim to universality, at least partially, since there seem to be psychological facts and principles, common to human beings, that restrain the ways in which human psychology can be conceptualized—a point made by both Smedslund and Wittgenstein. After this, I lay out Wittgenstein’s philosophical quietism and demonstrate in what ways Smedslund’s a-theoretical view of psychology parallels it. I emphasize that quietism, in both philosophy and psychology, is to be conceived of as a propaedeutic. Finally, I suggest that Smedslund’s bricoleur model for psychological practice is an example of the quietist ethos. This brings forth the ethical dimension of quietism, which is the renunciation of dogma.

In the eighth chapter, Jan Smedslund and Psychologic: The Problem of Psychologism and The Nature of Language, Henderikus J. Stam also questions the extent to which Smedslund’s recent modifications to his account of Psychologic can succeed as responses to critique from Wittgensteinian quarters. However, he also picks up upon themes of relevance for the first historically oriented part of the book and puts Smedslund’s work into further historical and interdisciplinary context in order to explain why he thinks the answer to this question must be negative. Here is the abstract:

Three issues that are raised by Smedslund’s psychologic are addressed in this chapter: First, the analytic-synthetic distinction although briefly addressed by Smedslund himself has not been thoroughly appreciated. I argue that it is crucial to understanding a project like the psychologic. Second, I place Smedslund’s work in a historical perspective derived from the debates surrounding psychologism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century initiative to find human reason on a series of logical laws. I present a short history of this complicated chapter in philosophy. By placing psychologic in a historical perspective, it is clear that Smedslund’s notion of an a priori conceptual structure of psychology has some very influential forerunners, even if they constitute a different project in other ways. These historical forerunners provide a number of crucial lessons for contemporary psychologic as well as psychology. Third, I emphasize that following Wittgenstein, the nature of language throws up some serious obstacles to psychologic as it is currently conceived. Although Smedslund has begun to respond to his critics who have noted this problem, Smedslund does not go far enough in addressing this fundamental question. Finally, I agree with Smedslund that much of psychology is pseudo-empirical, but I see this as a result of the nature of psychological theorizing with its commitment to an indeterminate functional ontology.

In contrast to the former three authors, in Chap. 9, The Linguistic Fore-Structure of Psychological Explanation, Kenneth J. Gergen does not discuss whether or not Smedslund has succeeded to respond adequately to earlier critique from Wittgensteinian quarters but turns to expand upon Smedslund’s earlier formulations:

This chapter extends the early work of Smedslund on the common-sense underpinnings of hypothesis testing in psychology. As argued by Smedslund, experiments cannot really test hypotheses about the relationship between psychological process and behavior because any failure to verify them would defy cultural understanding. However, I propose that the intelligibility of psychological phenomena does not rest so much on cultural understandings as
on tautological language use. This is born out of the impossibility of ostensively defining the states of mind presumably giving rise to action. The result is reliance on a logic of originary resemblance, that is, attempts to explain A, will bear a likeness to A. For instance, explaining a given behavior in terms of a “miniaturized” form of itself displaced within the mind. Further, because each definition of a mental term relies on the meaning of another term for its meaning, we enter a condition of semiotic slippage. It is thus possible to account for psychological explanations far removed from simple or transparent tautology. By drawing on extended tautologies and extended definitional sequences, we find that any given behavior (or its negation) can be explained by virtually any randomly drawn motive or trait. This includes otherwise counterintuitive or paradoxical explanations. These developments bear importantly on the potentials of psychological research, mental and diagnostic testing, and psychotherapy.

Though the last chapter (Chap. 12) in this second part of the book does engage in critical dialogue with Smedslund’s Wittgensteinian critics, the next four chapters do not respond to Smedslund’s recent advancements of his position primarily from a Wittgensteinian perspective. However, though the theme picked upon in the tenth chapter are relevant for the discussion with the Wittgensteinian critics, the question asked by Miika Vähämaa in his title appears to be related to an earlier discussion between Valsiner (1985) and Smedslund (1985): Can Common Sense Change? Psychologic, Synthetic Thinking and the Challenge of Changing Language. Smedslund and his Wittgensteinian critics seem to share the conviction that it cannot. Similar to Valsiner’s earlier arguments, Vähämaa brings arguments towards the opposite conclusion, but in apparent contrast to Valsiner’s (1985, 2014) arguments, Vähämaa does not think of common sense as providing culturally confined limits that ought to be transcended by science, but rather as something to be maintained by synthetic thinking beyond the current scope of Psycho-logic.

Common sense and common meaning of words are linguistic and psychological elements that enable people to speak and to understand each other with ease. Accordingly, ease and fluidity of interaction do not arise on their own. On the contrary, if we lose common sense and commonly shared language, we face disorderliness, chaos, and misunderstandings in small and large group interactions. This chapter discusses an argument that we now witness potential decay of both common sense and common word meanings, as our mass and social media practices change. Without widely shared common sense and common word meanings, we lose the necessary psychic unity that makes us understandable. To counter the observable loss of “common meaning,” I present a critical analysis of these core concepts and an increased effort to regenerate common meanings through synthetic thinking. In synthetic thinking, logically incompatible propositions are used to yield new and unexpected hybrids of meaning. These new hybrids move beyond the current scope of Psycho-logic. Such novel meanings can emerge in group settings, in which language is used to create and reinforce in-group cohesion. While the media “narrow-cast” meanings to small groups of like-minded individuals, such like-mindedness is also at the heart of the process of making something “common” in any sense. Thus, if we become good at reflecting and understanding the base of our common sense and fundamental psychological axioms of our language, we are also better equipped to consider unfamiliar word meanings with flexibility. This would enable new meanings in the maintenance of common sense.

In Chap. 11, How to Avoid Throwing the Baby Out with the Bathwater: Abduction Is the Solution to Pseudo-Empiricism, Sergio Salvatore extends upon his earlier arguments with Valsiner (Salvatore and Valsiner 2010) that though the prevailing reliance on inductive generalization from empirical data cannot deal
adequately with the inherent meaningfulness of a great lot of psychological phenomena, neither can Smedslund’s emphasis on deductive reasoning. Hence, he provides another solution alluded to in the title of his contribution, abductive reasoning:

In this chapter, I show how important it is for psychology to recognize the semiotic and semantic valence of psychological constructs, and thus, their embeddedness in common sense, which can be drawn from Smedslund’s criticism of the pseudo-empirical nature of psychological research. Smedslund has drawn a completely alternative scientific program, Psycho-logic, from this criticism. According to him, since psychological constructs are linked semantically, the function of psychology is to make the normative commonsensical meaning underpinning such linkages explicit. However, my thesis is that Psycho-logic is not the solution to the problem he identified. Indeed, it throws the baby (the possibility of empirical psychological knowledge) out with the bathwater (the problematic way empirical research is usually carried out). What is needed is a form of empirical research which is consistent with the semiotic nature of psychological phenomena. Accordingly, the second part of the paper proposes a view of psychological phenomena in terms of inherent formal (rather than efficient) causality and an approach combining dialectically abstract theory with an abductive analysis of local phenomena.

In Chap. 12, A Priori Afterthoughts: Continuing the Dialogue on Psycho-logic, Tobias G. Lindstad aims to continue the critical dialogue on the content, aim, and explanation of Psycho-logic:

Jan Smedslund has seminally presented Psycho-logic as a result of explicating psychological common sense, and he has persistently characterized this kind of inquiry as amounting to a priori knowledge. However, the question of which psychologically relevant assertions can be known a priori (and how) must not be conflated with the question of which assertions constitute psychological common sense (and how), and pace Smedslund, the former question must be given priority for advancing a needed alternative to empirical psychological research. However, this also calls for a refined and somewhat deflated notion of a priori psychological knowledge that takes issue with a contentious Fregean spirit of Smedslund’s arguments. By discussing Smedslund’s analysis of the conditions for trust, I argue that a suitably revised notion of a priori psychological knowledge implies not only that these conditions are better conceived of as conditions of trustworthiness, but also that Psycho-logic comprises a far more varied body of knowledge than hitherto recognized. As such, Psycho-logic is not about concepts, words, or common sense, but more fundamentally about possible relations between possible properties of persons.

**Part III: Psychology as Science: Research Extensions**

The third section of the book shares parts of its title with the second: Psychology as science. However, the chapters in this section do not discuss conceptual and epistemological problems of psychology as much as they suggest various ways that psychological research may and should expand upon Smedslund’s efforts to advance Psycho-logic, and three of the chapters do even present concrete research extensions in this regard.

However, the first chapter of this section is a notable exception to this, as it does not discuss or present research extensions compatible with Psycho-logic, but research that is purportedly not. In this chapter Jan Smedslund deals with an issue only tangentially touched upon by two other authors in the book (i.e., Henderikus
Stam and Jeff Sugarman in Chaps. 9 and 16). Though controversial, the conclusions that Smedslund makes this chapter have been part of his overall perspective for a long time. However, they have not earlier been spelled out as clearly as here, and arguably, the need for discussing these matters has become more urgent than ever. For bringing his points through Smedslund have, yet again, coined a term that might be suitable for shaking up the corridors of psychological research institutions. The term is aptly used already in the title of his chapter: What is at stake is the currently widespread, but arguably misleading, **Neuro-Ornamentation in Psychological Research**.

**Neuro-ornamentation** designates the unneeded insertion of references to neuro-science in psychological texts. A text is taken to be more “scientific” when it contains references to brain studies, just as an object is expected to be more “beautiful” when decorated. I give three increasingly powerful examples of neuro-ornamentation. They all presuppose the Correspondence Premise stating that for every psychological event there is a corresponding neural event. The first example shows the distribution of occurrences of the terms “neuro-cognitive” vs. “cognitive” in a psychological text. It appears that the prefix “neuro-” has no other discernible function than emphasizing the ideology that psychology should be based on neuro-science. The second example is the neuro-scientific contribution by Moser & Moser concerning the spatial orientation of rats. It arguably adds nothing to what has been known for many years in psychology. Hence, references in psychological texts to the work of these recent Nobel Prize winners are only neuro-ornamentation. The third example is the use of the term “endogenous depression.” This concept refers to psychological phenomena that can allegedly be explained only in terms of neuro-science. This directly contradicts the idea that all psychological phenomena can be psychologically explained and, hence, represents maximally powerful neuro-ornamentation. Finally, I explain the current exodus of psychologists to neuro-science as a result of a deplorable conceptual confusion.

Like in the former chapter in which Smedslund discusses the extent to which various kinds of concepts are relevant for psychological science or not, Chap. 14 could just as well have been put in the former part of the book. However, not as much as because it deals with conceptual issues, but because Davood Gozli deals extensively with epistemological issues of relevance for psychological science in his chapter called *Experimental Psychology and Distortions of Common Sense*. However, though Gozli is not as dismissive with respect to the value of experiments in psychology as Smedslund (2015, 2016a), his aim is to demonstrate the continuing relevance of Smedslund’s critique. Thus, extending on his recent book (2019), Gozli provides arguments to the effect that one significant research extension of Smedslund’s work is that his arguments contribute to provide a relevant kind of methodological self-awareness for doing psychologically relevant experimental research.

This chapter outlines a critique of experimental psychology, based on Jan Smedslund’s work on the epistemic status common-sense psychology. The critique is fleshed out with several examples from experimental research on cognitive control, cheating, self-reference bias, and sense of agency. Claims about discovery of surprising or general findings, at least in some cases, depend on neglecting or distorting common-sense psychology. Attention to psychological common sense, therefore, can sensitize us to certain types of error (e.g., pseudo-empirical research, over-generalization), similar to how attention to quantitative research can sensitize us to certain types of error (e.g., the so-called type I and type II
errors). I consider possible objections from the standpoint of experimental researchers, as well as reasons for a prolonged neglect of common-sense psychology.

While the two mentioned chapters in this third part of the book examine the scope and limits of psychological research, the next three creatively suggest and demonstrate intriguing ways to extend upon Smedslund’s efforts to advance Psycho-logic in other prolific directions. Thus, though not buying into all the arguments made by Smedslund regarding the axioms of Psycho-logic, Luk Van Langenhove complies with this format for Extending Smedslund’s Psycho-logic System into a Social Theory, which is also the title for Chap. 15:

This chapter proposes to extend Smedslund’s axiomatic system of psycho-logic (PL) into a psycho/socio-logic theory that is based upon insights from social theory and from the so-called linguistic turn in the social sciences. It will be argued that developing a conceptual system for psychology as Smedslund did, only makes sense if it is embedded in a broader context of social theory since psychological phenomena cannot be separated from the social realm. Smedslund focuses upon the agency of people, but one needs also to take into account the impact of structures on people. To this end, a reformulation of some of the axioms of PL will be presented that take as a starting point the notion that persons are social and moral beings and that the study of persons should start with the conversational context in which they operate.

In Chap. 16, Smedslund and the Psychological Style of Reasoning, Jeff Sugarman discusses Smedslund’s work in light of his recent earlier work (Sugarman 2017) on what he in the wake of Ian Hacking’s (2012) work has called “styles of reasoning”:

The chapter presents a critique of “psychologism” as a “style of reasoning” that has dominated disciplinary psychology from its inception and set the course for how psychological phenomena are made intelligible and investigated. Styles of reasoning comprise distinct disciplinary frameworks for scientific argumentation that set the terms for how phenomena are identified, defined, and understood, thus circumscribing the kinds of questions that can be posed about them and kinds of answers that can be justified. Psychologism as a style of reasoning holds that thought and experience are reducible to internal mental properties, in turn, taken to be manifestations of more primary biochemical and neurophysiological structures and processes. An explanation of styles of reasoning and their common features is followed by description of the characteristics and assumptions of psychologism, how it functions as a style of reasoning, and the ways it creates conditions of possibility in which psychological properties become articulated and attain ontological status. Subsequently, Smedslund’s analysis of psychological pseudo-empiricism and, particularly, his insights concerning the miscasting of analytic claims as empirical ones derived from psychological experimentation, are discussed in light of the ways they align with and support the account of psychologism provided. An illustration of the applicability of the analysis is given using the psychological study of self-regulation.

In Chap. 17, Wittgenstein’s Revenge: How Semantic Algorithms Can Help Survey Research Escape Smedslund’s Labyrinth, and extending his earlier work (Arnulf et al. 2018), Jan Ketil Arnulf creatively claims to have shown through empirical research that...

...semantic algorithms can often predict the statistics of survey data a priori, particularly in topics like “leadership” and “motivation.” In those cases, the survey data reflect the language usages of respondents, not the attitudes towards the topics in question. While this fact seems to bewilder researchers, it opens a computational tool for exploring our semantic construction of psychological reality. Using Dennett’s concept “competence without
comprehension,” this article discusses how humans are trapped in a semantic network that we ourselves struggle to understand. Since Smedslund’s work and the language algorithms have common roots in formal logics, the computational algorithms may help us explore the cognitively challenging area of a priori assumptions in psychological research. There may be a computational way to test and explore Smedslund’s ideas of “pseudo-empiricism,” helping science explore the complex area between empirical, logical, and psychological phenomena.

**Part IV: Psychotherapy and Psychotherapy Research**

In the third part of the book, the authors discuss, criticize, and/or expand upon Smedslund’s ideas of relevance for critical practice, the bricoleur model, and its relationship to Psycho-logic and the related concern to advance alternatives to pseudo-empiricism. To set the stage, the section starts with Jan Smedslund’s chapter *Professional Practice Without Empirical Evidence: The Psychologic of Trust*, which is the 18th chapter of the book.

I begin by summarizing why empirical research cannot support psychological practice. After presenting the non-empirical approach of Psycho-logic and the accompanying bricoleur model, I focus on the central role of trust in psychological treatment. To trust is to think that a person will not harm you. There are five necessary and jointly sufficient conditions of trust: care, understanding, own-control, self-control, and relevant know-how. I discuss some of the challenges that may be encountered in attempting to build trust. The first four conditions are reasonably well defined and in principle manageable. However, since we cannot know the relevant composition of context-bound know-how (skill), we must conclude that we cannot know fully how to teach students to become good psychologists. The task may even be unsolvable because treatment outcomes depend on indefinitely numerous, variable, and partly random conditions.

Like many of the other authors contributing to the book, Tor Johan Ekeland is also demonstrating important bridges between his own earlier work (e.g., 1999) and Smedslund’s. As such, in the 19th chapter of the book, *Psychotherapy: An Illusion that Works*, he points out that mainstream psychology is based on the epistemology that the domain for psychology exists in an independently pre-given reality (ontology) and that truth about such reality is attainable through empirical scientific investigation.

Mainstream psychology is based on the epistemology that the domain for psychology exists in an independently pre-given reality (ontology) and that truth about such reality is attainable through empirical scientific investigation. This has become a position more or less taken for granted in mainstream psychology and psychotherapy research. Jan Smedslund has challenged this epistemology in a profound way. Inspired by this, the argument in this chapter is not only that this epistemology is false, as convincingly argued by Smedslund, but I also expand on his conclusion about the bricoleur model of psychological practice by contextualizing psychotherapy culturally and historically and thereby classifying it as a kind that belongs to the *art of healing*. Necessary and sufficient conditions for the healing context are discussed. Furthermore, it is argued, this epistemological change could rescue psychotherapy from the problematic mismatch between what psychotherapy pretends to be, and what is really going on in practice.
Likewise, in Chap. 20, William B. Stiles demonstrates the bridges between his earlier arguments regarding responsiveness in psychotherapy (e.g., 2009) and Smedslund’s arguments for a bricoleur model of psychotherapy. However, there are also relevant differences. Stiles has given his chapter the title *Bricoleurs and Qualitative Theory-Building Research: Responses to Responsiveness*.

In his extended critique, Smedslund suggested that scientific theory and research on psychotherapy are not feasible because (1) people respond to a myriad of constantly shifting determinants, and their behavior (2) evolves in ever-compounding sequences that are not precisely predictable, (3) that is never precisely repeated, and (4) is deeply enmeshed in interactions with other people. Instead, he suggests that therapists should be *bricoleurs*, drawing on psychological common sense, which includes knowledge shared by virtue of being human, understandings acquired through language and culture, and personal familiarity with the client. Smedslund’s characterization articulates what I have previously characterized as appropriate responsiveness: therapists strive to do the right thing in response to ever-changing client requirements and emerging context. Despite this challenge, I am more optimistic than Smedslund about theory and research on psychotherapy and distinguish explanatory theories from treatment theories. An explanatory theory describes what things are and how they are related to each other within a domain. They are evaluated by comparing detailed observations with theoretical tenets and derivations. I call this theory-building research. A treatment theory describes the principles and practices that guide clinicians in conducting a therapy. They propose to say what works, and they tell therapists what to do. They are evaluated by assessing whether the treatment is effective. I call this product-testing research, illustrated by clinical trials. I argue that Smedslund was on target for treatment theory and product-testing research but that qualitative theory-building research on explanatory theory offers a strategy that can address Smedslund’s critique.

In Chap. 21, *Working with Stuckness in Psychotherapy: Bringing Together the Bricoleur Model and Pluralistic Practices*, John McLeod and Rolf Sundet also build bridges between their own work on what they call pluralistic practices (McLeod 2018) with Smedslund’s bricoleur model.

The chapter takes the experiences of being stuck, of lack of change, and detrimental development of persons in psychotherapy as its start point. The aim of the chapter is to connect these experiences to the work of Jan Smedslund and show how his ideas not only offer a perspective for addressing such events, but also provide a gateway into the work of other theorists who have similarly contributed to the development of an alternative critical standpoint in relation to professional knowledge and practice. The position being offered does draw on the experience of the authors and their engagement with stuckness. Informed by pluralism the practices highlight how to respond to stuckness, lack of change, and evidence of not being on track. Bringing together the work of Smedslund and pluralistic practice, perspectives on the use of theory and research in practice is developed. Central is Smedslund’s critique of generalized knowledge and its lack of focus on individual uniqueness. A relationship between the bricoleur model and pluralistic practices is established, grounded in a reconceptualization of how therapeutic change takes place, away from “interventions” and instead seeing what therapists do as “invitation to respond.” The chapter connects these ideas to other authors that can help us expand alternative knowledge of psychotherapy in line with Smedslund’s proposed bricoleur model and pluralistic practice. Lastly, the chapter underlines the importance of everyday language and cultural experience, and the value of engaging clients in a process of collaborative inquiry concerning relevant aspects of their everyday lives.

In the final chapter of the book, *Erik Stänicke and Tobias G. Lindstad* extend upon earlier ideas of Stänicke et al. (2019); Stänicke and Stänicke (2014), Lindstad,
(2020), and Lindstad’s critique of Psycho-logic in Chap. 12 to discuss and compare what they call psychoanalytic thought-models and Smedslund’s arguments for the bricoleur model. By so doing, they also discuss earlier work on the clinical implications of Psycho-logic by Waldemar Rognes (e.g., 1996) whose large and groundbreaking work is not as known as Smedslund’s because he wrote mostly in Norwegian. Here is the abstract for their chapter The Pragmatic Status of Psychoanalytic Theory: A Plea for Thought-models:

We argue that the concepts, notions, and assertions of psychoanalytic theory often constitute thought-models that might be practically relevant. Thus, these models are theoretically anchored regulative principles that may be relevant for practice even though the aspects and relations they refer to are not always manifested. As such, they may contribute to ground psychotherapy as a practice where one strives to meet persons as openly and unprejudiced as possible. As this aim is also shared by Jan Smedslund as part of his proposal of a bricoleur model of clinical practice, it is pivotal to discuss the extent to which the perspectives are compatible and may join forces or not. With respect to the bricoleur model, we acknowledge the critique of Salvatore and Valsiner that Smedslund’s related efforts to advance Psycho-logic must be broadened so as to include the relevance not only of deductive reasoning but also of abductive reasoning. However, pace Smedslund and Valsiner, we argue that these reasoning capacities may reveal not only conceptual relations, but also causal relations between dispositional properties of persons. On the other hand, we also argue that this requires that the traditional understanding of psychoanalytic perspectives as primarily based upon experiences of clinical encounters must be broadened so as to acknowledge the aspect of Andre Green’s notion of clinical thinking that it may comprise theoretical elaborations that may be removed from direct clinical experience.

References


