Psychologism, as a view on the nature and epistemology of logic, is rejected by most modern philosophers. But the grounds for its dismissal may vary, and the question which grounds are the correct ones is not altogether immaterial. For the answer to this question inevitably betrays the conception of logic one holds oneself. Husserl and Frege are usually magnified for having finally refuted the doctrine of psychologism. Sometimes, however, reasons for doing so are attributed to them which they themselves would have rejected. In this paper I shall discuss an example of such a reason. A common view of the matter is expressed by Herbert Feigl in the following observation:

"Ever since Frege's and Husserl's devastating critiques of psychologism, philosophers should know better than to attempt to reduce normative to factual categories. It is one thing to describe the actual regularities of thought or language; it is an entirely different sort of thing to state the rules to which thinking or speaking ought to conform."\(^1\)

Similar quotations can easily be found. So G. Radnitzky writes:

"Thanks largely to the pioneering work of Frege and Husserl, psychologism in logic and metamathematics is largely a thing of the past: the attempt to

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reduce the norms of logic to laws of thought is now merely a historical curiosity.”

According to these authors, it seems, Husserl and Frege considered psychologism as a special case of the naturalistic fallacy, as an attempt to deduce *ought* from *is*. Such an interpretation rests on the assumption that they would have conceived logic as an essentially normative or prescriptive discipline. In the following pages it is argued that Husserl explicitly (and Frege implicitly) rejected such a view. Neither Husserl nor Frege conceived of logic as an essentially normative discipline. As a consequence they would have considered the idea that psychologism is incorrect because it commits the naturalistic fallacy as fundamentally mistaken. The ‘fork’ they used in combatting psychologism did not consist of the dichotomy factual/normative, but, in the case of Husserl of the opposition between factual and ideal or, in Frege, the opposition between the subjective and objective or the one between objectively real and objectively non-real. To make this historical point is of course not to say that Husserl and Frege were right, and I shall briefly discuss to what extent they were.

I.

*Theoretical Laws and Practical Prescriptions*

Of course neither Frege nor Husserl denied the possibility of logical prescriptions or norms. But they both thought that the norms of logic are somehow derived from non-normative laws, the theoretical laws of pure logic. These theoretical laws would express an *is* rather than an *ought*; they would hold independently of human language and thinking. On the basis of such a view, one clearly cannot refute psychologism by saying that it commits the naturalistic fallacy, for one presupposes that it is legitimate to derive logical norms from non-normative propositions, i.e. the laws of pure logic.

What justifies this idea of the nature of logic? Husserl’s *Logical Investigations* are on this point more revealing than the work of Frege.