In a review of Bolzano’s *Wissenschaftslehre* (WL, 1837), a pseudonymous Dr. P. Menelaos remarked that “throughout, the author assumes the old, strictly objective or dogmatic, viewpoint, in contrast to the contemporary, which is based on the psychological self-consciousness of the thinking mind” (Bolzano 1972, XXIX). It must be granted that Bolzano did not think much of grounding logic in psychological self consciousness, and that he introduced mind independent, timeless, “sentences in themselves,” “objective” propositions, among which relations of consequence, consistency, probabilification, etc. obtain. He is now remembered mostly for this theory, which, as a counterpoint to psychologism, earned him the admiration of Husserl (1900, 225 f.), and the titles of a logical Plato and a Bohemian Leibniz. By contrast, Bolzano’s specific logical teachings, though of great and even current interest, have received less attention. It is not the focus of this paper, however, to deal with them.

Dr. Menelaos is correct in saying that Bolzano, unlike many of his contemporaries, did not seek to ground logic in psychology, but it is a mistake to think that he paid no attention to the “manifestations” or “appearances” of propositions in the mind, as the contents of thoughts that come and go: substantial portions of his *Wissenschaftslehre* are given over to this concern. A second misleading suggestion is that there was an accepted “contemporary” way of thinking about logic in psychological terms, when there were in fact deep divisions on just this issue. Thirdly, it is suggested that Bolzano reverted to an older style of doing logic, not long before then superseded by the modern psychological approach. Although Bolzano gives much space to pointing out, largely as a matter of courtesy, that many earlier logicians must have thought of something like propositions (as mind-independent entities), it is manifest that none of them had
explicitly postulated them. He did not, as is claimed, return to a previous practice, but pioneered a new one.

Indeed, there was not all that much previous practice. During the 18th century logic had fallen into a state of disrepair; the Enlightenment was perhaps an age of reason, but it surely was not an age of logic. A reconstruction and rehabilitation of logic had to start very nearly from the ground up. The logic books that were then published were meant to be propaedeutic to philosophical studies, more school book than treatise. Logic’s decline had been brought on, in part, by an increased insistence on its connection to psychology, only much later disparagingly called psychologism, in part by some other factors. I will now chronicle some highlights of this development.

II

It is tempting to think that psychologism made its entry into logical theorizing as a matter of reasoned insight, as a better grounding of the subject than what had gone before. That would be a mistake. It was as much a matter of style, fashion and ideology as of theory. I ask, therefore, the reader’s indulgence as I begin with a ramble through some aspects of the sociology and politics, if I may use that term, of logic in the late 17th and 18th centuries, without, however, neglecting theory altogether.

Older logics of the conservative variety, into the 17th century, usually began with a few perfunctory remarks about thinking and the laws of thought, but then got right down to business, discussing terms, propositions, syllogisms, without much attention to the ontological status of the entities they discussed. One cannot, without anachronism, describe them as either psychologistic or anti-psychologistic — that was not an issue. The pedagogy of logic divided the subject into the logica docens and the logica utens. There is, on the one hand, the subject as it is taught, remembered and practiced in disputations, and on the other hand its use in everyday life, in legal practice, and the like. There was no attention to what later came to be called “natural logic”, that is, the inferential habits of the untutored mind. The distinction between the latter and “artificial logic”, the codification of the logical canon, came later and is found, for instance, in the Logic of Port Royal. Arnauld says this:

Conceiving, judging, reasoning, ordering are all done quite naturally, and sometimes done better by those ignorant of the rules of logic than by persons instructed in these rules. So logic does not teach us how to conceive, to judge, to reason, or to order; for nature in giving us reason gave us the means to perform these operations. Logic consists, rather, in reflecting on these natural operations.¹