# ON THE IDEA OF A PSYCHOLOGY FROM AN EMPIRICAL STANDPOINT: BRENTANO'S UNDERSTANDING OF POST-KANTIAN PHILOSOPHY AND NINETEENTH-CENTURY SCIENCE

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**Abstract.** All of Brentano's students recall the burning sense of a mission to render philosophy a science that permeated the core of their mentor's being and teaching, but what kind of science does Brentano defend for philosophy in his *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (1874) and new science of descriptive psychology which he subsequently elaborated in his lectures in philosophy at the University of Vienna in the 1880s? Brentano would like us to believe that he is continuing the perennial science of philosophy as inaugurated by the ancient Greeks, and by Aristotle in particular, into the nineteenth century. This article, however, argues that once Brentano accepts the status of the newly emerging natural science of psychology and adopts in the 1870s a Humean philosophical approach to the mind and its contents, he cannot, despite his best efforts, establish the continuity of philosophy as *philosophia perennis* that exists before and after the modern conception of natural science. He thus defends for the science of philosophy instead, a psychology from an empirical standpoint that is fully modern in temperament, yet one that is neither fully empirical or rational in Hume or Kant's sense nor a capitulation to the method of the natural sciences in general and fledgling natural science of empirical psychology in particular.

**Keywords:** philosophia perennis; philosophy as science; natural science; empirical psychology; descriptive psychology; hermeneutic science.

## INTRODUCTION

From its beginning to its end, the nineteenth century is marked by various philosophers who grasped the gauntlet to engage in doing philosophy "that will be able to come forward as science" which Immanuel Kant had thrown down to his successors towards the end of the previous century in his *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics* (1783), by linking philosophy to either an existent or newly

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emerging model of science, whether that be traditional or post-Kantian metaphysics, modern natural science, economics, history, sociology, logic, mathematics, or hermeneutics.[1] It is outside the limits of this article to conduct any comprehensive analysis of these various kinds of science that underpin the different conceptions of what constitutes a scientific philosophy that were advanced by such diverse thinkers as Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, Auguste Comte, Wilhelm Dilthey, Franz Brentano, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Friedrich Ludwig Gottlob Frege, Edmund Husserl, and many more, or deal with thinkers, such as Søren Kierkegaard, who opposed, with equal fervour and ferocity, the very attempt to affiliate philosophy to (any) science, however the latter is progressed, before or after Kant, in old or new scientific skins. Among these post-Kantian thinkers, however, Brentano's position was quite unique for he believed that philosophy, despite its periodic rise and fall as science throughout its history, is a science and always has been a science.[2] Brentano's problem, therefore, was not with philosophy as science *as such* but with philosophies that paraded themselves as science, at different stages in the development of philosophy down through the ages, when they were not genuine science. In his own time, for instance, he thought that the kind of "speculative science" that had been recently exemplified in the post-Kantian German idealist systems of Hegel and Schelling was the antithesis of scientific philosophy.[3] Irrespective of the cogency or validity of either Brentano's theory of the four historical phases of philosophy or his criticisms of German idealist philosophies, all of Brentano's students, whether from his early period at Würzburg University or later career at Vienna University, testify to his burning "sense of a mission" to reform philosophy, that is to say, to make philosophy scientific again.[4] Husserl, who attended Brentano's lectures in philosophy at Vienna University from 1884 to 1886, tell us, that it was from those lectures that "I [Husserl] first acquired the conviction that gave me [him] the courage to choose philosophy as my [his] life's work, that is the conviction that philosophy, too, is a field of serious

[1] Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to any future metaphysics, that will be able to come forward as science*, translated by Gary Hatfield, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997.

[2] For an extended discussion of Brentano's theory of the four phases of philosophy (in Antiquity, Middle Ages, Modernity, and Contemporary), see, Ion Tănăsescu, "Franz Brentano and Auguste Comte: The theory of stages and the psychology" in Ion Tănăsescu et al., *Brentano and the positive philosophy of Comte and Mill: With translations of original writings on philosophy as science by Franz Brentano*, Berlin, Boston, De Gruyter, 2022, pp. 45–138.

[3] "[T]his expression 'speculative science' is a gross misuse of the term 'science'. A Schellingian or Hegelian system is bare and void of all scientific character." Franz Brentano, *Descriptive psychology*, translated by Benito Müller, London, Routledge, 1995, p. 5. Henceforth, abbreviated as *DP*.

[4] From his Würzburg period see, Carl Stumpf, "Reminiscences of Franz Brentano", in Linda L. McAlister (ed.), *The philosophy of Brentano*, London, Duckworth, 1976, pp. 10–46 (p. 12). For this continued "consciousness of a great mission" in his teaching at Vienna University, see, Edmund Husserl "Reminiscences of Franz Brentano", in McAlister (ed.), *The philosophy of Brentano*, pp. 47–55 (p. 48).

endeavour, and that it too can – and in fact must – be dealt with in a rigorously scientific manner".[5] The two lecture-courses which captivated him in particular, he recalls, were entitled "Selected Psychological and Aesthetic Questions", which "was devoted mainly to fundamental descriptive analyses of the nature of the imagination", and "Elementary Logic and its Needed Reform", which "dealt with systematically connected basic elements of a descriptive psychology of the intellect, without neglecting, however, the parallel elements in the sphere of the emotions, to which a separate chapter was devoted".[6]

In Brentano, then, we find the unquenchable conviction that philosophy is a science of human consciousness and its objectivities, or it is nothing at all. In this respect, and notwithstanding his later and controversial development of Brentano's method of descriptive psychology into a descriptive-eidetic psychology, Husserl, proved to be the good student, repaying his teacher well by not remaining a pupil, as Nietzsche's Zarathustra would have it, carrying this burning torch forward for philosophy as science into the twentieth century. Unlike Brentano, however, Husserl focused exclusively on advancing a post-Kantian conception of philosophy as science, whereas for Brentano philosophy was a perennial science (*philosophia perennis*) to which even Kant had failed to live up. It is in Brentano, and arguably in Brentano alone, therefore, that we find defended the ideal of philosophy as not only rigorous but also perennial science in the nineteenth century.

That Brentano advocated philosophy as science is beyond dispute, but what kind of science did Brentano promote for philosophy? This is not so clear, and it was disputed by his adherents and opponents alike. Even when confined to this singular thinker of the nineteenth century, the issue of the relation between philosophy and science is exceedingly intricate and complex. In this article, therefore, we will focus on only some of the most general features of Brentano's thinking on the relationship between philosophy and the natural sciences and the newly emerging natural science of empirical psychology in particular in his 1874 publication of *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (*PES*)[7] and his view of philosophy as "descriptive psychology", subsequently elaborated in his lectures on *Descriptive*

[5] Husserl, "Reminiscences", pp. 47–48.

[6] *Ibidem*, p. 47. The first time that Brentano delivered a lecture-course that was actually entitled "Descriptive Psychology" was in 1887–88, and he repeated these, without major revision, in 1888–89 and 1890–91. The 1888–89 lecture-course was entitled: "Deskriptive Psychologie oder bescreibende Phänomenologie" ("Descriptive Psychology or Describing Phenomenology"). See, Herbert Spiegelberg, *The phenomenological movement: A historical introduction*, 3rd rev. and enlarged edn, Dordrecht, Kluwer, 1994, p. 27. Husserl, therefore, would not have attended these lectures. Müller, however, informs us that "(E)ven though Husserl left Vienna by the time the present lectures were read by Brentano, he was in possession of a transcript (by Dr Hans Schmidkunz) of the 1887/8 lectures which is kept in the Husserl Archive in Leuven, (call number Q10)." "Introduction", to *DP*, p. xiii, n. 14.

[7] Franz Brentano, *Psychology from an empirical standpoint*, trans. by Antos. C. Rancurello, D.B. Terrell & Linda L. McAlister (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973; Routledge, 1995). Henceforth, references will be to English translation and abbreviated as *PES*.

*Psychology* (*DP*) at Vienna University in the 1880s, that are of most relevance to its understanding and assessment. Brentano clearly thinks that a psychology from an empirical standpoint, in the way he understands this, is where philosophy can regain its foothold in genuine science. So, can we examine Brentano's *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* as his response to the task of rendering philosophy a genuine science which Kant had bequeathed to philosophy and his successors some hundred years earlier in the *Prolegomena*?[8] It seems to me that we can and that this, in fact, is the case; or, at least, so I would like to argue in this article.

## PRE-MODERN NATURAL SCIENCE, MODERN NATURAL SCIENCE, AND CAUSALITY

Originally, Brentano had planned six books for *PES* but only published the first two for *PES* in 1874: Book I "Psychology As a Science" and Book II "Psychical Phenomena in General".[9] In Book I, Brentano begins by providing us with a brief overview of the origins and development of psychology from its inception in ancient Greek philosophy as "the science of the soul" up to and including the budding new contemporary natural science of empirical psychology as advanced by Gustav Theodor Fechner, Wilhelm Wundt and many others. He thus begins by reminding his contemporary reader that by the soul Aristotle means the "first actuality" and principle of life of "a living being".[10] Hence, for Aristotle, plants, animals and human beings, insofar as all of these living beings exhibit degrees of immanent self-perfective activity, were included as the objects of investigation for this science, and so, "after establishing the concept of the soul, the oldest work on psychology [*De Anima*] goes on to discuss the most general

[8] From the bibliometric details compiled for *PES*, Elizabeth Valentine notes that, next to German writers, British authors are the most frequently cited, with John Stuart Mill being the most highly cited British author, in third place overall, after Aristotle and Kant. See, Elizabeth Valentine, "British sources in Brentano's psychology from an empirical standpoint", *Brentano Studien*, vol. 17, n. 1, 2017, pp. 291–328, "Table 4." (p. 296). Neither Kant nor British authors are cited in Brentano's earlier 1862 doctoral thesis on Aristotle's metaphysics or his 1866 habilitation thesis on Aristotle's psychology.

[9] Brentano had drafted six books for *PES*, but published only the first two in 1874, and did not publish the remaining four. There are various reasons for this but the main one is that Brentano's thinking took a new turn, when he applies his idea of a descriptive psychology to clarifying basic concepts in logic, ethics and aesthetics in his lecture-courses at Vienna University, rather than as he had done earlier in the two books published for *PES*, clarifying the meaning of central concepts used in the empirical science of psychology. After *PES*, Brentano's new science of descriptive psychology is thus no longer a preparatory discipline to the natural science of empirical psychology but an autonomous science taking on another function of clarifying the origins of concepts used in the normative disciplines. See, Theodorus De Boer's excellent, short account of this issue in, "The descriptive method of Franz Brentano: Its two functions and their significance for phenomenology", in McAlister, (ed.), *The philosophy of Brentano*, pp. 101–7.

[10] *PES*, p. 3.

characteristics of beings endowed with vegetative as well as sensory or intellectual faculties".[11] No sooner, however, does Brentano give us this account of the inauguration of psychology as a science than he remarks that this science *can now no longer be regarded* in this broad Aristotelian sense due to developments in modern natural science. Various natural sciences, such as botany, zoology and physiology, have since emerged and taken over various parts or domains of enquiry into plant-life activity and animal sense-life activity that were originally demarcated by Aristotle for part of the subject-matter of this science. Thus, Brentano explains,

> On the assumption that it lacked consciousness, the entire realm of vegetative life ceased to be considered within the scope of their [psychologists'] investigations. In the same way, the animal kingdom, insofar as it, like plants and inorganic things is an object of external perception, was excluded from their field of research. This exclusion was also extended to phenomena closely associated with sensory life, such as the nervous system and muscles, so that their investigation became the province of the physiologist rather than the psychologist.[12]

Notwithstanding the *modern gloss* of Brentano's explanation for this change, since plant-life activity and animal-sense-life activity – which of course extends to and includes what Aristotle and the Aristotelians would have considered as the lower life-activities of human beings – as well as organic and inorganic things are all capable of being subjected to natural-scientific observation, hypotheses and experimentation, all of these "phenomena" *now* fall under the remit of either established or newly emerging natural sciences. These developments in the natural sciences, nonetheless, do not imply that there is no subject-matter left over for the science of psychology to investigate as such because they leave entirely untouched "our own psychical phenomena", which are presented to us directly by way of "inner perception"; or, at least, this is what Brentano now asserts and stresses. Thus, for Brentano, although,

> Psychology, like all natural sciences, has its basis in perception (*Wahrnehmung*) and experience (*Erfahrung*). Above all, however, its source is to be found in the *inner perception* of our own psychical phenomena (*der eigenen psychischen Phänomene*). We would never know what a thought is, or a judgement, pleasure or pain, desires or aversions, hopes or fears, courage or despair, decisions and voluntary intentions if we did not learn what they are through inner perception of our own phenomena. Note, however, that we said that *inner perception* (*innere Wahrnehmung*) and not introspection, i.e. inner *observation* (*innere Beobachtung*), constitutes this primary (*erste*) and indispensable source (*unentbehrliche Quelle*) of psychology.[13]

[11] *Ibidem*.
[12] *Ibidem*, p. 4.
[13] *Ibidem*, p. 22, English trans. mod.

Given his strong Aristotelian philosophical roots,[14] one would expect Brentano to disapprove of this modernist reduction of the traditional science of psychology to a study of what occurs in the "inner perception of our own psychical phenomena"; far from it, he approves of it because now, in Brentano's estimation, "(T)his narrowing down of the domain of psychology was not an arbitrary one. *On the contrary*, it appears to be an obvious correction necessitated by the nature of the subject-matter itself."[15] Whether such a narrowing down of the domain of enquiry for the science of psychology is "an *obvious correction* necessitated by the nature of *the subject-matter itself*", or not, as Brentano asserts, depends of course upon one's view of that subject-matter, and by 1874 Brentano is clearly of the opinion that psychology can no longer be regarded as the study of all potentially embodied living beings in the way in which Aristotle and the Aristotelians did, but as the science of "our own psychical phenomena" in much the same way in which the "English empiricists", and David Hume in his *Treatise* in particular did, for, "whether or not there are souls," Brentano remarks, "the fact is there are psychical phenomena".[16] Thus, Brentano's empirical starting point for "psychology" in his *PES*, like Hume's in the *Treatise,* begins with the existences of our experiences, for,

> (I)n the case of cognition through inner perception, what we perceive is *that* a psychical act *exists*. […] No one who pays attention to what goes on within himself when he hears or sees and perceives his act of hearing or seeing could be mistaken about the fact that this judgement of inner [reflective]

[14] Before he published *PES*, Brentano had published two works on Aristotle, his doctoral study, *Von der mannigfachen Bedeutung des Seienden nach Aristoteles*, Freiburg, Herder, 1862; and his habilitation thesis on, *Die Psychologie des Aristoteles, insbesondere seine Lehre vom nous poiētikos*, Mainz, Kirchheim, 1867. Though Brentano becomes clearly very influenced by his study of "the English Empiricists" after completing these works, his reputation as a scholastic continued to accompany him to Vienna in 1874, even if he had departed significantly from Aristotle's views in *PES*. A decade later, he was still regarded as a Scholastic, for, as Husserl recalls, when he arrived at Vienna University in 1884, he went to Brentano's lectures "at first merely out of curiosity, to hear the man who was the subject of so much talk in Vienna at that time, but whom others (and not so very few) derided as a Jesuit in disguise, as a rhetoritician [*viz*], a fraud, a Sophist, and a Scholastic" ("Reminiscences", p. 47). Husserl, however, continues, telling us that he was "soon fascinated and then overcome by the unique clarity and dialectical acuity of his explanations, by the so to speak cataleptic power of his development of problems and theories" (p. 48). And "(M)ost impressive was his effectiveness in those unforgettable philosophy seminars. (I remember the following topics: Hume's *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, and *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*; Helmholtz's lecture *Die Tatsachen der Warhnehmung* (*The Facts of Perception*); and Du Bois-Reymond's *Über die Grenzen des naturerkennens* (*On the Limits of the Knowledge of Nature*)" (Ibidem). One of the chief characteristics of Brentano's thinking, Husserl remarks, is that it "never stood still" (p. 50). This explains the many reputations that followed Brentano, some of which were far from complementary.

[15] *Ibidem*, p. 4, my emphasis.

[16] *PES*, p. 18. See, also, *ibidem*, pp. 16–17, where Brentano directly quotes Hume's *Treatise*, Book I, IV, Sect. 6, and comments on Hume's famous passage on the self as "a bundle or collection of different perceptions".

> perception does not consist in the connection of a mental act as subject with existence as predicate, but consists rather in the simple [= intuitively direct] affirmation of the psychical phenomenon [the current experience] which is present in inner consciousness.[17]

As Hume had put it earlier,

> I hear of a sudden *a noise of a door* opening upon its hinges […] I have never observed that this noise could proceed from anything but the motion of the door, and therefore *conclude* that the present *phenomenon* is a contradiction to all past experiences unless the door […] be still in being.[18]

Even though Brentano disagrees with Hume's denial of the existence of the soul of a human being as the substantial bearer of such psychical phenomena or presentations, he is nonetheless in complete *agreement with Hume* that the existence of these experiences is not only empirically indubitable but the back behind of which, as it were, we cannot *philosophically go to think*. Since these experiences *present what they are* in inner perception, these phenomena, in Brentano's estimation, can now provide psychology with its own subject-matter as they exhibit not only their own peculiar natural kind of unity and continuity that is amenable to direct reflective-philosophic scrutiny but also their own very existences to us via inner perception. Any metaphysical questions pertaining to the existence of such phenomena, then, are unnecessary, and so, simply not part of this modern conception of psychology *as a science*. It suffices to begin with the fact that psychical phenomena exist. Brentano, in other words, takes the fact that psychical phenomena exist to be a factually self-evident truth – that is to say, the inner perception of our own phenomena needs no epistemic justification other than the fact that it is the case and it is true.

The philosophical position which Brentano has now adopted in *PES*, therefore, is not one that is associated with either modern natural science or Aristotle and the Medieval Aristotelians, but is one that originates more in line with Descartes and modern philosophy, where Descartes (famously) remarks in the Second Meditation,

> I am the same [one] who feels, that is to say, who perceives certain things, as by the organs of sense, since in truth I see light, I hear noise, I feel heat. But[,] it will be said[,] these phenomena are false and I am dreaming. Let it be so; still [*and here is the important passage to note*] it is at least quite certain that *it seems to me* that I *see* light, that I *hear* noise, and that I *feel* heat. That *cannot* be false [doubted].[19]

[17] *Ibidem*, pp. 141–142, my emphasis.

[18] David Hume, *A treatise of human nature*, ed. by Lewis Amherst Selby-Bigge, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1896, [1739], p. 196, my emphasis.

[19] René Descartes, *Key philosophical writings, meditations on first philosophy*, translated by Elizabeth S. Haldane and G. R. T. Ross, Ware, Wordsworth, 1997, p. 143 (my emphasis).

Brentano, then, is quite certain, as Descartes, Locke and Hume were before him, that when one confines attention to reflection on one's own actual experiences themselves it seems to him that he feels warmth, hears sounds, and sees colours, *and that there are activities of sensing, thinking, willing, hoping, imagining, fearing, desiring, judging, taking an interest, loving, hating, and so forth*, immediately present there too. This now, in Brentano's estimation, *can* furnish and *does* furnish the science of psychology with its *special* empirical and epistemological (irrefragable) basis.[20] Moreover, if we take this basis *exclusively* as the foundation stone upon which the new science of psychology is to be built, we can, as Brentano notes, define psychology *contra* Aristotle and the Aristotelians as a science "without a soul" since it evades any metaphysics of the soul as "substantial bearer" of such presentations.[21]

Like Hume's "perceptions of the soul," then, Brentano's "psychical phenomena" (experiences) are passively acquired by "the mentally active subject." As an empiricist, he thus accepts the tenet that we can attempt to analyse, order and classify our experiences, but we cannot call our experiences to order. Yet Brentano objects to Hume's psycho-analytic reduction of causality to mere factual psychological association within the mind of the knower precisely on the basis of the causal power of derivation that is operative in any action of a cause and the *existence* of *its* effect. The *mere* succession of one discrete event with another is simply not causality (seeing someone eating ice-cream and seeing that it is a nice sunny day does not mean eating ice-cream causes the sun to shine, nor do we think this). The very meaning of the concept of causality cannot be understood in terms of the *mere succession* of a cause and an effect, for, a cause *also is said or is seen* to impart existence to its effect. Hume, after all, requires both the succession of an impression and the *existence* of *its* "idea" to follow, however "fainter" the latter idea may be, irrespective of whatever his celebrated theory of causality concludes about causality not being a power in a cause and its effect, but the mere mental association of one event followed by another event in expectation that such will happen again.[22] For Brentano, then, causality applies absolutely and across board in all our mental and moral activity as well as our involuntary experiences. As he summarily puts it in his lectures on the existence of God at Würzburg and Vienna Universities:

> In every conclusion we notice that it is produced by the thought of its premisses, in every choice it is effected by its motives. Also, every mental act,

[20] See, *PES*, Book I, Ch. II Psychological method with special reference to its experiential basis, pp. 21–32 (§ 2 Über die Methode der Psychologie, insbesondere die Erfahrung, welche für sie die Grundlage bildet).

[21] *Ibidem*, p. 11.

[22] See, Matthew O'Donnell, "Hume's approach to causation", *Philosophical Studies*, vol. 10, 1960, pp. 64–99.

> such as our seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling, is maintained not by analogy to the law of inertia but only a continually renewed causation (Brentano 1929, p. 287).[23]

Unlike Hume's psychological theory of causation as (mere) succession of (discrete) mental events, therefore, Brentano clearly believes that efficient causality is a "force" in nature where "the laws of co-existence and succession" are operative absolutely, that is to say, causality exists, whether we know (or can know) about such causality, or not.[24] Brentano thus has no need to turn to Kant's elaborate explanation and transcendental-idealist defence against Hume on the necessity of causality as an *a priori* feature of *our human mind*. Nor does Brentano need to subscribe to Kant's approach to nature and natural science where nature, for Kant, is nature *only in so far as we know it by natural-scientific means* (*Prolegomena* §14). Brentano rather, by comparison, is a "scientific realist" and "determinist" in this sense, that causal laws apply necessarily, whether knowable by human beings or not.

Brentano's declaration in the "Forward" to his 1874 study of *PES* "my psychological standpoint is empirical; experience alone is my teacher",[25] nonetheless, is, in effect, a rejection of both ancient Greek Aristotelian philosophical psychology (that he once subscribed to) and any natural-scientific psychology in favour of Hume's celebrated "first maxim, that in the end we must rest contented with experience".[26] For Hume, the mind and its "perceptions", that is to say, the mind with its passively impressed contents of "sensations, passions and emotions *as they make their first appearance* in the soul",[27] whatever caused them to appear there, is where philosophical reasoning begins. This, too, for Brentano, is now the site or "province" of investigation for a new science of empirical psychology of "psychical phenomena in general". The intention of such an investigation in Book II "Psychical Phenomena in General" of *PES*, like Hume's, is to check and clarify the meaning of all words, terms, ideas and concepts against the facts of experience. The two concepts that he chooses to clarify for the natural science of psychology in Book II are "physical phenomena" and "psychical phenomena" because, he tells us, he found

[23] Franz Brentano, *On the existence of God. Lectures given at the Universities of Würzburg and Vienna (1868–1891)*, ed. and translated by Susan F. Krantz, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1987, p. 287.

[24] *PES*, pp. 98–99.

[25] 1874 "Foreword" to *PES*, (p. xxxii). Brentano, indeed, uses this "experiential basis" to assess various accounts of the "psychical phenomena" of the human soul or mind given by philosophers down through the ages (e.g., by Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Descartes, Kant, English empiricists, and also some contemporary natural-scientific attempts). See, *PES*, Book II, § V A Survey of the principal attempts to classify psychical phenomena (pp. 177–193).

[26] Hume, *Treatise*, p. 60.

[27] *Ibidem*, p. 1, my emphasis.

such a high level of "confusion" and "self-contradiction" among scientists and philosophers alike over their use and meaning that "neither agreement nor complete clarity has been achieved regarding the delimitation of the two classes".[28] The only recourse left open here to Brentano, then, is to argue for a return back to the facts of our actual experiences themselves in order to clarify their meaning. He must, in other words, like Hume, "eschew metaphysical hypotheses" in his philosophical-psychological investigations, that is, block off and out any hypothetical-theoretical entertainment of knowledge of that which exists *outside of the experiencing subject* in clarifying basic concepts for the science of empirical psychology.

All of this, however, does not imply that Brentano does not subscribe (implicitly or explicitly) to *any* metaphysical suppositions regarding the nature of the existence of psychical phenomena (and physical phenomena) or the existence of the external world or the existence of the relation between an individual's consciousness and body. He clearly does. For one thing, Brentano agrees with Aristotle's presupposition that only individual things really exist, in this case, however, for Brentano, it is not substances but individual psychical act-experiences (psychical phenomena) and their objectivities (which includes "physical phenomena"). "Inner perception tells me that I am now having such-and-such sound or colour sensations, or that I am now thinking or willing this or that."[29] Moreover, Brentano is acutely aware that *all* empirical natural scientists subscribe to *tacit* metaphysical explanatory hypotheses in their science regarding (1) the absolute existence of the external world outside of the experiencing subject; (2) the human being's sensory ability to perceive that world; and (3) the relationship between the human being and the external world.[30] Since Brentano, however, is only concerned with establishing the existence of a subject-matter for the science of psychology within the continual rise of the natural sciences, he avers the minimalist metaphysical acceptance of the existence of psychical phenomena themselves in inner perception, without explaining or entertaining the relationship between consciousness and one's own body, or between my actual consciousness and the world that exists independently of one's own actual experiences. What solely concerns Brentano, rather, is the inner perception of our own psychical phenomena for without this there simply would be *no subject-matter* for the natural science of psychology to investigate, or for any

[28] *PES*, p. 77.

[29] Brentano, *The origin of our knowledge of right and wrong*, translated by Roderick M. Chisholm and E. Schnerwind, London and New York, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969, pp. 19–20.

[30] Husserl draws attention to these critical passages in *PES*, quoting them in length in his "Appendix" to the *Logical Investigations I* (1900–01), and praises Brentano for his acute observations of these *tacit* metaphysical presuppositions which natural science must adhere to in their scientific pursuits. See, Edmund Husserl, "Appendix: external and internal perception: physical and psychical phenomena," in Edmund Husserl, *Logical investigations*, translated by John N. Findlay, London, Routledge, 1970, pp. 852–869.

scientific endeavour to study and research, including the normative sciences of logic, ethics and aesthetics – it is of that significance for Brentano (as it was for Hume).[31]

What is of concern to Brentano in *PES*, as it was to Hume in the *Treatise*, then, are our experiences themselves, *first and foremost*, as they are "present to the mind" or "perceived." This, then, is why Brentano informs us that, as he uses these terms in *PES*, "conscious act," "consciousness," "psychical act," "mental act" and "psychical phenomenon" are all "synonymous expressions".[32] In sum, his psychology from an empirical standpoint purports to be a science of (conscious) experiences.

Irrespective, therefore, of what external source may have caused our "impressions," or "perceptions," or "psychical phenomena," or "physical phenomena" or "experiences" to appear (in the soul, mind, or body of an individual human being, such makes no difference, in this context, to Hume and Brentano's position), these imprinted experiences are all that we have to go on when reflecting philosophically on our experiences in any *philosophy* of mind.

## BRENTANO'S SWITCH FROM ARISTOTLE TO HUME'S PHILOSOPHY OF PSYCHOLOGY

In *PES*, therefore, Brentano has clearly switched his philosophical allegiance away from Aristotle's approach to the subject-matter of psychology and adopted instead Hume's approach to the mind and its "perceptions" or "psychical phenomena" as Brentano names them. This is the subject-matter for "psychology" that now befits, according to Brentano, the "modern conception" of psychology as a science. Yet he also believes in the reality of causality, that causality is operative in the mind and in nature as Aristotle did. He thus believes that he is justified in concluding, with J.S. Mill from his *System of Logic*, that psychology is a science that "investigates the laws which govern the succession of our mental states, i.e., the laws according to which one of these states produces another".[33]

[31] In this approach, Brentano is thus following Hume who, in the "Introduction" to the *Treatise*, writes: "(T)here is no question of importance whose decision is not comprised in the science of man; and there is none, which can be decided with any certainty, before we become acquainted with that science. In pretending therefore to explain the principles of human nature, we in effect propose a complete system of the sciences, built on a foundation almost entirely new, and the only one upon which they can stand with any security" (p. xx). As one commentator rhetorically remarks, "What is this but a Scottish version of Kant's Copernican Revolution?" H. H. Price, *Hume's theory of the external world*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1st edn, 1940, 1967, p. 9.

[32] *PES*, p. 102. Hence Brentano excludes the "hypothesis" of the "unconscious" in explaining or elucidating our "psychical phenomena". See, *PES*, Book II, Section II Inner Consciousness (pp. 101–137). For Brentano, whatever is in consciousness must be conscious, thus he excludes any consideration of the relation of the unconscious to the conscious. This, of course, was later challenged and addressed by one of Brentano's other famous students from his Vienna period, Sigmund Freud. See, Raymond Fancher, "Brentano's psychology from an empirical standpoint and Freud's early metapsychology", *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 13, 1977, pp. 207–227.

[33] *PES*, p. 12.

In Brentano's view, then, what unites all scientific approaches towards their subject-matter is that they all investigate laws of some kind. Yet Brentano recognises that there are many different kinds of law, and so, many different kinds of science and causalities. Laws of logic, for instance, are normatively prescriptive in character, directing us on how one ought to think correctly. Natural-scientific laws, by comparison, are descriptive in character of how things must be connected, they depict regularities of how things must be and rely upon observation, hypothesis and experiment.[34] Moral laws dictate how a free human being ought to act and behave – one cannot act morally and automatically. Although Brentano, therefore, agrees with Mill's definition of psychology as the study of the laws of our mental states, he never held the belief that the laws determining the kind of thinking that is characteristic and exhibited in the normative disciplines of logic, ethics and aesthetics can be reduced to mere psychological association as Hume and Mill argue or to natural-scientific descriptive laws of fact, and indeed points to Comte's erroneous attempt to "utilize phrenology as an instrument of psychological investigation".[35] Brentano, nevertheless, accepts the validity of natural-scientific causal laws and normative laws determining the human being's activities in mind and matter. This will create difficulties for him in not being able to rule out, in principle, the reduction of normative laws to natural-scientific laws (in the future); but he does not see this as a problem for his view of psychology.[36] What marks the experiences of a valid normative logical, ethical and aesthetical consciousness *as such*, nonetheless, is the necessity of their connections that are evidently true, irrespective of fallible, corrigible, empirical factual-psychological laws of thought. In his insistence, then, that natural-scientific consciousness and normative-scientific consciousness are irreducible to each other, Brentano, philosophically speaking, is much closer to Kant and to Kant's two-domain theory of human consciousness in his *PES* than he is to either Mill or Aristotle (even if Brentano rejects Kant's transcendental-idealist account of causality in nature and agrees with Aristotle on efficient causality).[37] Yet this is why Brentano can be so adamant in his criticism of Mill's attempt to base the validity of the normative sciences of logic, ethics and aesthetics on the basis of empirical inductive generalisations as "an astounding confusion".[38] Still, if all psychical act-experiences that are characteristically lived by *human* beings are to become the subject-matter

[34] *Ibidem*, pp. 98–99.

[35] *Ibidem*, p. 48, and see also, p. 33.

[36] See, Cyril McDonnell, "Hume's 'bundle of perceptions' and the problem of the 'I' in Brentano's psychology from an empirical standpoint", in I. Tănăsescu et al. (eds.), *Brentano and the positive philosophy of Comte and Mill*, pp. 279–308 (pp. 303–305).

[37] Though Brentano reproaches the idealism of Kant, the latter, besides Aristotle and Mill, are the three top authors cited in his *PES*. See, Valentine, p. 296.

[38] Brentano, *Versuch über die Erkenntnis*, ed. by Alfred Kastil, Leipzig, Felix Meiner, 1925, 1970, pp. 57–58, cited in De Boer, "The Descriptive Method of Franz Brentano", p. 102.

for a psychology from an empirical standpoint, then this includes acts of outer perceptual sense experiences as well as all other activities of the human mind, and so, opens up a vast area of research for psychology as a science.[39] Such a psychology will contain, in other words, both natural-scientific investigations and the philosophical empiricism that is broadly in line with Locke, Hume and Mill's approach to the mind: no more, no less. It is in light of this intricate understanding of psychology as a science, that we can understand why Brentano is so enthusiastic in *PES* about the promising prospects for this psychology to become the "science of the future", for,

> The worthiness of a science increases not only according to the manner in which it is known [e.g., from alchemy to chemistry], but also with the worthiness of its object. And the phenomena of the laws of [psychical phenomena] which psychology investigates are superior to physical phenomena not only in that they [psychical phenomena] are true and real in themselves, but also in that they are incomparably more beautiful and sublime. Colour and sound, extension and motion are contrasted with sensation and imagination, judgement and will, with all the grandeur these [psychical] phenomena exhibit in the ideas of the artist, the research of the great thinker, and the self-dedication of the virtuous man. So, we have revealed *in a new way* how the task of the psychologist is higher than that of the natural scientist.[40]

Natural scientists, in other words, may well discover certain laws of natural-scientific empirical fact about light-rays, light-particles, sine waves and sound waves, and so forth, in relation to colours and tones, but what an artist feels, expresses, imagines, judges and wants in their use of colours and tones in her efforts in works of art is *qualitatively different* yet part of the experiences of the psychical. Investigating these specifically *human* experiences and concerns that belong to "the task of the psychologist". It thus now follows for Brentano that,

> Let me point out merely in passing that psychology contains the roots of aesthetics, which, in a more advanced stage of development, will undoubtedly sharpen the eye of the artist and assure his progress. Likewise, suffice to say that the important art of logic, a single improvement in which brings about a thousand advances in science, also has psychology as its source. In addition, psychology has the task of becoming the scientific basis for a theory of education, both of the individual and of society. Along with aesthetics and logic, ethics and politics also stem from the field of psychology. And so,

[39] Specifically human outer perceptual sense experiences, such as, for instance, appreciating nature itself, and not as an object of natural-scientific observation, is thus left out of Brentano's demarcation of "descriptive psychology" or "describing phenomena". It is not left out by later phenomenologists.

[40] *PES*, p. 20, my emphasis.

> psychology appears to be the fundamental condition of human progress in precisely those things which, above all, constitute human dignity.[41]

Underpinning Brentano's confidence in this development of the science of psychology to assure man's progress and human dignity, therefore, is his acceptance of Hume and Mill's philosophical view of psychology as a science that focuses attention on *the experiences of the human being*, whatever these may turn out to be, including the experiences of a normatively valid logical, ethical and aesthetical consciousness as such. Since this conception of psychology as a science *includes* both the natural-scientific and moral progress of human beings, Brentano believes that in *PES* he is steadily following the model (and German translation by Schiel) of Mill's "moral sciences" for "*Geisteswissenshaften*" that incorporates and promotes the methodology of the natural sciences (*Naturwissenshaften*) in the "moral sciences".[42] How these two empirical methods – the method of the natural sciences and the method of the inner perception of our own psychical phenomena which includes the experiences of a valid moral, ethical and logical consciousness as such – are supposed to come together in any unified conception of a modern science of empirical psychology, however, is simply not explained by Brentano in his 1874 study or in his later lectures on descriptive psychology at Vienna. Nor does he see any problem here. He hopes (rather optimistically) that the newly emerging natural science of empirical psychology will sort this issue out "in a more advanced stage of development".

The problem, nevertheless, for Brentano, is this. Whilst we are infallible reporters of the actual acts of experiencing (psychical phenomena) in inner perception, we are not infallible with regard to any knowledge that we can have of *the objects* of the actual acts of outer perceptual-sense experience, that is, of physical phenomena themselves. On the contrary, for Brentano, acts of outer (sense) perception are *inherently* false and *necessarily* misleading *per se*, not because, on some occasions, they are unreliable when we succumb to sense illusions, as Descartes argued, nor because we misinterpret the subjective nature of those experiences as objective qualities of the object perceived, as Locke had demonstrated through his famous experiment of putting one cold hand and one warm hand simultaneously into a basin of water of the same temperature to produce different experiences of "warmth in

[41] *Ibidem*, p. 21. Here, we may detect echoes of conversations that Brentano may have held with John Henry Newman, later Cardinal, whom he met on a visit to his Oratory at Edgbaston in England in 1872 and who was concerned with education (setting up the Catholic University in Dublin, Ireland, in 1851) and who had published his ideas on *The idea of a University* (1852 and 1858). See, Brentano's letter to Herman Schell, in *Herman Schell als Wegbereiter zum II. Vatikanischen Konzil*, ed. by Josef Hasenfuss, Munich, Schöinigh, 1978. See, also, Valentine, "British sources in Brentano's psychology from an empirical standpoint", p. 293.

[42] Oskar Kraus notes that Brentano, when quoting from Mill's *System of Logic*, uses Schiel's German translation published in 1849 on the basis of the first edition of Mill's *Logic* (1843). *PES*, p. 48, (editor's) n.

one hand and cold in the other, and thus proved that neither warmth nor cold really existed in the water".[43] The way in which sensorially perceivable qualities such as warmth, sound and colour *really* and *truly exist* extra-mentally, for Brentano, are *as* "molecular movements", "atoms", "light rays", "forces", and so forth, that is to say, as the theoretically-constructed objects which are discovered and discoverable via modern natural science.

To understand and be fair to Brentano's position here, therefore, we must recognise *two different* meanings that Brentano operates for the one term of "physical phenomena" in *PES*.

"Physical phenomena", in sense[1], are Lockean so-called secondary qualities, that is, sensorially perceivable qualities (colours, sounds, odours, warmth etc.) which exist as the objects *of those actual experiences*. These exist *only as long as the actual experience occurs*. They thus enjoy *only* phenomenal existence. They exist as "immanent objects" of actual acts of outer perceptual-sense experience. As Locke's experiment demonstrates, warmth only exists in the experiencing and not as an actual objective property of things existing extra-mentally (water).

"Physical phenomena", in sense[2], are the theoretically-constructed objects of natural science (light particles, sine waves, forces, etc.). When considered from a natural-scientific-theoretical point of view, *these* "physical phenomena" enjoy actual existence in a world that is hypothesized by the natural scientist as one that is "extended in space and flowing in time", whether we are made aware of their actual existence through natural-scientific means, or not.

It now follows, for Brentano, that since we think the colours that we see and the sounds that we hear (physical phenomena in sense[1]) *really and truly* exist *as that* outside of the experience in the objects of those experiences, say, as accidental modifications of a substance, as Aristotle held, but the way these phenomena really and truly exist are as they have been uncovered by *natural-scientific means and investigations* (i.e., as physical phenomena in sense[2], as molecular movements, light particles, sine waves, atoms, forces etc..), our everyday natural acts of outer sense perception are inherently mis-leading (*falsch-nehmung*). The correct view of outer sense perception is that sensorially perceivable *phenomenal* objects (colours and sounds) are "signs" of an extra-mental reality that really and truly exists as *determined by natural-scientific fact*, i.e., as light rays and sound waves. This is why Brentano feels justified in concluding that, from this perspective,

> we have no right, therefore, to believe that the objects of so-called outer perception really exist as they appear to us. Indeed, they demonstrably do not exist [as properties of the objects] outside of us [as shown through natural science, as is evident from the context]. In contrast to that which really and truly exists ['physical phenomena', *qua* molecules, light particles], they [physical

[43] *PES*, p. 6.

> phenomena, *qua* colours] are *mere* phenomena. […] We have no experience of that which truly exists [*qua* objects of physics], in and of itself, and that which we do experience [*qua* sensorial perceivable qualities of an object] is not true. The truth of physical phenomena is, as they say, only a relative truth.[44]

Though Brentano calls the theoretically constructed objects of natural science "physical phenomena", these are kinds of things that *never can appear or ever do appear directly to (or in) consciousness*, and since he takes these "physical phenomena" (theoretical objects of physics) to have in truth, *actual* existence and not phenomenal existence, he has to qualify what he means in his definition of modern physics as the science of "pure physical phenomena", by now explaining that,

> I believe that I will not be mistaken if I assume that the definition of natural science as the science of physical phenomena is frequently connected with the concept of forces belonging to *a world which is similar to the one extended in space and flowing in time*; forces which, through their influence on the sense organs, arouse sensation and mutually influence each other in their action, and of which natural science investigates the laws of co-existence and succession. If those objects are considered as the objects of natural sciences, there is also the advantage [over 'physical phenomena' considered as sensorial objects of actual acts of outer sense perception, as is evident from the context] that this science appears to have as its object something that really and truly exists.[45]

We could put Brentano's understanding of the task of the natural scientist in this way. The natural scientist begins with phenomena as objects of our immediate experience, say, seeing a green leaf on a tree, in order to explain to us later that this is not how the greenness of the leaf *actually exists* independently of our experiences. The greenness of the leaf exists, rather, as actual light-particles or wave-lengths or wavicles, and as an upside-down image residing in the retina of the eye stimulating certain C-fibres in one's brain, and so forth. These objects, the objects of natural science, have "real", "actual", "true" and "absolute" [= independent] existence, outside of the mind. By comparison to *these* objects of physics, the sounds and colours that we experience exist *only as long as* the actual act of hearing and seeing occurs. Thus the "physical phenomena" of sounds and colours do not have "real", "actual", "true" and "absolute" [= independent] existence outside of the mind's activity. They depend upon the actual psychical act-experiences for their existence. They can *only* have a kind of relative existence *to* the *actual* psychical act-experience. They have *only* mental (or intentional) existence and *only* phenomenal existence since these sensorially perceivable qualities exist only as long as the experiencing subject is having such experiences. Thus Brentano has to qualify and

[44] Ibidem, p. 10 and p. 19, my emphasis.
[45] Ibidem, pp. 99–100, my emphasis.

specify the particular task that faces all of the natural sciences in their endeavours, beyond our everyday observation of things about us, by pointing out,

> We could express the scientific task of the natural sciences by saying something to the effect that they are those sciences which seek to explain the succession of physical phenomena connected with normal and pure sensations (that is, sensations which are not influenced by special mental conditions and processes) on the basis of the assumption of a world with resembles one which has three dimensional extension in space and flows in *one* direction in time, and which influences our sense organs. Without explaining the absolute nature of this world, these sciences would limit themselves to ascribing to it forces capable of producing sensations and of exerting a reciprocal influence upon one another, and determining for these forces the laws of co-existence and succession. Through these laws they would then establish indirectly the laws of succession of the physical phenomena of sensations, if, through scientific abstraction from the concomitant mental conditions, we admit that they manifest themselves in a pure state and as occurring in relation to a constant sensory capacity. We must interpret the expression "science of physical phenomena" in this somewhat complicated way if we want to identify it with natural science.[46]

When, nevertheless, the natural scientist decrees that the objects of his science really and truly *exist*, whereas the physical phenomena (of sounds and colours) do *not really and truly exist as they are in our experiencing of them*, that natural scientist turns into a metaphysician of sorts, or, perhaps more accurately speaking, into a metaphysician of the natural-scientific-materialist variety.[47] In Brentano's account of physical phenomena and his defence of the way natural science uncovers the reality of these phenomena (as molecular movements), Brentano, therefore, like so many of his contemporaries, is a natural-scientific materialist. Yet it is of importance to distinguish this natural-scientific materialism from the philosophical materialism of a Thales or a Democritus or an Aristotle since their materialisms are based on philosophical reflection and philosophical speculation, and not on the established facts and results of modern natural science as Brentano's is.[48] Nature, insofar as it is known and capable of being known through natural-scientific

[46] *Ibidem*, pp. 98–99.

[47] If we assume that natural science will provide the basis for all such knowledge claims, then this is a version of what Timm Triplett calls "theoretical basics foundationalism", in his paper, "Recent work on foundationalism", *American Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 27, 1990, pp. 93–116 (p. 98). Triplett remarks that this particular version of foundationalism (that Cornman identifies) "would hold that the theoretical statements of science are basic, being epistemologically prior to propositions about subjective psychological states and to ordinary singular propositions about the external world. However, I do not find any clear advocacy of such a view in the literature" (Ibidem). It seems to me, however, that this is exactly the position that Brentano endorses and advocates in *PES* in his understanding of "the scientific task of the natural sciences" cited in our previous quote *supra*, n. 46.

[48] See, John Passmore, *A hundred years of philosophy*, London, Penguin, 1968, 1980, p. 35.

means, not the existence of nature outside of this scientific parameter, is solely Brentano's focus here as it was for Kant in his *Prolegomena*.[49]

In opposition to both Hume and Kant, nevertheless, Brentano maintains that causality is a necessary feature of the world, even if it is ultimately unknowable in-itself. The law of gravity, for instance, as Brentano writes in his 1869 paper on "Auguste Comte and Positive Philosophy," necessarily applies under certain conditions, whether we know anything about it, or not; and we cannot know how gravity works, producing its effect, from a natural-scientific perspective, without utilizing the method of observation, mathematical hypothesis and experimentation. For Brentano, then, *that* there is causality operative *absolutely* in nature and in the nature of my own will – Brentano uses the example of directing his pen to write – cannot be denied, even if we do not know "the how and why" of such causality, or why causality is *operative at all:* "neither I nor anybody else can say".[50] It is precisely because of the reality of causality both inside and outside of the mind, therefore, that Brentano rejects both Hume's reduction of causality in the world to the mere, albeit unavoidable but epistemologically unjustifiable, psychological association of ideas of cause and effect in one's own mind and Kant's idealistic projection of causality as a necessary feature onto the world in the mind of the natural scientist in order to conduct their modern natural science research into nature.

Notwithstanding all of the above, however, when it comes to the science of psychology in his *PES*, it is the positivism of the "modern English philosophers" to which Brentano is committed in his view of *psychology as a science* because the primary objects that are perceived as they are in themselves are one's own actual experiences. "Inner perception", Brentano re-iterates in his next publication, after *PES*, on *The Origin of our Knowledge of Right and Wrong* (1889), "tells me that I am now having such-and-such sound or colour sensations, or that I am now thinking or willing this or that."[51] Whether one wishes to emphasize the point that it is "I" who am having such and such sensations, or that there exists acts of thinking or willing or sensing this or that, or that the objects of such particular

[49] In §14 of his *Prolegomena*, Kant stresses that "*Nature* is the *existence* of things, insofar as that existence is determined according to universal laws," for, "(I)f nature meant the existence of things *in themselves*, we would never be able to cognize it, either *a priori* or *a posteriori* […]. My understanding, and the conditions under which alone it can connect the determinations of things in their existence, prescribes no rules to the things themselves; these do not conform to my understanding, but my understanding would have to conform to them" (p. 46). For Kant, then, if we could know the existence of things in themselves, there would be no possibility of any modern natural science at all. Though Brentano rejects Kant's explanation and reduction of the necessity of cause and effect to (an *a priori* mental structure of) the mind of the modern natural scientist, he does not reject the necessity of cause and effect that the natural scientist presupposes and assumes in their modern science of *the existence* of nature, even if *this* is something that is, ultimately, unfathomable in itself. See Brentano's essay on "Auguste Comte and positive philosophy (1869)", translated by Susan Krantz Gabriel, in Tănăsescu et al., *Brentano and the positive philosophy of Comte and Mill*, pp. 437–456

[50] Brentano, "Auguste Comte and positive philosophy (1869)", pp. 448–49.

[51] Brentano, *The origin of our knowledge of right and wrong*, pp. 19–20.

psychical act-experiences are the directly intended objects of sensation, cognition and volition, it is the actual psychical act-experiences as *particular experiences themselves* that, in Brentano's view, constitute the origin upon which all empirical and normative judgements are based.[52] It is this facticity of our experiences that marks Brentano's empirical standpoint, and so, marks pre-eminently what he understands as a psychology from an empirical standpoint.

Brentano, therefore, must, like Hume, distinguish a philosophical approach to the mind from any natural-scientific psychology, and so, after *PES* Brentano begins to distinguish two components of the science of psychology into what he calls "descriptive psychology" and "genetic psychology". The genetic-experimental psychologist is concerned with natural-scientific causal analysis of the human organism, but this can give us no guide or insight into the origin of what we know and can know through reflection on our own psychical phenomena. It is, nonetheless, with the latter task that "descriptive psychology", "describing phenomenology", or "psychognosy" (all labels Brentano coins for this science) is concerned. Though Brentano tells his students in his lectures on descriptive psychology that he is borrowing a model he noticed that had occurred in the development of certain natural sciences into descriptive and genetic component parts for their natural science for the science of empirical psychology –'(I)n the same way as orognosy and geognosy precede geology in the field of mineralogy, and anatomy generally precedes physiology in the more closely related field of the human organism, psychognosy [descriptive psychology] [...] must be positioned prior to genetic psychology"[53] – the distinction that Brentano actually follows philosophically is Hume's distinction between the anatomy of the mind characteristic of his philosophical approach and the anatomy of the body that concerns natural scientists. These, however, are distinct and unrelated fields of enquiry.

## BRENTANO'S DISTINCTION BETWEEN DESCRIPTIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND GENETIC PSYCHOLOGY

Even though Brentano says his science of descriptive psychology and the natural science of empirical psychology are two components of the one science of psychology, causal-hypothetical investigations into the laws that bring about the existence of our phenomena in consciouses do not figure in descriptive psychology; they belong rather to that part of the natural science of psychology which Brentano calls genetic psychology, for, as Hume had put it earlier, "The examination of our sensations belongs more to anatomists and natural philosophers [natural scientists] than to moral [philosophers]; and therefore shall not at present be enter'd upon."[54]

[52] Brentano never relinquishes this position after *PES*. See, *PES*, Appendix XII "Thinking is Universal, Entities are Individual [Dictated November 21, 1917]," pp. 311–314. Brentano died on March 17, 1917; so, this must have been dictated earlier.

[53] *DP*, Ch. 1 "Psychognosy and Genetic Psychology", pp. 3–11 (p. 8).

[54] Hume, *Treatise*, p. 8. Brentano, *DP*, p. 4.

Brentano, therefore, is following Hume philosophically when he tells his students in his lectures on "Descriptive Psychology" that:

> Psychognosy [Descriptive Psychology] […] teaches [us] nothing about the causes that give rise to human consciousness […] [and will] never mention a physico-chemical process in any of its doctrines (*Lehrsätze*). […] For, correct as it is to say that such processes are preconditions for consciousness, one must resolutely contradict the person who, out of a confusion of thought, claims that our consciousness in itself is to be seen as a physico-chemical event, that it itself is composed out of chemical elements.[55]

Genetic psychology deploys the same method that characterizes all of the natural sciences, namely, the method of observation, hypothesis and experimentation. By comparison to this natural-scientific-theoretical approach to our psychical phenomena, descriptive psychology endeavours to describe human consciousness itself and its contents in a direct, non-hypothetical, intuitive manner of reflection. Thus "Psychognosy [Descriptive Psychology] will, therefore, even in its highest state of perfection, never mention a physico-chemical process in any of its doctrines (*Lehrsätze*)."[56]

Brentano is quite clear about this point that the method of the natural sciences is inapplicable to the study of *human* consciousness, but he also notes that the descriptive psychologist cannot rely on observation and critical metaphysical speculation on the nature of familiar living things around us (plants, animals, human beings) as Aristotle and the medieval Aristotelians did. Nevertheless, "(W)hether or not there are souls [as substantial bearers of our psychical phenomena], the fact is there are psychical phenomena".[57] Although Brentano believes that Hume is misguided in denying the existence of our soul as substantial bearer of our own psychical phenomena, he is nonetheless in entire agreement with Hume that modern (descriptive) psychology concerns itself solely with the unity and continuity of our actual experiences themselves as presented in the inner perception of our own psychical phenomena. The science of descriptive psychology can thus exclude any "metaphysical presuppositions" into the nature of the soul and the question of its immateriality or immortality, and concentrate instead on psychical phenomena themselves as presented in inner perception. This, then, is why Brentano feels justified in concluding in *PES* that,

> Nothing, therefore, stands in our way if we adopt the modern definition [of psychology as the science of psychical phenomena] instead of defining psychology as the science of the soul. Perhaps both are correct. The differences, which still exist between them, are that the old definition contains metaphysical

[55] *DP*, p. 4.
[56] *Ibidem*.
[57] *PES*, p. 18.

> presuppositions from which the modern one is free [...]. Consequently, the adoption of the modern conception simplifies our work. Furthermore, it offers an additional advantage: any exclusion of an unrelated question not only simplifies, but also reinforces the work. It shows that the results of our investigations are dependent on fewer presuppositions, and thus lends greater certainty to our convictions.[58]

Whether both modern and Aristotelian definitions of psychology are compatible or correct, Brentano is clearly championing modern British psychological empiricism over and against ancient Greek empiricism in his definition of psychology as a study that is based upon the inner perception of our own psychical phenomena. Like Hume, Brentano believes that access to one's own consciousness is peculiarly direct and certain in comparison to anything else, and that includes access to anybody else's mental life experiences. I can know the mental life of another human being *but only by way of analogy* based upon the inner perception of one's own psychical phenomena, "(F)or, someone else can no more apprehend my psychical phenomena through inner perception that I can those that belong to him".[59] This is why Brentano stresses the point that by comparison to "the direct perception of our own psychical phenomena we [can only] have an *indirect knowledge of the mental phenomena of others*".[60]

Brentano's *methodological* doctrine of inner perception, therefore, prevents him from acknowledging the recognition of *the existence* of another *directly* as other, as an experiential fact of one's own mental life. This marks a significance difference between Brentano's starting point and Dilthey's concept of understanding others in what Dilthey also called "descriptive psychology".[61] What Dilthey calls "descriptive psychology" and Brentano calls "descriptive psychology" are entirely different concepts of descriptive psychology. Identity in terms is not identity in concepts. Behind the terminological agreement that exists here between Brentano and Dilthey there are substantial and major philosophical differences in concepts of descriptive psychology that they developed in the nineteenth century, which was later only to play out in the controversial dispute between Husserl and Heidegger in the twentieth century over what kind of "science" was appropriate in the advancement of "phenomenology" – in the direction of Brentano's "[psycho-analytic] science" *or* Dilthey's "[hermeneutic] science".[62] Yet Brentano's concept is clearly not a return to Aristotle and Aquinas's view of self-knowledge for even

[58] *Ibidem*, p. 18–19.

[59] *Ibidem*, p. 37.

[60] *Ibidem*.

[61] See, Wilhelm Dilthey, "Ideas concerning a descriptive psychology and analytic psychology (1894)", in W. Dilthey, *Descriptive psychology and historical understanding*, translated by Richard M. Zaner and Kenneth L. Heiges, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1977, pp. 21–120.

[62] For further explanation of this issue, see, Cyril McDonnell, "The Origins of the Husserl-Heidegger philosophical dispute in twentieth-century phenomenology," *Maynooth Philosophical Papers*, vol. 9, 2018, pp. 81–112.

though, as Aquinas notes, "Our mind knows itself not by its own substance but by its activities – and through a consideration of those activities man can come to a general understanding of the mind's nature – but that requires diligent and subtle investigation" (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a. q. 87. a.1), the mind can only know itself *secondarily* and not immediately or directly through such immediate reflective considerations as Descartes, Locke and Hume were later to maintain. Brentano now follows Locke and Hume's approach, and not Aquinas or Aristotle's, nor Dilthey's or any modern natural scientist's.

Brentano, nevertheless, does not follow completely the empirically-analytic approach of the "English empiricists" in his investigations into the workings of the mind and its contents because Brentano believes that only an appeal to the evidence of necessarily true judgements about our experiences can be invoked in order to reach clarity and resolve disputes among scientists and philosophers alike over the meaning of central concepts deployed in their science. "Another important difference", therefore, between the science of descriptive psychology and the natural sciences that Brentano explicitly notes in his lectures on "Descriptive Psychology" is that descriptive psychology "is an exact science, and that in contrast, genetic psychology, in all its determinations, in an inexact one".[63] By exact science, Brentano means those "sciences which can formulate their doctrines sharply and precisely", such as, for instance, "a mathematician doesn't say: the sum of the angles of a triangle is often, or usually, equal to two right angles. But he says that this is always and without exception the case".[64] Since descriptive psychology is an exact science it seeks this kind of mathematical precision and accuracy in its general knowledge-claims about our experiences removing all "confusion" and" misunderstanding" from its descriptions of its "phenomena", whether they be "physical" or "psychical phenomena".[65] By comparison, all natural-scientific investigations, including genetic psychology, seek empirical knowledge-claims that are true for the most part, but such truths are *never* necessarily true. This is because all natural-scientific investigations depends upon what Brentano calls "induction in the narrower sense" which, as Brentano defines this, "derives a general law from one or several experienced facts,", and in which, as Hugo Bergman comments, "the cognition of the law is not absolutely certain, but only probable, because we have no immediate insight into the reason for the fact".[66] From an epistemological point of view, empirical-hypothetical-scientific generalisations produce highly probable knowledge-claims but these are always confined to checking the validity of such laws against the perceived instances. We always have to go back to these, hence these general laws are always "narrowed down", as it were, to these instances.

[63] *DP*, p. 4–5.
[64] *Ibidem*, p. 5.
[65] *PES*, p. 77.
[66] Hugo Bergman, "Brentano's Theory of Induction", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 5, no. 2, 1944, pp. 281–292 (pp. 281–282).

Many experiments, of course, do prove the hypothesis. As Brentano tells his students,

> Helmholtz in his investigations on the nature of tone colours. (Namely the use of resonators, tuned to specific tones: the resonators enabled one to distinguish these tones in sounds in which they did not clearly stand out). In following this experiment, one could admittedly still doubt whether the tone-phenomenon in question really contained the overtones, or whether it is to be regarded as the effect of the simultaneous influence of different sound-waves, each of which would separately have brought about one of those tones. But in sharply concentrating his attention, Helmholtz later succeeded in really hearing the tones which he could only suppose to exist in the sound. The genetic experiment gave rise to the right hypothesis, and this was in this case, as so often, essential in facilitating the discovery of the truth.[67]

By relying on observations, hypothesis and experimentation, Helmholtz, like every other natural scientist, was able to discover certain general natural-scientific true facts about our experiences of sounds and sine-waves. In the above example, the hypothesis was verified, but, as in all natural-scientific enquiries, something *in principle* could always be discovered via this natural-scientific methodology which disproves the hypothesis. Even though the characteristic method of the natural sciences is committed to "experiment as the source of knowledge, mathematical formulation as the descriptive medium, mathematical deduction as the guiding principle in the search for new phenomena to be verified by experimentation",[68] no modern natural scientist claims (apodictic) certainties in their knowledge-claims about their discoveries for their science. This is why Brentano correctly labels them as "inexact sciences". To be empirically inductive in the narrow sense in one's scientific generalizations, nonetheless, is not a fault of natural science; it is rather, as Brentano correctly insists, "*essential* in facilitating the discovery of the truth [i.e., their natural-scientific truths]". By drawing attention to the "inexact" nature of the natural sciences, then, Brentano is not trying to "discredit the scientific legitimacy of genetic psychology [natural science] or to describe it as a hotbed of arbitrary speculations", but to point out that, by comparison to the exact sciences, "genetic psychology is […] incapable of formulating its doctrines other than in the imprecise manner of the inexact sciences".[69] By comparison to the inexact sciences, in the exact sciences, Brentano argues, "[W]e carry out an induction in a broader sense whenever we draw a general law from an experienced fact, even if this is done without any inferential process; the reason for the fact becoming immediately

[67] *DP*, p. 1, my emphasis.

[68] E.J. Dijksterhuis, *The mechanization of the world picture*, translated by C. Dikshoorn, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1961, p. 3.

[69] *DP*, p. 7.

evident from the distinct apperception of the concept".[70] In his 1889 lecture on "The origin of our knowledge of right and wrong", Brentano speaks of such cognition of universal *a priori* truths "at one stroke and without induction [in the narrower sense]".[71] Using Leibniz's distinction, Brentano argues that descriptive psychology seeks "truths of reason" (*vérités de raison*) as opposed to "truths of fact" (*vérités de fait*). In thus seeking to establish descriptive psychology as an *a priori* science that arrives at its knowledge-claims based on "induction in the broader sense", Brentano, as de Boer comments, "in reality here employs a method that is never used in the natural sciences and is more akin to that of mathematics".[72] In this, therefore, Brentano is a true follower of Kant of the *Prolegomena* for Kant too, despite his Copernican revolution, looked to mathematics as the model for the new philosophy of the future that would be able to call itself "a science".

Brentano's descriptive method for psychology, then, contains two components: particular experiences as the empirical basis from which the content of all meaning is to be found and mathematical induction of necessary features of the concepts deployed in the description of those experiences themselves. This is the *a priori empiricism* to which Brentano committed his new science of philosophy as descriptive psychology, and it is one that caught and ignited Husserl's attention.

## CONCLUSION: SITUATING BRENTANO'S NEW SCIENCE OF PHILOSOPHY AS DESCRIPTIVE PSYCHOLOGY IN COMPARISON TO OTHER SCIENTIFIC CONCEPTIONS OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

From the 1870s onwards, encountering external things, independently of our experiences, whether animate or inanimate, is not the first concern for Brentano *qua* philosopher in any philosophical psychology from an empirical standpoint as he now understands it, just as it had not been earlier for Hume. Following instead some kind of Cartesian foundational empiricism, the first reality to be examined by the psychologist *qua* philosopher is the "perceptions" of our soul as Hume puts it,

[70] Bergmann, p. 281. Bergman remarks, "Brentano's 'induction in a broader sense' seems to be very close to Husserl's 'essential intuition'." *Ibidem*. The difference, nonetheless, is that for Husserl there are general objects, e.g., colour, which is not a colour (or a coloured thing), given directly to our experiences and this "eidos" is this "object" that is the target of eidetic insight that underpin *a priori* judgements such as "colour implies extension". Brentano's Aristotelian metaphysical prejudice that only individuals exist, prevents him from "seeing" these "objects" as objects of a descriptive-empirical science. Brentano thinks these are platonic entities. Cf., *PES*, Appendix (1911), Supplementary Remarks, IX "On genuine and fictitious objects," pp. 291–301. Husserl, however, only notes that colour is a general object given to our experience *sui generis* and one that is not ontologically *a priori* but epistemologically *a priori* to particular sense judgements (sensuous intuitions as Husserl calls them, or outer perceptions of physical phenomena as Brentano names them).

[71] Bergmann, p. 281.

[72] De Boer, "The descriptive method of Franz Brentano", p. 106.

that is, whatever experiences have been impressed upon us and out of which we generate any knowledge-claim about anything of significance to us about ourselves and the real world about us, for, "in the end we must rest content with experience". Yet Brentano also notes that the modern natural scientist begins with the presupposition that there is an absolute world, existing independently of our experiences, though this world is not a world of substances (and accidents) *à la* Aristotle or of everyday objects of natural experiences, water and hills, but one that is governed by and follows independent laws of succession and co-existence, with the *provisio*, that these laws are laws that are hypothetically-constructed using the method of the natural sciences and abstracted from our "immediate experiential facts" ("*Erfahrungstatsachen*").[73] We can thus look at the human being and that being's experiences from *either* a descriptive-psychological philosophical point of view *or* from a natural-scientific point of view. To do the former, we have to abstract from the natural-scientific point of view and *vice versa*, to conduct a natural-scientific analysis of the experiences of a human being we have to abstract from our actual experiences. Brentano's component of descriptive psychology, in other words, was always, from its very conception and inception, a distinct and unrelated science to the natural science of empirical psychology. It was an autonomous science.

Brentano, like Hume, nonetheless, is aware of the historical emergence of the new natural science of empirical psychology, yet again, following Hume, for Brentano this science does not play a major role in their philosophical approaches and study of the mind. That said, Brentano would like to suggest and thinks that there is some inherent connection between "the English empiricists" in their elaboration of a "modern conception" of psychology and the budding new natural science of empirical psychology, so much so, that Brentano predicts future developments in the natural science of empirical psychology as impacting on the entire breadth of what concerns the humanities. In this assumption, Brentano, unlike Aristotle and Hume, thinks that psychology, as Brentano now understands it, is both first philosophy and the future queen of the natural sciences. This, however, does not mean that Brentano rejects the traditional science of metaphysics as the study of the being of things as Kant had, or that metaphysics, as Comte thought, points back to some bygone days and ways of unscientific mystical thinking in philosophy. Metaphysics is still part of philosophy, with its own tradition and its own subject-matter, but it is not psychology, nor the goal of all our learning and science. Unlike Comte, then, who ruled out psychology as a genuine science since inner observation is impossible, the inner perception of our own psychical phenomena becomes for Brentano the province (and battlefield) for the regeneration of a rigorous universal scientific philosophy, *a psychology* from an empirical standpoint

[73] *PES*, pp. 40–4. That *this basis* in "inner perception" later becomes a *dispensable* source (*eine entbehrliche Quelle*) in Husserl's elaboration of the intuition of essences in the *Logical Investigations* (1900–01) was, therefore, entirely incomprehensible to Brentano.

(with two component parts: descriptive and genetic psychology). Brentano even believes that this new way of doing science in psychology would be still able to address the question that inaugurated the science of psychology in the first place, the question of the continued existence of the soul after death of the body, although it would be better now described, Brentano notes, as "the question whether our mental life somehow continues even after the destruction the body, […] though it would be more appropriate to call it immortality of life than of the soul". [74]

Yet sometime after his completion of his 1866 habilitation thesis on Aristotle's psychology, Brentano does become aware of the major difference in the conceptions of natural science conducted by ancient Greek or medieval authors (as the study of the eternal causes of things that are) and modern natural science that does not consider this its remit. He thus (correctly) believes that Kant, Comte and positivism in general do not seem to be aware of the major developments in the meaning of scientific laws and in natural science itself. In Aristotle's day, for instance, as Karl Lewin has shown, "the principle of law-governendess applies only to heavenly bodies, not to the things here below. The lawful and general [thus] stand in contrast to the historical and unique."[75] Natural science of law-governedness was of the stars, not particular existences (animate or inanimate) here on earth. "[E]ven the principle of law-governedness is historical."[76] Accordingly, there could be no science of history for Aristotle either. History recorded facts (deeds), not eternal motion. From within the hierarchy of science, then, Aristotle could not but consider the study of history as the least scientific of all the disciplines precisely because it concerned itself only with the recounting of individual facts, recording great deeds, moments of significance. By comparison, poetry was considered by Aristotle as being more scientific than history precisely because it investigated universal and eternal characteristics of human motives and experiences. History, nonetheless, in stark contrast, told stories. It focuses on singular events and singular facts (*facta*, deeds done) that are not coherently connected by any eternal law nor follow any lawful and eternally ordained motion at all. It was not considered a science by Aristotle at all (and maybe this is why Brentano had no interest in Dilthey's privileging of

[74] *PES*, p. 13. This was to be final topic addressed in BK VI for *PES*. Brentano had planned six books for *PES* ("Foreword to the 1874 Edition", p. xxvii–xxix) but only published the first two: Book I "Psychology as a science" and Book II "Psychical phenomena in general". The remaining books were to deal with the relation between the mind and the body, culminating in addressing the question of immortality (Book VI). For an account of Brentano's treatment of the theme of the immateriality and immortality of the soul during his Würzburg lectures on psychology leading up to the publication of *PES* and Brentano's plan of his final and sixth book see Robin D. Rollinger, "Brentano's *psychology from an empirical standpoint:* Its background and conception," in Ion Tănăsescu, (ed.), *Franz Brentano's metaphysics and psychology*, Bucharest, Zeta, 2012, pp. 261–309 (pp. 289–296).

[75] K. Lewin, "Der Übergang von der aristotelischen zu galileischen Denkweise in Biologie und Psychologie", *Erkenntnis* I, 1930/31, cited in Theodorus de Boer, *Foundations of a critical psychology*, translated by Theodore Plantinga, Pittsburgh, Duquesne University Press, 1983, p. 25, n. 24.

[76] *Ibidem*.

history as the main model of "science" for "psychology" and "the human sciences" in the nineteenth century). No modern natural science, however, considers its own science as a search for knowledge of the eternal causes of what makes things to be the kind of things they *always* are, the eternal form and motion of things. Brentano, nonetheless, is thoroughly aware of this, more than most of his contemporary thinkers and natural scientists; or, at least he became fully aware of this from the time of his study of Comte as is evident from his 1869 paper on "Auguste Comte and Positive Philosophy".

Alongside the continual rise of the natural sciences into the nineteenth century, nonetheless, grew the study of history in this century. It, too, had blossomed into, and become a science (or field of study) in a very different way to the way in which it was considered by Aristotle. Hegel, no doubt, exercised influence on this, but by the mid-1830s his idealist-metaphysical view on the historical march of reason had been rejected, though the significance of history had not, by Brentano's contemporary, Dilthey. In stark contrast to Brentano, Dilthey championed history as the model of science for the humanities precisely because "[W]e are historical beings before we become observers of history".[77] Yet this very "fact" meant for Dilthey that any historical approach to understanding the meaning of concepts and human experiences should clearly not be aligned to *either* any mathematical science of eternal truths *or* any natural science that finds its methodology rooted in sense observation, mathematical hypothesis, and experiment analysing those aspects or factors of things that follow coherent and determinate law-governedness as theoretically constructed in natural science. As Dilthey puts it in his 1894 Berlin Academy essay, "[M]an does not apprehend what he is by brooding over himself, nor by doing psychological experiments, but rather by history."[78] Rejecting both inner perception in its Cartesian-Lockean-Humean-Kantian variety and natural science, Dilthey proposed, instead, "the understanding (*Verstehen*)" and "hermeneutics" as the more appropriate model of "science" to follow in the humanities (*Geisteswissenschaften*), omitting psychology as a science from the human sciences when it referred to the natural empirical science of psychology (*Naturwissenschaften*). And because hermeneutics must always be based upon the individual, a play or a poem, the word in a sentence, the significance of a historical event, a mood, or an experience, this was "the science of the unique".[79]

[77] Wilhelm Dilthey, *Der Aufbau der Geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften*, GS 7, edited by B. Groethuysen, 2nd ed., Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1956, p. 278.

[78] Dilthey, "Ideas concerning a descriptive psychology and analytic psychology (1894)", p. 63.

[79] "The historical sense based on this assumption enables man to recapture the whole of his past; he can look across all the barriers of his own age at past cultures and increase his happiness by drawing strength from them and enjoying their charm. While the systematic human studies (*Geisteswissenschaften*) derive general laws and comprehensive patterns from the objective apprehension of the unique *they still rest on understanding and interpretation*. These disciplines, therefore, like history, depend for their certainty on the possibility of giving general validity to the understanding of *the unique."* Wilhelm Dilthey, "The development of hermeneutics", in W. Dilthey, *Selected Writings*, translated by H.P. Rickman, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976, pp. 247–263 (p. 247), my emphasis.

Dilthey, in other words, thought it was a fundamental mistake to align the study of the Humanities to natural science, the Humanities rather needs a different model and different approach, one that was neither natural-scientific nor an eidetics of the facticity of our experiences, as Husserl had advocated, but a hermeneutic of the rationality of the significances that is deposited and contained in the facticity of those experiences themselves as expressed in language. The model of text, rather than of thing, is more appropriate here, and so,

> Because our mental life finds its fullest and most complete expression only through language, […] explication finds completion and fullness only in the interpretation of the written testimonies of human life.[80]

Though Dilthey proposed this "method" and called this a "science", such hermeneutic science is not really any kind of "science" in any ancient, medieval, modern or contemporary sense at all. It is rather more akin to the act of retrieving the significance of what is deposited by an artist in understanding ourselves in time and over time, in a text, a play, a poem, like reading a platonic dialogue. The only law here for our re-living (*Nacherleben*) is that of situating one's particular experience (e.g. of reading a play) in the context of the totality of our experiences that is permanently open to re-interpretation of that deposited self-understanding in relation to other-understanding over time and in time but which is never, in principle, complete. Dilthey, therefore, would probably have been better off if he had *not called this a science at all*; but the century in which he lived, post Kant's *Prolegomena*, demanded science of philosophy, even if, as Dilthey well knew, both the models of natural science and mathematical science for philosophy, which Kant advocated, were resolutely inappropriate for the human sciences.

Unlike Dilthey, nevertheless, Brentano does not oppose psychology (philosophy) and the humanities to natural science, seeing this unified in all kinds of science of nature and moral science. Yet philosophy as descriptive psychology is clearly not a modern natural empirical science, it is more akin to mathematics, and it certainly is not linked to history or to any kind of historical science, even if Brentano is very aware of the historical evolutions of the rise and fall of the scientific status of both science and philosophy itself. However mistaken in principle it may well be to align the humanities to the methodology of modern natural science, as Dilthey had (correctly) argued, Brentano's desire to align his views on a psychology (philosophy) from a (Humean) empirical standpoint as *the science of the humanities* with the budding new natural science of empirical psychology is unfurled from within the dominant intellectual environment of the nineteenth century out of which Brentano could not extricate himself. Yet this is the context in which Brentano's *PES* was

[80] Wilhelm Dilthey, "The understanding of other persons and their expressions of life (ca. 1910)", in Dilthey, *Descriptive Psychology and Historical Understanding*, translation modified, pp. 123–144 (p. 135).

composed and out of which he developed his novel idea of a descriptive psychology for philosophy in the 1880s.

For Brentano, nonetheless, the descriptive part of the discipline of psychology, that is, the philosophically relevant feature of psychology from an empirical standpoint, focuses exclusively on describing the *a priori* features that are characteristic of our psychical phenomena in general based upon the intentionality of consciousness from within the inner perception of our own psychical phenomena. Husserl, therefore, is quite correct, philosophically and historically, to portray his mentor to his students attending his 1925 Summer Semester lecture course at Freiburg University "as a path finder" (*als Wegbereiter*) in Brentano's "discovery" of the intentional structure of consciousness for a new descriptive science of consciousness and its objectivities.[81] In this regard, descriptive psychology, as Brentano understands it, is an exact science, comparable in epistemological status to mathematics, whereas genetic psychology is an inexact science, comparable in epistemological status to all the natural sciences. Heidegger, therefore, is also correct to point out to his students at Marburg University in his 1925 Summer-Semester lecture course that in *PES* Brentano "detaches himself from the tendency to transpose the methods of natural science and physiology into the exploration of psychic life" and contains, instead, "a unique blend of *Aristotelian-Scholastic* philosophizing and modern *Cartesian* inquiry".[82] What Heidegger does not stress, or omits to note, however, is that Brentano's conception of psychology in *PES* is mediated through post-Kantian spectacles focusing on the *a priori* features of our "perceptions of the soul" as *Hume* had approached them. What Brentano proposes, in other words, is a different kind of Kantian and Humean enquiry into the facticity of our natural and normative experiences, one that is neither constructivistic nor aprioristic, nor is it an eidetics of those experiences that Husserl had later advanced. It is, nonetheless, a conception of philosophy that neither Kant nor Hume would recognise, for, it is neither a transcendental philosophy (in Kant's sense) nor an empirical philosophy (in Hume's sense). Yet despite that, Brentano's idea of philosophy as a psychology from an empirical standpoint, all to be taken in the way he understood this concept, is still a post-Kantian and post-Humean scientific-philosophic line of enquiry into the human mind and its contents that approves of the dominant natural-scientific mind-set of the nineteenth century. Viewed in this light, Brentano's argument for a psychology from an empirical standpoint as he configures it in the 1870s and onwards is, in a

[81] See, Edmund Husserl, *Phenomenological psychology. Lectures, Summer Semester 1925*, trans. by John Scanlon, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1977, Section (d) Brentano as pioneer for research in internal experience—discovery of intentionality as the fundamental character of the psychic, pp. 23–27. For a treatment of Brentano's new concept of the intentionality of consciousness and deviance from the Scholastic concept of intentionality, see, Cyril McDonnell, "Understanding and assessing 'Brentano's Thesis' in light of his modification of the scholastic concept of intentionality", *Brentano Studien*, vol. 13, 2015, pp. 153–182.

[82] Martin Heidegger, *History of the concept of time: Prolegomena*, translated by Theodore Kisiel, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1985, p. 20.

very important respect, his answer to Kant's call in the *Prolegomena* to produce a philosophy "that will be able to come forward as science", but, for Brentano, such a philosophy has to be a science that expresses a philosophy that is not trapped from within the naturalistic and idealistic philosophies of the nineteenth century, but the perennial science of philosophy down through the ages as genuine science, before and after Kant, or at least, this is how it appeared to Brentano and in his mind.[83]

[83] Although Brentano only realised the autonomous status of his new science of descriptive psychology much later, after his publication of his 1874 *PES*, Spiegelberg is correct to conclude that because Brentano's *very idea* of descriptive psychology, *right from its inception*, entails "a peculiar intuitive examination of the phenomena [of consciousness]", it "establishes itself as an autonomous enterprise, if not as a separate one" from all other established natural sciences, such as, for instance, "psychophysics and physiological psychology". *The Phenomenological movement*, p. 35.