

BRENTANO ON PHILOSOPHY AS A SCIENCE

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Abstract. The Introduction to Brentano's posthumous *Geschichte der Philosophie der Neuzeit* (GPhN), edited by Dr. Klaus Hedwig, is compiled primarily from the manuscripts H 45 and H 47 (which date from 1870 and before 1870, respectively). Its title, "On the Concept of the History of Philosophy" (GPhN, pp. 1–12), indicates the path Brentano chose to take here in exploring the question of what philosophy actually is. In pursuing this question, Brentano variously (in the separate manuscripts and their separate parts) arrives at the definition of philosophy as a science. In this paper, I reconstruct Brentano's apparent train of thought as it is to be found in the text and notes provided by Hedwig in the Foreword, Introduction, and Editor's Notes to GPhN. I conclude that if we are to understand fully what Brentano meant by philosophy as a science, then we must repair to Aristotle's *Physics*, as it provides the model here. Among other things, this explains why Brentano considered the teleological proof of God's existence, among other empirical proofs, to be certain and irrefutable. Aristotle's inclusion of the question of God, the unmoved mover, in his book on nature (*phusis*), provided inspiration for Brentano as well as it did for his Scholastic forebears. Philosophy is a science in this inclusive sense, for Brentano, and at the same time his claim that philosophy is a science should be understood as a normative assertion about the rigorous method that is appropriate to philosophy.

Keywords: philosophy; method; science; history of philosophy; God.

The Introduction to Brentano's posthumous *Geschichte der Philosophie der Neuzeit*, edited by Dr. Klaus Hedwig,¹ is compiled primarily from the manuscripts H 45 and H 47.² Its title, "On the Concept of the History of Philosophy" (GPhN,

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¹ Franz Brentano, *Geschichte der Philosophie der Neuzeit* (History of Modern Philosophy), edited by Klaus Hedwig, Hamburg, Felix Meiner Verlag, 1987. Hereafter GPhN. My English translation may be found in Ion Tănăsescu, Alexandru Bejinariu, Susan Krantz Gabriel, and Constantin Stoenescu (eds.), *Brentano and the Positive Philosophy of Comte and Mill*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2022, pp. 457–473. Hereafter BPPH. I use this translation throughout, and it includes many of the notes provided by Hedwig. Citations are from GPhN only.

² Both manuscripts bear the title, "Geschichte der Philosophie" (History of Philosophy). Neither one is dated, but H 45 is said to be from about 1870 and H 47 from before 1870. At the end of this presentation of Brentano's view I address the question whether it remained his later view.

pp. 1–12), indicates the path Brentano chose to take here in exploring the question of what philosophy actually is. Early on in this piece, Brentano raises the following questions: “What is history? What is the history of a science? What is the history of that science which we call philosophy?” In pursuing these questions, Brentano variously (in the separate manuscripts and their separate parts) arrives at the definition of philosophy as a science.³ In what follows, I reconstruct Brentano’s apparent train of thought as it is to be found in the text and notes provided by Hedwig in the Foreword, Introduction, and Editor’s Notes to GPhN. Let us see how the concept of philosophy as science is developed there, and what the term ‘science’ means for Brentano in this context.

Brentano begins by making two points: 1) because the history of philosophy covers some 2,000 years, any discussion of it must aim for a degree of brevity by selecting points and areas to focus on; and 2) the history of philosophy is both like the history of any other science and also different, because individuals are important, as in any history, but at the same time progress is not steady as in the other sciences, rather in the history of philosophy there are periods of decline. These premises enable the conclusion that it makes sense to focus on periods of advancement, rather than periods of decline, and that it therefore makes sense to focus on those philosophers who excelled during a given historical period. (GPhN, p. 1) We might conclude that Brentano’s ultimate definition of philosophy will be normative or ideal. Let us take up each of Brentano’s questions in order.

What is history? For Brentano, there are two senses of the term ‘history,’ an objective sense and a subjective sense. The former involves “what has happened, in particular, what has happened to humans.” The latter involves “the knowledge and description of what has happened, in particular the knowledge and description of human experiences.” (GPhN, p. 2)

What is the history of a science? As the history of a kind of knowledge, then, the history of a science is history in the subjective sense just noted. This may seem surprising, because we think of science as being objective knowledge, and rightly so. However, from Brentano’s standpoint, history is a human or humanistic subject concerning what human beings have thought or felt or known, in a word, what they have experienced. And experience is to that extent subjective.⁴

What is a science? The task at this point, then, is to discern what kind of knowledge science is. What does a person experience in gaining scientific knowledge? Brentano’s definition is careful and clear. Knowledge, he says, is by definition:

³ Many of the footnotes inserted by Hedwig are important for understanding Brentano’s train of thought. Such notes are included in the English translation in BPPH. In GPhN, they are to be found variously at the back of the book and in Hedwig’s Foreword. I have made use of them freely in this exposition and in each case have indicated where they are to be found in GPhN.

⁴ Likewise, Descartes’s *cogito* is the result of inner reflection and thus subjective to that extent. At the same time, however, it clearly expresses a truth which is objective in the sense of being incontrovertible.

[...] any clear knowledge of an intelligible truth or, in other words, any supersensible knowledge, whether related to a fundamental proposition or to a subordinate fact, and grasped by direct insight or by inference from what is directly understood (whether we have gained understanding directly or indirectly, by deduction or by some other manner of inference), such that only truths of faith and opinions are excluded. (*Ibidem*)

With this in mind, he proceeds directly to a definition of science: “science is the (clear) knowledge of a certain genus of intelligible truths.” (*Ibidem*) And the genera of intelligible truths lead to the following table of the sciences:

- I. Supernatural Science (i.e., theology)
- II. Natural Science (including physics, chemistry, biology, physiology, etc.)
 1. Abstract Science
 - a. Mathematics
 - b. Philosophy in the broader sense
 - i. Physical Science (concerning objects of outer experience)
 - ii. Mental Science (philosophical science in the narrower sense, i.e., concerning objects of inner experience)
 2. Concrete Science (GPhN, pp. XIII–XV)

Brentano says,

So the result is that philosophy in the narrower sense is the science that deals with being and its attributes, insofar as that falls under concepts which are given in inner experience, whether they be acquired only by inner experience or else at least do not belong exclusively to outer experience. (*Ibidem*, XV)

Noticeably, this table of the sciences follows the basic plan of what has been called the “Great Chain of Being,”⁵ as put forth in the philosophy of St. Augustine and others in ancient and medieval times. God is at the top; rocks are at the bottom. But we shouldn’t on this basis impute to Brentano an antiquarian conception of reality. Rather his object is to systematize concepts and intelligible truths.

Now if being may be said to “fall under concepts,” and if science is “clear knowledge of a certain genus of intelligible truths,” the question arises whether or in what sense there may be said to be several genera of intelligible truths. One comment Brentano provides here is that when we consider sensory knowledge we

⁵ See for instance Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1936. See also Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will*, translated by Thomas Williams, Indianapolis, Hackett, 1993, Book II, pp. 29–69.

find that there are several genera of sensory truths because we have several senses. Since we only have one understanding, however, there is only one genus of intelligible truths. (GPhN, p. 3)

But this is an oversimplification because intelligible truths may in fact fall under several concepts and thus may be divisible into several genera. It is obvious, by comparison, that sensory qualities determine the genera and species of sensory knowledge in various ways. For instance, colored things constitute one genus of objects of sensory knowledge, the species of which are determined by the various colors. At the same time, a colored object may also belong to another genus of sensory things, for example, insofar as it is able to produce a sound. When it comes to intelligible truths, which are distinguishable as to genus according as they fall under various concepts, something similar is true. For instance, plants and animals are both living things, thus the intelligible truths concerning them belong to the science of biology. One concept, life, one genus of intelligible truth. But there are also the sciences of botany, zoology, herpetology, and so forth. (GPhN, pp. 301–302) Now the intelligible or conceptual differs from the sensory in that the former are abstract, and abstraction, Brentano says, actually takes place in three ways. 1) Physical abstraction is an abstraction from individual difference; thus we have the concepts of color, of sound, of plant, of animal. 2) Mathematical abstraction is an abstraction not only from individual difference but also from all sensory qualities; thus we have the concepts of size, dimension, quantity and the like. 3) Metaphysical abstraction is an abstraction from the corporeal, or from what belongs to bodies as such; thus we have concepts of potentiality and actuality, of an existing thing, of an immaterial entity. In this way, there are three genera of intelligible truths. Since a science is “clear knowledge of a certain genus of intelligible truths,” the relevant genus must be specified if we are to understand exactly what philosophical science is. (GPhN, pp. XII–XIII)

Since knowledge is, so to speak, the final cause of any genuine science, it is important to distinguish what might be called areas of expertise from science proper. Brentano says in this connection that there is no special science of architecture, or of military strategy, or of seafaring. Rather, there are principles required for distinguishing genuine sciences which rest upon three considerations: “that *from within* which something is proved, that which is proved *about* something, and that *on the basis of* which something is proved.” Thus according to the first of these, botany is distinguished from zoology; according to the second, physics is distinguished from chemistry; and according to the third, theology is distinguished from rational sciences. (GPhN, pp. 4–5) By applying these considerations, we are able to isolate the relevant genus of intelligible truth.

To summarize what has been shown so far: science is the knowledge of a certain genus of intelligible truths; and the history of a science is the knowledge and description of human experiences relevant to the research into a given science. We are now in a position to entertain our central question.

What is the history of philosophy? Here we cannot avoid the question whether philosophy is a science. For instance, some pursuits such as alchemy and astrology were thought to be sciences in the past, but no longer qualify for that distinction, and somebody could say the same about philosophy. (GPhN, p. 6) In particular, the following objections can be raised against philosophy's purported scientific status:

1) Philosophers do not agree even on fundamental propositions, and after more than 2,000 years there are no universally accepted philosophical theses;

2) The history of philosophy includes complete revolutions in outlook, for instance, from materialism to idealism and vice versa;

3) Philosophy is discredited in popular opinion, and there are philosophers who themselves claim that philosophy is not a science. (*Ibidem*)

Brentano admits that he would deny the status of a science to philosophy if, in fact, there were no "certain knowledge and sound proof" of anything philosophical. But this is not the case. For one thing, the principle of contradiction is absolutely true, even if somebody denies it. "Logic is as evident as mathematics." For another, the existence of God is "rigorously proven," in particular by the teleological proof.⁶ Clear observation of nature, plus the inference from the facts about nature to the necessary existence of a "correspondingly ordering intelligence," leads to a certain truth which, although it may be denied, cannot be correctly or truthfully denied. (*Ibidem*)

Nevertheless, it does appear that the history of philosophy is not quite like the histories of the other sciences, a fact that needs to be explained.

First of all, there simply haven't been as many philosophers as other scientists, and this makes it difficult to isolate a steady, scientific philosophical tradition. Part of the problem is that philosophical reflection is abstract, remote from the senses. Also, the focus is purely theoretical and not practical as such. And philosophy's discoveries are intangible, unlike the discoveries of the other sciences. Brentano mentions 19th century marvels such as electricity and the telegraph, steam power and the railroad, plus discovery of the planet Neptune. (GPhN, p. 7) Today we might point to travel by air, nuclear power stations, the internet, and the James Webb telescope. Nothing produced by philosophers as such has attracted this kind of attention.

Brentano suggests that these considerations help to explain why progress in philosophy is not linear, as in the other sciences, but that in fact it exhibits periods of decline. At times, the decline is so significant that "even correct method [is] entirely lost." (*Ibidem*) By correct method in philosophy Brentano specifically

⁶ See Franz Brentano, *On the Existence of God: Lectures Given at Würzburg and Vienna (1868–1891)*, translated by Susan F. Krantz, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1987, pp. 155–307. I have discussed Brentano's various proofs of God's existence elsewhere, e.g., in "Can We Have Scientific Knowledge About God? Brentano on Comte's Metaphysical Skepticism," in BPPH, pp. 165–183.

means the method of natural science, as stated in his fourth habilitation thesis.⁷ In order to understand precisely what he means by this, it is useful to note what he has to say about other possible methods that purport to expand our knowledge.

The *intuitive method*, one variety of which is *mystical* method, claims direct insight into the answers to the most difficult philosophical questions. The Romantic idea of a genius plays a role here as does the idea of intellectual insight and, in mysticism, a special mental state. Brentano says that among philosophers who have relied on this so-called method are Schelling, Plotinus, and Hegel. (GPhN, pp. 302–303)

The *mathematical method* relies on intuition and deduction. Brentano mentions especially Spinoza in this connection, as well as Christian Wolff. (*Ibidem*)

The *method of natural science* relies on intuition, deduction, and induction. When philosophy is at its best, this is the method followed. Brentano mentions Plato, Aristotle, Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes, Descartes, John Locke, and “to some extent” Leibniz. (*Ibidem*)

The *methods of rhetorical argumentation* involve variously the appeals to authority and to tradition, as well as allegory and popular opinion. Brentano mentions Pythagoreans, Thomists,⁸ and Epicurus. (GPhN, pp. 303–304)

Poetic methods, also various, rely on a kind of aesthetic appeal. Among others, Brentano mentions Kant’s propensity to arrange things in groups of three, and four sets of three, particularly in the First and Third Critiques. Fichte, he says, developed this “rhythm” further. And Hegel’s dialectical method perfects the poetic method by making everything somehow tripartite. (*Ibidem*, p. 304)

The *testimony of faith* is like knowledge, in that it claims certainty, but is also like opinion in that it requires no evidence or conclusive reasoning. “The will determines the understanding to acquiesce with full certainty, just as if the reasons were compelling.” (*Ibidem*)

When it comes to philosophy, Brentano tells us, none of these methods is acceptable, not even mathematical method, except only the method of natural science. This means the other methods must be assiduously avoided. Philosophy must proceed on the basis of intuition, deduction, and induction.⁹ Philosophical inquiry

⁷ Franz Brentano, *Über die Zukunft der Philosophie*, edited by Oskar Kraus and Paul Weingartner, Hamburg, Meiner Verlag, 1968, pp. 136–141. The habilitation theses (1866) may also be found in English in BPPH, pp. 433–436. The fourth thesis states: “The true method of philosophy is none other than that of the science of nature.”

⁸ Clearly Brentano distinguishes between Thomas Aquinas himself and the Thomists, his would-be followers, just as we distinguish between Plato himself and the Platonists. I take it, Brentano would not consider himself a neo-Thomist; although he certainly philosophized in the spirit of Thomas Aquinas, and of Aristotle, he also disagreed with them on several topics.

⁹ The role of induction will vary according to the matter in question. Brentano spells this out with regard to inquiry into the immortality of the soul. See Franz Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, edited by Linda L. McAlister, translated by Rancurello, Terrell, McAlister, New York, Humanities Press, 1973, Book I, Part IV, ch. 4, pp. 72–73. Something similar is to be observed in Brentano’s proofs of God’s existence, namely, that the proofs vary quite a bit with regard to their empirical (inductive) content. See Brentano, *On the Existence of God*. See also, Susan Krantz Gabriel, “Can We Have Scientific Knowledge about God?”

must be suited to the object of study. In particular, observation and experiment must be directed toward inner experience. (GPhN, pp. 304–305)

Thus it is not quite true that there is no scientific tradition in philosophy, because it is possible to designate those philosophers throughout history who have practiced correct method in philosophy. This can be traced, for example, from Thales to Aristotle, during the Scholastic period through Thomas Aquinas, and from Descartes to Locke and Leibniz. At the same time, philosophers do easily depart from correct method, adopting one or more of the other possible methods, and so the history of philosophy admits periods of decline.¹⁰ These periods account for the lack of unanimity among philosophers over time. Brentano considered his own epoch to be one of philosophy in decline.¹¹ And the lack of unanimity among philosophers over time also accounts for the public's low estimation of the value of philosophy. (GPhN, p. 7)

However, none of this means that philosophy fails to possess knowledge with certainty, or that philosophy is not a science. In its progressive phases, with the use of correct method, philosophy does indeed achieve scientific truth. (GPhN, p. 8)

A question remains, however, as to whether philosophy is a single science, that is, whether it addresses one genus of intelligible truths. The fact that there have been so many diverse definitions of philosophy speaks against this. Brentano notes that every one of the following philosophers, among others, would give a different definition of philosophy: Seneca, Wolff, Kant, Schelling, Hegel, Herbart, and his own teacher, Trendelenburg. (*Ibidem*) What if philosophy is not a single science but rather a conglomeration of distinct sciences called 'philosophy' by a long-running tradition from antiquity? Indeed, there may be said to be a number of philosophical disciplines – logic, metaphysics, theology, ontology, psychology, cosmology, philosophy of history, ethics, aesthetics. For some of these, a clear definition may be contentious, e.g., is ethics the study of human happiness or the study of right action? Must an artwork properly so called necessarily conform to a certain definition of beauty? (GPhN, p. 9)

Philosophy in this narrower sense might not be one, single science. But philosophy in the broader sense, in other words, that which is philosophical in each of the abovementioned disciplines, actually does belong to one genus. The unity of

¹⁰ Besides loss of dedication to correct method, another cause of decline is the lessening of theoretical interest in times of pressing need. See GPhN, p. 7, and Brentano, *Die Vier Phasen der Philosophie*, Hamburg, Meiner Verlag, 1968, p. 8 / Franz Brentano: *The Four Phases of Philosophy and Its Current State*, in Balázs M. Mezei, Barry Smith, *The Four Phases of Philosophy. With an Appendix: The Four Phases of Philosophy and Its Current State by Franz Brentano*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1998, p. 89.

¹¹ We see this in his assessments of German idealism and its aftermath, for instance, in "On Schelling's Philosophy," (1889), BPPH, pp. 501–522. In "On the Reasons for a Loss of Confidence in the Area of Philosophy," (1874), *Ibidem*, pp. 489–500, however, we see Brentano not only bemoaning the decline but also anticipating a resurgence of genuine theoretical interest in philosophy during his era and for the future. See also, "On the Future of Philosophy," *Ibidem*, pp. 523–569.

philosophy consists in its immateriality, its abstraction, and its intellectuality. (GPhN, p. 10) Thus the definition of philosophy:

“Philosophy is that science among inductive (and in the broader sense philosophical) sciences which addresses being insofar as it falls under such concepts as are given in inner experience, whether given in inner experience alone or in both inner and outer experience at the same time.” (GPhN, p. 11)¹²

But apparently not all philosophers have accepted such a definition. In particular, Epicureans, Stoics, and other materialists would not accept it. (*Ibidem*) Does this mean that we must exclude a whole cohort of philosophers from our definition of philosophy? Or does it mean that we must devise a definition of philosophy so broad as to include them all and at the same time so vague as to be meaningless? (*Ibidem*)

No, says Brentano, the definition is correct, but some philosophers are mistaken. For instance, they may regard something incorporeal, say the mind, as corporeal, but thinking it so does not make it so. To hold that every existing thing is material is not to ensure that that is the case. Rather it is to consider things under concepts such as universality and materiality which, *qua* concepts, are in fact immaterial, abstract, and intellectual. (GPhN, p. 12)

Accordingly, e.g., the logical and ethical investigations of the Stoics operate in the mental realm just as surely as do those of Plato and Aristotle. It holds for them, too, that as soon as they philosophized, they addressed things which, at least according to the concept under which they considered them, were free from sensible and intelligible matter. (*Ibidem*)

Thus we arrive at a definition of *the history of philosophy*:

The history of philosophy is the knowledge and description of research into the human experiences relevant to those truths which, without being purely mathematical, belong to things insofar as they fall under the concepts of inner experience (whether given through inner experience alone or through both inner and outer experience at the same time). (*Ibidem*)

And Brentano adds: “Thus the history of philosophy reports to us on the discoveries of these truths as well as on the efforts which led to these discoveries, *or should have done so*, and the circumstances that promoted or hindered them.” (*Ibidem*, emphasis added S.K.G.)

¹² The reader may notice that this definition of philosophy has a clearly Cartesian cast. Despite his abidingly Aristotelian commitments, Brentano was undeniably a post-Cartesian thinker. This is discussed carefully by Eberhard Tiefensee in his *Philosophie und Religion bei Franz Brentano*, Tübingen and Basel, Franke Verlag, 1998, for instance, p. 477.

The normative element in Brentano's definition of the history of philosophy is clear here, such that not just any mode of abstract speculation will satisfy that definition.

In what sense is philosophy scientific today? Because of the history of the Vienna Circle, of Anglo-American analytic philosophy, of the phenomenological movement, and also probably because of two devastating world wars,¹³ philosophy today is divided into a variety of "schools," some of which consider their work scientific, some of which do not, and perhaps none of which quite understand the term 'scientific' in Brentano's sense. For instance, Wittgenstein's focus on language led him to call grammar "the descriptive science of speaking."¹⁴ But he would not go further than this in the direction of philosophy as science, due perhaps (in the words of his biographer, Ray Monk) to "his detestation of the power of science in our age, which on the one hand encouraged the philosopher's 'craving for generality,' and on the other produced the atomic bomb."¹⁵ By contrast, for example, the emphasis Foucault places on power and power relationships¹⁶ appears to be a rejection of the objectivist, scientific outlook. Again, Russell tells us that much of what counted as philosophy in the past has been taken over by the sciences, leaving a relatively trivial "residue" which counts as philosophy today;¹⁷ this residue is precisely not science. And Heidegger sought insight into the meaning of being in the deep roots of Western culture and in the ancient derivations of words, while waiting for "yet another God" to save us and holding, somewhat with Russell, that "philosophy is at an end" because today it has "dissolved into individual sciences: psychology, logic, political science."¹⁸

¹³ According to Henry Kissinger, the period in Western history from 1914 to 1945 was equivalent in disruptive power to what occurred in Europe during the Thirty Years' War of 1618–1648. See Kissinger, *Leadership: Six Studies in World Strategy*, New York, Penguin Press, 2022, pp. xix–xxiii, 409–414. Certainly, the fragmentation of philosophy – and the generalized lack of confidence in philosophy – that we see today, makes sense in the context of a civilization on the brink.

¹⁴ See Ludwig Wittgenstein, "The Big Typescript," in *Philosophical Occasions*, edited by James Klagge and Alfred Nordman, p. 163.

¹⁵ Ray Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein, The Duty of Genius*, New York, Macmillan, 1990, pp. 484–485.

¹⁶ See for instance, Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, translated by Alan Sheridan, New York, Pantheon, 1977.

¹⁷ See Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 155: "[. . .] those questions which are already capable of definite answers are placed in the sciences, while those only to which, at present, no definite answer can be given, remain to form the residue which is called philosophy."

¹⁸ See Martin Heidegger, "Only a God Can Save Us": The *Spiegel* Interview (1966), translated by William J. Richardson, S.J., <http://www.ditext.com/Heidegger/interview.html>. He even suggests that cybernetics now "takes the place of philosophy," that it is "another kind of thinking." Further, "the manner of thinking of traditional metaphysics that reached its term with Nietzsche offers no further possibility of experiencing in thought the fundamental thrust of the age of technicity that is just beginning." Is this a lament?

If Robin Rollinger is right,¹⁹ and I defer to him in this, Husserl is the philosopher who best understood and practiced philosophy as science in Brentano's sense of it, and the path forged by these two thinkers is the one that will deliver philosophy from the "dogmatism, relativism and mysticism of the continentals," on the one hand, and on the other from the narrow and exclusionary analytic view of science which sees theoretical physics alone as science "in its finest form."

But I hasten to add that if we are to understand fully what Brentano meant by philosophy as a science, then we have to repair to the Scholastic tradition in which he was steeped, the tradition especially of Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas.²⁰ It is Aristotle's *Physics*, not modern theoretical physics, which provides the model here. This explains why Brentano tells us that the correct method in philosophy, the method of natural science, involves "intuition, deduction, *and induction*" (emphasis added S.K.G.). This also explains why Brentano considered the teleological proof of God's existence, among other empirical proofs, to be certain and irrefutable. Aristotle's analysis of the four causes – material, efficient, formal, and final – plus his inclusion of the question of God, the unmoved mover, in his book on nature (*physis*), provided inspiration for Brentano as well as it did for his Scholastic forebears.²¹ Philosophy is a science in this inclusive and transcendent sense, for Brentano, keeping the door open to metaphysics, philosophical science *par excellence*, the science of both material and immaterial being.²²

Finally, it is worth mentioning that, although Brentano's term, '*Wissenschaft*,' does not have the same connotations as the English, 'science,' nevertheless when it comes to philosophy, Brentano is quite serious that it *ought to be* scientific in the strict sense that the two terms share. There are examples of subjects for which this would not be the case, for instance, in German it is acceptable to refer to "*katholische Wissenschaft*" and to "*theologische Wissenschaft*". Proper English translations would be "Catholic studies" and "theological studies", respectively; however, neither of these is a science in the English sense of 'science'. But

¹⁹ See Rollinger, "Brentano and Husserl," in Dale Jacquette (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Brentano*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 255–276, especially p. 272.

²⁰ For a very thorough discussion of this, see Ion Tănăsescu, *Psychologie, Seiendes, Phantasie bei Franz Brentano*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2020, pp. 133–149.

²¹ Although an admirer of Auguste Comte, Brentano found fault with his notion of positive philosophy, not because it was intentionally scientific, but because it excluded metaphysics in the traditional sense of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas. See Franz Brentano, "Auguste Comte und die positive Philosophie" (Auguste Comte and Positive Philosophy) (1869), in *Die Vier Phasen der Philosophie*, pp. 99–133; also in English in BPPH, pp. 437–456.

²² See for instance, Klaus Hedwig, "Eine Gewisse Kongenialität: Brentanos Rückgriff auf Thomas von Aquin in Seiner Dissertation," in Ion Tănăsescu (ed.), *Franz Brentano's Metaphysics and Psychology*, Bucharest, Zeta Books, 2012, pp. 95–131. In my opinion, this "congeniality" extends from Brentano's early period at Würzburg, through the lecture, "The Future of Philosophy," of 1893, to the publication of *Aristoteles Lehre vom Ursprung des menschlichen Geistes* (Aristotle's Theory of the Origin of the Human Spirit), Leipzig, von Veit, 1911, to the 1915 dictation, "On the Train of Thought in the Proof of God's Existence", in *On the Existence of God*, pp. 308–337. In other words, the influence of Thomas Aquinas is apparent throughout Brentano's philosophical career.

Brentano's claim about philosophy should be understood as a normative assertion about the rigorous method that is appropriate to philosophy. As we have seen, this method, as Brentano understands it, is properly scientific; not mystical, not mathematical, not rhetorical, not poetic, but scientific and, like the other sciences – physics, chemistry, biology, physiology – suited to the object of study and to the acquisition of genuine knowledge about its object. Such it has always been, during those periods when philosophy has thrived, and such it ought to be today as well.²³

²³ My thanks to Ion Tănăsescu for several very helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper. Any remaining errors or oversights are my own.

