

Introduction:

Phenomenology and Scientific Philosophy

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Starting with Brentano, the development of phenomenology has been preoccupied from its inception with the question of whether the methodology of philosophy, and by extension, descriptive psychology or phenomenology, must be framed in terms of scientific philosophy. As early as 1866, Brentano advanced the thesis that the methodologies employed in philosophy are, in essence, identical with those of the natural sciences (cf. Brentano, 1866: 137). This thesis is commonly interpreted as positing that philosophy, in its broadest sense, ought to adhere to scientific, or empirical, methodologies.

Whilst this understanding is accurate, it may nevertheless provide an inaccurate representation of the scientific principles Brentano regarded as fundamental to philosophy. As Carl Stumpf, one of Brentano's students, noted in his recollections of the 1866 disputation on Brentano's habilitation thesis in Würzburg, Brentano “of course did not mean that the realm of facts (*Tatsachenkreis*) of natural science should be the only basis of philosophy [...]. He only wanted to see the general tenets of the inductive method transposed into philosophy” (Stumpf, 1922: 70, translation by author).

It is widely acknowledged that Brentano's perspective on the use of scientific methodologies in philosophy exerted a profound influence on the subsequent evolution of Austro-German philosophy. The members of the Vienna Circle acknowledged the influence of Brentano's thesis on the development of their project of a unitary science (Neurath, 1929). Furthermore, philosophers influenced by the Vienna Circle saw a direct connection between Brentano and the Vienna Circle in this respect (von Mises, 1939; Haller, 1993).

However, even within the scope of Austro-German philosophy, the influence of Brentano's fourth habilitation thesis is not limited to logical empiricism. Husserl himself

acknowledged the influence of Brentano on his conception of philosophy, and more specifically of phenomenology. In his 1919 “Reminiscences of Franz Brentano”, he writes:

It was from his lectures that I first acquired the conviction that gave me the courage to choose philosophy as my life’s work, that is the conviction that philosophy, too, is a field of serious endeavour, and that it too can – and, in fact, must – be dealt with in a rigorously scientific manner. (Husserl, 1976: 48)

It is noteworthy that both logical empiricism and Husserl's late phenomenology exhibit a biased interpretation of Brentano's thesis. On the one hand, as per logical empiricism, Brentano's endorsement of empirical methods in philosophy does not entail a rejection of metaphysics. Conversely, the concept of descriptive psychology or phenomenology constitutes an integral component of his metaphysics. On the other hand, in contrast with Husserl's late phenomenology, Brentano's conceptualisation of scientificity aligns with the methodologies employed by natural sciences. The proposition that philosophy, interpreted as a rigorous science (Husserl, 1911), ought to be structured around a “critique of reason” does not resonate with Brentano's philosophical standpoint on scientificity.

Notwithstanding his 1911 Kantian conception of scientific philosophy, Husserl's conviction, as expressed in his reminiscences, is closely connected to Brentano's view when one considers his early works, especially the *Philosophy of Arithmetics* and the *Logical Investigations*. These early works, along with the later ones, allow us to distinguish between three views on the relation between phenomenology and scientific methods:

- 1) The methods of phenomenology are the methods of natural, i.e. empirical sciences (Brentano and his school, the early Husserl);
- 2) The methods of phenomenology are the methods of transcendental philosophy (the Husserl from 1910-1930, the Neokantians – Natorp in particular);
- 3) Philosophy, and phenomenology in particular, should get away from modern sciences and find a way to get back to the everyday life of the life-world (*Lebenswelt*) (the late Husserl from the *Krisis* period; Husserl, 1936).

Disagreements amongst phenomenologists frequently occur with regard to the delineation of the correct method of phenomenology, with each individual defending one of three perspectives against the other two. This approach was not adopted in this special issue. The

objective of this issue was to provide a comprehensive overview of the three perspectives on the relationship between phenomenology and scientific methods.

In her paper, Susan Gabriel provides an account of the first view and explores the question of whether philosophy can be regarded as an empirical science by contrasting the views of Franz Brentano and Ludwig Wittgenstein. Brentano argued that the true method of philosophy is akin to that of the natural sciences, advocating for a systematic, empirically grounded approach to metaphysical and theological questions. In contrast, Wittgenstein saw philosophy primarily as a grammatical analysis aimed at clarifying language and dispelling linguistic confusions, rather than as an empirical science. The paper analyzes Brentano's conception of philosophy as a science in the traditional sense and Wittgenstein's critique of the scientific status of philosophy. She concludes with a discussion on the extent to which both perspectives offer a realistic understanding of philosophy's role in relation to empirical sciences and what lessons can be drawn about the methodology of philosophy.

In his paper on scientific philosophy in Ukraine, Liubomyr Fedoriv presents a discussion of the application of the first view by Kasimir Twardowski, a student of Brentano and the founder of the Lviv-Warsaw School of philosophy in 1895. The paper focuses on the peculiarity and uniqueness of this phenomenon in the context of Ukrainian culture, as well as on the future development of philosophy in Ukraine.

The second view is explored in the article "Natorp, Husserl, and Gurwitsch – The Problem of the Pure Ego in Phenomenology" by Brenda Soares, which presents a reconstruction of the debate between Natorp and Husserl concerning the "pure ego". The article emphasises the methodological issues of the debate and the influence of Natorp on Husserl's transcendental turn.

Finally, Mario Porta discusses the third view in "Lotze, Husserl, and the Crisis of European Science" by showing the correlations between Husserl's "Crisis" and Hermann Lotze's appraisal of the collapse of idealism towards the end of the 19th century, showing the convergence of their perspectives on the subject.

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