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KNOWING FROM EXPERIENCE:
ON INDUCTION IN A BROADER SENSE AND
THE INTUITION OF ESSENCES

Abstract

Phenomenology, in its Husserlian design, appeared as a form of descriptive psychology that aimed to overcome the boundaries of an empiric science and become a pure, eidetic discipline. In this paper, I reevaluate the relation between Husserl's phenomenology and Brentano's descriptive psychology or psychognosy. I argue that despite Husserl's famous retraction of his initial characterization of phenomenology as descriptive psychology, in Brentano's specific method of psychognosy exists a step that is not specific to any empirical science, does not imply any positing, and it is not bound to the actual world, namely: *induction in a broader sense* or the intuitive grasping of laws that arise from concepts.

Keywords: induction, experiential science, eidetic intuition, a priori laws, evidence, intuitive grasp, variation, positing character

Introduction

The early days of Husserl's phenomenology are essentially determined by their link with Brentanian descriptive psychology. Already ten years before Husserl's founding work of phenomenology, namely the *Logical Investigations* (henceforth, LI), Brentano had used the term 'phenomenology' in titling one of his lecture manuscripts (1888/89): *Descriptive Psychology or Descriptive Phenomenology* (*Deskriptive Psychologie oder beschreibende Phänomenologie*). Then, Husserl explicitly labelled phenomenology as descriptive psychology in his introduction to the first edition (1900) of the second volume of LI, only to definitely reject this designation another decade later in the second edition of LI. The ground of this rejection is that descriptive psychology entails "empirical, scientific descriptions," referring to "the real states of animal organisms in a real natural order" and, therefore, has the

character of "empirical generality," holding "for *this* nature" (LI I, 175 f.). Phenomenology, on the other hand, as Husserl had more clearly conceived it by the second edition of the LI (1913, after his so-called transcendental turn of 1907[1]), was to discuss "perceptions, judgments, feelings *as such*, and what pertains to them *a priori* with unlimited generality, as *pure* instances of *pure* species, of what may be seen through a purely intuitive apprehension of essence, whether generic or specific" (LI I, 176). From this point of view, phenomenology resembled mathematics, *i.e.*, arithmetic and pure geometry, which does not deal with *hit et nunc* instances of numbers or shapes but with their pure ideas, independently of their instantiation in this or that actual, empirical context.

Despite Husserl's non-transcendental standpoint and lack of the term 'intuition of essences,' in the first edition of LI he sharply separates phenomenology from empirical sciences as an *a priori* endeavor pertaining to a formal theory of knowledge meant "not to *explain* knowledge in the psychological or psychophysical sense as a temporal occurrence, but to *shed light* on the *Idea* of knowledge in its constitutive elements and laws" (LI I, 178). Opposed to this stands the explanatory endeavor of identifying the laws of succession and coexistence of acts or, in Brentano's terms, of psychical phenomena—precisely the task of Brentano's project of psychology of his 1874, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (henceforth, PES), as well as of his later genetic psychology. However, as I will argue, both Brentano's psychology of 1874, as well as his genetic psychology are empirical sciences that fundamentally differ from the science of descriptive psychology, which, while remaining grounded on experience, no longer aims at or employs only *a posteriori*, inductive knowledge of limited validity but also *a priori*, universally valid laws obtained through the so-called *induction in a broader sense*.

One of the first to broach the subject of Brentano's method of descriptive psychology and Husserl's eidetic phenomenology was Kraus, who criticized the pertinence of Husserl's accuses of psychologism in the case of Brentano. He argued that Husserl maintained even in his later thought a version of the Brentanian theory of knowledge from 1874 that Brentano himself considered obsolete, because it presupposed a theory of correspondence and the existence of so-called non-real objects (*ens irrealia*) (see Brentano 2009d, xxi–xxii). In the late 1960's, authors like Chisholm (1976) and De Boer (1968; 1978) took up again this discussion. Later, Marek (1986) develops an initial view more akin to that of Chisholm (1976) and Bergman (1966) in considering descriptive psychology a

"purely a priorical endeavor," as he himself testifies some years later (see Marek 1989, n. 15), when he also adjust his view so much, that he even misinterprets Brentano's clear examples of *a priori* certain laws as cases of enumerative inductions or generalizations (Marek 1989, 56, 58). Rollinger (1999) recognizes the similarity between Brentano's induction in a broader sense and Husserl's eidetic intuition[2] and briefly points out the empirical origin of the concepts of psychology. He also emphasizes the fact that, unlike Husserl, Brentano is not committed by his induction in a broader sense to any ontological claim concerning essences (see Rollinger 1999, 24 f.). Except Marek's later revision, hence, the main interpretative hypothesis has been so far that descriptive psychology is an *a priori* science whose concepts alone, but not its judgments, have an empirical origin. Only very recently, Tănăsescu (2022) showed that Chisholm's identification of Brentano's induction in a broader sense with Johnson's (1922) notions of 'intuitive induction' is problematic, since the latter's notion seems to apply rather to Brentano's notion of enumerative induction. This is due to the fact that intuitive induction presupposes a certain minimal number of individual, concrete cases starting from which the universal law is grasped—which is not at all the case with Brentano's intuitive grasping of apodictic universal laws which stem from concepts and not from individual instances.

In light of these intricacies, I set out in the present paper to investigate the relation of descriptive psychology with Husserl's phenomenology as an *a priori* or eidetic science. The main goal is to determine whether between Husserl's eidetic phenomenology and Brentano's descriptive psychology can still be identified any continuities, despite the latter's factual and the former's eidetic character. In this respect, I argue that at the heart of Brentano's descriptive psychology lie *a priori*, apodictic laws that are 'manifested through concepts' and are intuitively grasped by the researcher. Hence, in the first part of this paper, I discuss each of the steps Brentano devises for descriptive psychology and his peculiar notion of *induction in a broader sense*, its Aristotelian origin and methodological function. In the second part, I look at Brentano's method of descriptive psychology at work in his lecture on *The Origin of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong* (henceforth, KRW) and discuss his standpoint on the empirical origin of concepts. As I hope to show, the possibility of acquiring *a priori* 'insights' in the realm of emotional attitudes is especially clarifying in connection to the *a priori* moment of the descriptive method. In the third part, I begin with Husserl's ideal of phenomenological knowledge through acts of adequate

perception and then turn to Husserl's later procedure of eidetic variation as it is formulated in *Experience and Judgment* (henceforth, EJ). In doing this, I identify three main differences between Husserl's phenomenological method and Brentano's descriptive psychology.

1. Brentano's Descriptive Psychology and His Two Concepts of Induction

The notion of *induction in a broader sense* (*Induktion in einem weiteren Sinn*) is essential for the descriptive method as it is presented in Brentano's lectures from *Descriptive Psychology* (henceforth, DP) and its connection with actual, empiric experience. For this notion presupposes only an indirect tie with experience, *i.e.*, an initial empirical experience (perception) out of which the analyzed concept is formed beforehand. In the role that a generality of essence would play for Husserl, Brentano casts the general law grasped (*erfassen*) immediately from empiric concepts. It is important to note, that this generality is not at the same time empirically founded. Its truth is rather founded in the evidence with which the law stems from the empirical concept. In a nutshell, we are dealing with *analytic* judgments on the grounds of *a posteriori* concepts, *i.e.*, 'pure' knowledge from empirical concepts.

The distinction between descriptive and genetic psychology is explicitly introduced by Brentano only in the late 1880's (see Kamitz 1987, 163). Although in his PES this distinction does not appear as such, Brentano identifies[3] a rather descriptive aspect or stage of the research and a rather genetic one.[4] Broadly said, empirical psychology has to establish, on the base of inner perception, the fundamental classes of psychical phenomena in order to then identify their laws of succession and coexistence. In order to attend to this rather genetical part of the task, the psychologist must first of all identify the most general characteristics of mental phenomena and, accordingly, their principle of classification as well as their fundamental classes: "[…] without having distinguished the different fundamental classes of mental phenomena, psychologists would endeavor in vain to establish the laws of their succession" (PES, 33). On the one hand, we can most certainly call this first methodological step a descriptive one, on the other hand, it cannot be totally assimilated to what Brentano will later call 'descriptive psychology.' This is mainly because (a) in reaching these most general characteristics of mental phenomena, the 1874 descriptive

side of the method relies on enumerative induction, which yields only probable empirical generalizations; and (b) it only serves the genetic trait of establishing the laws of succession and coexistence. Descriptive psychology, or, as Brentano also calls it, *psychognosy* or *phenomenology*, is an individual descriptive science that is to a much greater extent independent of physiology than the psychology of 1874 or than genetic psychology. Moreover, among its propositions there are not just empirical generalizations of limited validity but also intuitive apodictic truths that *stem* from concepts (*aus den Begriffen entspringen*) in what, as we will see, Brentano calls induction in a broader sense.[5]

While still relying on inner perception, descriptive psychology "[...] aims at exhaustively determining (if possible) the elements of human consciousness and the ways in which they are connected [...]" (DP, 3). In further clarifying this distinction, Brentano calls descriptive psychology *pure* (*reine*) psychology, meaning that its doctrines are free from all physiological elements or physico-chemical processes. In this respect, descriptive psychology shares with Husserl's phenomenology a strong anti-naturalistic trait: they both reject the reduction of consciousness to a psycho-chemical event and the thesis "that it itself is composed out of chemical elements" (DP, 4). Thus, its specificity is no longer that of identifying causes that lead to the appearance of a certain mental phenomenon[6] but of offering "a general conception of the entire realm of human consciousness [...] by listing fully the basic components out of which everything internally perceived by humans is composed, and by enumerating the ways in which these components can be connected" (DP, 4).

As pure psychology, it is also an *exact* science. Unlike *inexact* sciences, like meteorology—which genetic psychology resembles—, its laws need not be amended with weakening terms such as 'mostly,' 'in average,' etc., being able to formulate its laws "sharply and precisely" (DP, 5). Brentano's example of such a precise psychognostic doctrine is: "the phenomenon of violet = red-blue" (DP, 6). This means that it is an analytic universally valid law that the experience of violet presupposes an experience of red and one of blue. There is no possible experience to contradict this, the law itself being evident not from several instances of noticed experiences of violet but from the empirical concept 'violet' itself.

Now, Brentano's separation of descriptive and genetic psychology does not entail the fact that the laws or the results of genetic research cannot be of any use for the descriptive endeavor. On the contrary, Brentano identifies several respects in which psychogenetic research can help psychognosis.

For example, the psychognost can use psychogenetic laws to 'call up the sensation to be analyzed,' to retain it, and even to present herself with other phenomena which help her, by comparison, to *notice* (*bemerken*) certain distinctive traits of the initial phenomenon (see DP, 8 f.). As an example in this regard, Brentano mentions Helmholtz's investigations into the nature of tone colors. In his research, Helmholtz used resonators which allowed him to distinguish in a sound certain overtones that otherwise would have been difficult to notice.[7] This experiment, as Brentano emphasizes, still leaves plenty of room for doubting whether those overtones were really present in the particular sounds or whether they were rather a biproduct of other soundwaves. Therefore, it is not the experimental part of Helmholtz's investigations *per se* that serves as an ultimate ground for the ultimate law to be distinguished. The experiment only gives rise to a *hypothesis* which guides the researcher, who, by using his *attention*, "later succeeded in really hearing the tones which he could only suppose to exist in the sound" (DP, 9). Brentano interprets Helmholtz's endeavor as leading to an evident experience in inner perception, guided along the way by experiences of external perception (aided hearing of overtones in sounds). Psychogenetic laws offer the experiential soil from which the psychognostic process as such can begin and from which concepts are informed.[8]

Nevertheless, for Brentano it is important to make it very clear that the uses of descriptive psychology for genetic psychology are far greater than the other way around, psychognosis as such being "one of the most essential steps in preparation for a genuinely scientific genetic psychology" (DP, 11). This is due to the fact that psychognosis offers the main characteristics of phenomena, the fundamental elements and identifies their possible connections and differences without which genetical psychology would lack any clear ground concerning its subject matter, being left exposed to confusions.

Brentano lists a total of six steps of the method of the psychognost: (1) experiencing (*erleben*), (2) noticing (*bemerken*), (3) fixing (*fixieren*), (4) inductively generalizing (*induzierend verallgemeinern*), (5) intuitively grasping general laws (*intuitiv erfassen*), and (6) making deductive use of what was obtained from general laws (*deduktiv verwerten*) (DP, 31, 67).

(1) *The psychognost first has to experience*: "his inner perception must register, if not simultaneously, then at least successively, a wealth of facts of human consciousness if he is not to lack the material necessary for his investigations" (DP, 32). As showed above, this is the moment when

genetic laws can help descriptive psychology by producing the required experiences.

(2) *The psychognost has to notice.* Brentano holds that there is a clear difference between experiencing and noticing, since we can very well experience something without noticing it. Thus, the real prejudicing incompleteness is not that of the quantity of experiences but that concerning the sufficiency of noticing "the particular experiences and their essential parts" (DP, 34). By noticing, Brentano refers to an *explicit inner perception* of what was initially internally perceived in an implicit way (see DP, 36). Noticing does not mean to be struck by something (*auffallen*), or to make a mental note of something (*sich merken*), or even to pay attention (*aufmerken*) to something, albeit paying attention is much more closely connected to noticing that the former two terms. Although it is neither necessary, nor sufficient, attention can represent a successful condition for noticing or making observations (DP, 39). Brentano discusses at quite some length other required empirical circumstances for noticing, like being a normal, fully intellectually developed individual, being awake, fresh as opposed to fatigued or exhausted, having an appropriate emotional state, eliminating distractions and also existing prejudices (especially those rooted in habit, *e.g.*, linguistic expressions or lack thereof, or rushing into judgment). To sum up, noticing represents a source of incompleteness for psychognosy because it is subjected to a variety of concrete circumstances ranging from external, physical factors, to practice or talent in noticing, and all the way to the specific individual constitution of one's intellect. However, it is certain that there can be no *false* noticing, since it is based on inner perception.

(3) *The psychognost must fix his observations in order to collect them.* The relation between noticing and fixing is such that nothing can be fixed that has not been noticed, but not everything that has been noticed is also fixed (DP, 67). Thus, it is not sufficient just to notice something, one must also use techniques like associations or substitutions to take note of that which is noticed and impress it on one's memory.

(4) *The psychognost must inductively generalize.* Under this heading, Brentano discusses not just the inductive generalization but also the next moment of intuitive grasping of general laws. As the last *empirical* step of the descriptive method, inductive generalization is also common to the earlier project of psychology from 1874. We are dealing here with enumerative induction on the ground of particular noticed characteristics or, as Brentano also calls it in *Versuch über die Erkenntnis* (henceforth,

VE), induction in a narrower sense (*Induktion im engeren Sinn*): acquiring a general empirical law from a number of particular individual observations.[9] The problem that Brentano tackles here concerns more exactly the extension or the field of induction. For example, I see a red point and notice that for it holds the law *L*: 'spatial location and quality (redness) are mutually pervading parts of the color red.' Then, I experience seeing a blue point, a green one, a yellow one, etc., and in all these cases I notice the same law *L*. I can thus induce that this trait is specific of color in general. Have I thus exhausted the domain of my induction? Or does this law also hold for other senses? Could this law actually characterize even the highest concept of 'sensory content'? To be sure, when Brentano says that "one must try to generalize as much as possible, so that the induction becomes exhaustive," (DP, 74) he does not mean that one should experience all the particular cases (as a complete induction would require (see VE, 68 ff.)). He does not require that induction be complete in the *infima species* but rather in the other higher species and genus.[10] Thus, if the inductive law *L* holds for all other senses also, *i.e.*, for hearing, smell, taste, touch, then it can be affirmed about the highest genus 'sensory element.' In brief, every induction should aim toward the highest concept possible. Where a general law cannot be extended to other species, like it is actually the case with *L* for the other senses except color, one can identify *analogies* that can help us easier gain overall intuitions (*Gesamtanschauungen*).

Except empirical psychology and genetic psychology, this notion of induction is also specific to natural science, and it can yield at best knowledge that is infinitely probable, never reaching apodictic certainty.

(5) This step stipulates however that the psychognost must also "intuitively grasp the general laws wherever the necessity or impossibility of unifying certain elements becomes clear through the concepts themselves" (DP, 75). This intuitive grasp corresponds to the notion of *induction in broader sense* which, as Brentano puts it in his 1903 text *Nieder mit den Vorurteilen!* (see VE, 68 ff.), acquires general truths in one strike (*in einem Schlage*), without having recourse to multiple, particular instances to abstract from. This immediate grasping of general descriptive laws also enjoys *a priori* apodictic certainty, allowing therefore no exceptions. Brentano gives here the following example of an intuitively grasped law: 'the peculiarity of evidence is not to be found anywhere outside of judgments' (DP, 75). This judgment 'unpacks' the concept of evidence, which is nothing else than a distinctional (*distinktionelle*) part of judgment, *i.e.*, a part that cannot be actually separated from judgment

and that is merely distinguishable in thought. It follows from the concept of evidence alone, and not from any particular instance of evidence, that it cannot be found outside of judgments, since that would *contradict* its character of mere distinctional part and make it into an actually separable one (*ablösbar*) (see DP, 15 ff.).

In distinguishing these two senses of induction, Brentano draws upon an apparent inconsistency in Aristotle. Namely, in the second book of *Posterior Analytics*, Aristotle holds that knowledge of universals is obtained by means of induction from individual perceptions:

> [...] when an *infima species* has made a stand, the earliest universal is present in the soul (for while what we perceive is an individual, the faculty of perception is of the universal-of man, not of the man Callias) [...] we pass from 'such and such a kind of animal' to 'animal,' and from 'animal' to something higher. Clearly, then, it is by induction that we come to know the first principles; for that is how perception, also, implants the universal in us (Ross 1957, 674).

However, Brentano notices that Aristotle holds in other writings that the law of noncontradiction is self-evident and that in the *Nicomachean Ethics* he argues that the principles of knowledge can be obtained in different ways, not only through induction. This entails that Aristotle may have used the concept of induction in more than one sense, *i.e.*, both in a narrower and in a broader sense. The latter use of the term is consistent with what Brentano shows about mathematical concepts, namely that they are all acquired from perceptual intuitions, and thus every analytic a priori mathematical judgment as well as the law of noncontradiction must be preceded by perception and apperception:

> Thus, it can be generally said that we always obtain the most general laws only in that individual perceptions open our way toward them. And if we were to call *every* ascent from assertoric individual judgments to general laws 'induction,' then we must recognize that the principles of all knowledge cannot be attained otherwise than with the mediation of induction (VE, 73).

In this kind of induction, the general law arises with immediate absolute certainty, *i.e.*, without any type of inference, from the clear presentation of the concept—which is never the case with the induction in the narrower sense.

(6) *The psychognost must make deductive use of what he has acquired through induction or intuition.* This final step means that he can deduce certain features that cannot be noticed as such, *e.g.*, the existence and characteristics of the individualizing factor for individual content (DP, 77).

My comments on these six moments hopefully made it clearer in what way psychognosy, while still an empirical science, is *purely* psychological—psychogenetic laws representing merely a means of obtaining experiential material—and *exact*, given its use of induction in a broader sense, *i.e.*, immediate intuitive grasping of laws out of concepts. On the other hand, it is difficult to see how it could otherwise be deemed an altogether a priori science, given also Brentano's own remarks:

> 6. Psychognosy as an experiential science.
> There are sciences which, at least according to the *sententia communis*, are built up completely a priori. Psychognosy, in any case, is incapable of being so. It, too, must start with what is immediately evident. But [what, in its case, is immediately evident] are immediately evident facts which are not of apodictic but of purely assertoric character. It is the sort of fact upon which every experiential science is based in its own way. Because each one must start with facts which are immediately evident. Yet this kind of fact we only possess in the perception of our psychical states, *i.e.*, in the knowledge of that which appears to us as *psychical* (DP, 167).

In this text from Appendix V of DP, titled *Psychognostic Sketch*, Brentano points out explicitly that psychognosy cannot be a completely *a priori* science since its fundamental source is the immediately evident experience, namely inner perception. External perception, however, is not a case of evidence, its judgments being quite the opposite, namely *blind*. Moreover, Brentano distinguishes between two types of evidence: the *assertoric* evidence of the affirmative judgments of inner perceptions and the *apodictic* evidence of the negative judgments of induction in a broader sense or of axioms in general.[11] The evidence of inner perception is guaranteed by the fact that our psychical phenomena, unlike physical phenomena, are given to us precisely as they actually are. But since they are still facts of experience and are not unpacked from concepts, they remain merely assertive.

This discussion sets the stage for the next section of this paper, in which I will attempt to flesh out Brentano's view on the empirical origin

of concepts. To do this, I refer to his 1889 lecture on *The Origin of our Knowledge of Right and Wrong* (henceforth, KRW), which can be seen in general as a contribution to the rejection of ethical relativism, by setting ethics on certain grounds in the sphere of emotions analogous to the immediate evidence of judgments.

2. The Grounding of Universal Moral Laws

Brentano's endeavor in KRW of establishing the grounds of ethics is based on the fact that there are certain analogies that hold between judgments and emotions and, hence, between the concepts like 'truth,' on the one hand, and 'good' on the other. More precisely, for Brentano, the empirical origin of the concept 'truth' lies in the experience of the two specific types of evidence mentioned above. Namely, in the experience of the evident assertoric judgments of inner perception, *e.g.*, 'I think,' 'I judge,' 'I feel,' etc., and in the experience of evident apodictic judgments that can only be negative, *i.e.*, reveal impossibilities, *e.g.*, 'one and the same thing cannot be both affirmed and denied.' For Brentano, judgments are either affirmative or negative and they can be correct or incorrect. An evident judgment, be it assertoric or apodictic, is characterized by the evidence of its correct affirmative or negative character, *i.e.*, of it correctly accepting or rejecting the object it is about. In a judgment of inner perception, *e.g.*, "I see a tree," I am immediately presented with the evident correctness of accepting the fact that I indeed see something. In other words, the *existence* of my act of seeing something is affirmed with evidence.[12] Both of these two types of evidence are immediate, that is, they do not require any other further deductive steps in order to arise as such. Their evidence is immediately present in our conscience and cannot be further explained or reduced to other judgments and concepts.

"These two forms of immediate cognitions, the assertoric cognition of our perception of ourselves and the apodictic, negative cognition, exhaust the sources from which we obtain our concept of the true" (Brentano 2009c, 88). Thus, in order to know what the concept of 'truth' is, one must have first an experience of these two forms of immediate cognition.[13]

Similarly to the way in which there are judgments or axioms that immediately are manifested from the concept as evident and thus inform the concept of truth, there are also *emotions* or *feelings* that are immediately manifested from the concept as being *qualified as right* (*als*

richtig charakterisiert) which inform the concept of good.[14] Thus, not just apodictic, immediately evident judgments can lead to knowledge but also *higher emotions qualified as right.* The concepts of logic are rooted in the immediate evident judgments of internal perception, while the concepts of ethics are rooted in emotions given in inner perception as qualified as right. The analogy to judgments also holds for the separation of emotions into *higher* and *lower.* Just as the judgments of outer perception lack evidence and are mere blind judgments of instinct or habit, so the lower pleasures, *e.g.*, the miser's pleasure from heaping riches, are never qualified as right (KRW 4, 11 f.). Generally, for Brentano, higher emotions are precisely those emotions that arise from concepts, like the love of insight and hatred of error (KRW, 13 f.). In short, 'good' is a concept obtained on the basis of the experience of a 'rightful love,' and to say that 'A is good' entails that from the concept 'A' arises a higher love toward it that is qualified as right (KRW, 15). The way in which these concepts are acquired from specific inner experiences can be seen even clearer from a 1904 letter of Brentano in which he answers to a question that Kraus had previously raised (KRW, 75).

Kraus' main intention in his original letter to Brentano seems to be that of nuancing the determination of 'empiricism' specific to Brentano and his school. The raw qualification of 'empiricist' could have meant back then, after Husserl's strong criticism in the 1900 *Prolegomena* to his LI, almost the same as 'guilty of psychologism.' It is thus plausible to think that Kraus tried to evade this accuse by making it clear that neither Brentano, nor himself take ethical norms to be reducible to our psychical organization. The way to do that was to show that the ethical principles (*e.g.*, 'there is no knowledge worthy of hate') were actually *a priori*, that is, they were not inferred from factual experience but extracted from the concepts themselves, in a similar manner to the axioms of mathematics. However, in his argument, Kraus loses sight of *the experiential origin of the concepts* themselves—and this is what Brentano corrects in his answer: He begins by showing that, actually, ethical insight is not at all analytic since 'good' is not included in the concept of 'knowledge.' As for Kant, analytic judgments have in the case of Brentano too the character of the 'principle of non-contradiction.' So, when denying such a judgment we end up faced with a contradiction: it is contradictory to say that, *e.g.*, '2+1 does not equal 3,' since '2 plus 1' is the analytical definition of '3.'

But if we were to build the negation of an ethical principle like 'knowledge is good,' we will not obtain at all this type of logical contradiction and, thus, its immediate, apodictic rejection.

This is the point in which Brentano's argument turns toward the empirical formation of concepts. Consider the judgment '2+1 *necessarily* equals 3.' We notice that the concept of 'necessity' is not included in '2+1.' Then how does one attain the immediate evidence of this judgment? Brentano's solution is to indicate as source for the concept of 'necessity' an experience of contradiction: we assume that '2+1 is not 3,' this, being contradictory, determines the apodictic rejection of it and, by reflection on this apodictic judgment of rejection, we acquire the concept of 'impossibility' (KRW, 75). What is remarkable about this argument, is that both the evidence of the analytic proposition and its necessity stem from the concepts: the former, analytically—'2+1' is the definition of '3'—the latter, informed by the experience of the apodictic judgment of rejection of contradiction resulting from the negation of the former. Still, neither in the case of physical laws such as the principle of inertia (negating the principle of inertia does not yield the same kind of apodictic judgment of rejection), nor in the case of the ethical principles does this happen.

So, in order to explain the apodicticity of ethical principles there must be some other *analogous* kind of experience. We saw that Brentano argued that the concept 'good' is an empirical concept which stems from the experience of a 'love which is qualified as right.' Precisely this is the other experience that we need—and that, as Brentano points out, a purely intellectual being would lack—in order to experience the evidence of the judgment 'knowledge is good.' Like in the former case, when the negation of '2+1=3' motivates a cognitive act (a judgment) of rejection, from the concept 'knowledge' stems now a phenomenon of love toward it, which, since it arises from a concept, is also qualified as right.

> We call something good in view of the fact that the love directed upon it is experienced as being correct, just as we say that an object exists if the acknowledgment directed upon it is directly or indirectly evident (Brentano 2009c, 91).

But what if someone does not feel that particular emotion toward that which is good? What if someone feels in fact the opposed emotion and hates knowledge? The analogy identified by Brentano between evident judgments and emotions which are 'qualified as right' can be again of help here. In short, the first case would be similar to that in which someone does not experience the contradiction of saying '7 x 7 does not equal 49,' or 'a triangle does not have three sides.' It could be that particular

psychological factors prevent that person from seeing the evident truth of those judgments, like tiredness, sickness, etc., or it could be the fact that our apperceptive and imaginative capacities are limited—this is why we have proofs, demonstrations that bring forth the evidence of a judgment. But it is not the fact *that* a person has a certain experience or feeling that validates the judgments but rather *because* that law is evident in itself, as an analytic judgment, a particular psychological mechanism occurs.[15]

3. Husserl on Eidetic Variation

Since the LI, Husserl envisaged phenomenology as a presuppositionless endeavor concerning our knowing. Its task was that of clarifying the concepts of epistemology in order to clear the grounds for founding logic. In classical terms, phenomenology was designed as a theory of knowledge, with a specific methodology guided by the ideal of the lack of presuppositions. But what kind of presuppositions had Husserl in view? In a nutshell, any assertion lacking an actual or possible intuitive confirmation in experience should be discarded, that is, any metaphysical theory (like, for example, the existence of a substantial soul), any theoretical scientific claim regarding nature or society (*e.g.*, the principle of causality), religious dogma, personal beliefs or habits, etc. Seen in this light, it could seem we're facing a cumbersome, endless task of purifying our entire system of knowledge. However, what Husserl actually sets out to do in the LI is to retrace logical or epistemological concepts to their roots in the *intuitive experience* of what is given as such in conscience and thus gain full intuitive clarity over concepts that otherwise would be improperly, vaguely understood and, hence, left open to the import of presuppositions (LI I, 168).

Tracing back concepts to their intuitive experiences assumes that such an experience that reveals its object in a fully adequate manner is possible in principle. Can this be the case with a perception of a random physical thing, like a landscape, a table, a house, etc.? We can meet all of these objects, so to say, in person, stand right in front of them, circle around them, get closer or further, etc. But at any given moment what we are given is only a particular aspect of the physical thing, it is never given in its entirety. Regardless how long we stare at a house, go around it, go inside, up the stairs, etc., we will never have in any of our acts of perceptive presentation the object as such in its totality, in what Husserl

calls a fully adequate perception; there will always be sides hidden from us, which are merely indicated by the side actually facing us. It seems thus that such intuitive experiences that offer always only *inadequate* presentations of their objects cannot meet Husserl's claim for adequate givenness. This is not the case though with what is actually present as a real (*reell*) part in my consciousness when I experience these perceptions and then reflectively turn toward what is given *as the immanent content* of our consciousness. Husserl holds that in this kind of reflection we do not stumble upon landscapes, houses, trees, and other such things as present in our consciousness but upon real (*reell*) sense-data: sensations that constitute the real (*reell*) content of our presentations, be they perceptual, imaginary, recollections, etc., as well as upon other apperceptive, doxic characters, etc.[16]

Consider Locke's famous example of bringing in front of our eyes a uniformly colored globe (Locke 1975, 145). We would be tempted to say that its color is, *e.g.*, a uniform red, that this intentional object 'red sphere' has the objectual property of being red or that 'redness' is characteristic of it. At a closer reflective look upon its presentation, we realize that, although we perceived it as being this uniform color, in our subjective experience there was never a unitary sensory content of a solid red but a multiple one, comprising many nuances and shades of red, which then we apperceived or interpreted as the 'red of the sphere,' a specific visual property of the object of my presentation, *i.e.*, of the intentional object (LI II, 83). This sensory content that is apprehended, interpreted or apperceived as the objective color is that which is really present in our conscience and is given adequately, in full evidence, in reflexive acts. Except for these reflective acts, however, sensory contents never appear as such: in perceiving the red sphere, I do not perceive different shades of red that then merge somehow to form the final solid red. We say thus that sensory contents as real elements of consciousness are not themselves, in the first instance, intentional objects, *i.e.*, they do not appear as such or become phenomenal in acts that contain them. They and their functions are revealed only in the subsequent acts of reflection in a so-called 'inner' perception. This kind of 'inner' perception is precisely the adequate one Husserl refers to. However, it must be kept in mind that although only 'inner' perceptions can be adequate, not every such 'inner' perception is adequate, since, *e.g.*, we can never fully grasp the flow of our consciousness (see LI II, 86 f.).

In this type of investigations, we see how such concepts as 'content,' 'presentation,' 'object,' 'perception' are retraced to a certain type of

intuitive experiences, namely *acts of reflection*, that can be performed time and time again. Thus, for Husserl, already in the first edition of LI, phenomenology, like descriptive psychology for Brentano, presupposed an intuitive experiential basis.[17] Nevertheless, a *first* notable difference concerns the *reflexive character of this fundamental experience*. While for Brentano this experience was granted by what is given with assertoric evidence in inner perception and which is further to be noticed, fixed, and inductively generalized, for Husserl the fundamental experience is that of adequate perceptions, which are nothing else than reflexive acts intending the immanent content of consciousness. This further entails a different stand of the two thinkers about the ontological status of the immanent contents. For Brentano, physical phenomena exist only as immanent contents of psychical phenomena—which, to be sure, possess real existence—, having thus only an intentional or phenomenal existence and not a real one. Moreover, physical phenomena are never given *as* what they are, being signs of their real causes (see PES, 14). Husserl, on the other hand, rethinks what Brentano called 'physical phenomena' as sensory contents, *i.e.*, a part of the real (*reell*) make up of consciousness, given adequately, as they actually are, in reflective acts.[18]

Now, phenomenology does not restrict itself to particular acts of reflection of this or that individual. In this respect, it is important to bear in mind that Husserl, in the second edition of the LI, conceived phenomenology as an 'eidetic science':

> This phenomenology must bring to pure expression, must *describe* in terms of their essential concepts and their governing formulae of essence, the essences which directly make themselves known in intuition, and the connections which have their roots purely in such essences. Each such statement of essence is an *a priori* statement in the highest sense of the word. (LI I, 166)

This means that the phenomenologist does not deal with real psychical occurrences, *hic et nunc* experiences of real subjects in the real world, but with the ideas or the pure species of these experiences. This is also the case with the mathematical endeavor: Pythagoras' theorem is never demonstrated for this particular right-angled triangle and then extrapolated to other instances, rather it holds for the species 'right angled triangle' which is merely instantiated in the drawn figure.

Thus, a *second* fundamental difference between the method of descriptive psychology and that of phenomenology regards the sense in which both methods are said to be *pure*. Brentano's psychognosy is a pure psychological science since it is independent of any natural science, like physiology, chemistry, etc. However, it remains an *experiential science* (*Erfahrungswissenschaft*) that proceeds necessarily from an immediate intuitive experiential basis. Phenomenology, on the other hand, is *pure* in that it suspends every connection with empiric reality.[19]

In the second edition of *LI*, Husserl determines pure description as the task of the phenomenologist and indicates the following procedure: we start from *exemplary* individual intuitions of experiences—which, and this is very important to keep in mind, can very well be freely imagined ones—then, we conceptualize the pure essences given in them.[20] The way in which Husserl secures the independence from any contingent factual occurrence and can acquire pure concepts is by recourse to the so-called *free variation in phantasy*. To be sure, the explicit mention of this method as the *eidetic variation* appears only later in Husserl's works.[21] Still, an overview of his later stance on this methodologic moment could allow us to better estimate in retrospect the divergence between his path and Brentano's descriptive psychology.

In EJ, Husserl's discussion concerning the method of *essential seeing* (*Wesenserschauung*) begins with the distinction between empirical and pure concepts. Empirical concepts are obtained inductively from contingent actual experiences and their extension, although broader than the specific instances they were acquired from, can prove to be limited, since it is also contingent and subject to cancellation in the course of future experiences. Pure concepts, on the other hand, come before experience and even prescribe its rules. Thus, "the universal which first comes to prominence in the empirically given must from the outset be freed from its character of contingency" (EJ, 340). If we relate this to Brentano's steps of psychognosy, we could see Husserl as introducing a new step right after the moment of inductive generalization.

The novelty consists in the subsequent freeing of empirical concepts from the contingency specific to any enumerative induction. This operation consists in taking an initial experiential object and turning it into an 'example' or a "guiding 'model'" (EJ 340) starting from which we produce in our pure imagination other different individuals as *arbitrary* variants of the former. By doing this, "it then becomes evident that a unity runs through this multiplicity of successive figures [...] an *invariant*

is necessarily retained as the *necessary general form*, without which an object such as this thing, as an example of its kind, would not be thinkable at all" (EJ, 341). This invariant is nothing else than the *general essence*. For example, if we take what is common to the free, arbitrary variants of an initial heard or imagined sound, we acquire a certain invariant which is the *eidos* sound. Any other instance of a sound would then be recognized not as an instance of a new eidos but of the eidos sound. What is important in variation is not the actual number of variants but rather that the variation *can* continue arbitrarily to infinity, that we are dealing with what Husserl calls an "'infinitely open' multiplicity" in which "is grounded as a higher level *the true seeing of the universal as eidos*" (EJ, 342). By holding in grasp the entire series of variations, their overlapping[22] takes place in a passive way and by looking "toward the congruent and the purely identical […] we attain the *eidos*" (EJ, 343). More precisely, at first, we might possess only a vague presentation of an empirical concept, then, through this process of variation in phantasy, we get to *see* a generality, that is, we experience this generality itself in one of our more complex acts: "It is a seeing resulting from the actively comparative overlapping of congruence" (EJ, 348). The most important aspect for attaining a pure universal is that it has to be completely free of all positings of actuality (see EJ, 349 ff.). The initial contingent starting point is purified, so to say, precisely through the process of arbitrary imaginative variations, every positing of actual existence being excluded.

> If we practice variation freely but cling secretly to the fact that, *e.g.*, these must be arbitrary sounds *in the* world, heard or able to be heard by men on earth, then we certainly have an essential generality as an *eidos* but one *related to our world of fact* and bound to this universal fact. It is a secret bond in that, for understandable reasons, it is imperceptible to us (EJ, 350).

For Husserl, thus, perfect purity is attainable only together with the severing of every connection the variants have with this factual world. This means that in acquiring universalities we must put out of play any relation of the variants or the eidos with the actual world, *i.e.*, abstain from grasping them as belonging to this factual world. The extension of, say, the pure concept of red that I obtain starting from an initial example contains no trace of the actual red color but only pure possibilities.[23] However, every actual red color corresponds to a certain eidetic possibility: "each can be considered as an example and can be changed into a variant" (EJ, 352), and

every conceptual note of the pure eidos 'red' will belong to every actual instance of the color.[24] Thus, the truths that stem from pure concepts are all necessary *a priori* and norm every actual experience.

The central question now concerns the specific ontological commitments of the phenomenologist regarding ideas or ideal objects. As we already saw, for Brentano, the step from particular to general is called induction, more exactly, enumerative induction and induction in a broader sense as intuitive grasping of a priori apodictic truths. Here, we find a *third* fundamental difference between Brentano's descriptive psychology and Husserl's phenomenology which concerns *their ontological commitments.* Namely, decisively rejecting any sort of empirical, enumerative induction in the practice of phenomenology, Husserl relies exclusively on what he calls *intuition of essences* or *eidetic intuition.* As already pointed out, there are several mentions in the literature of the fact that eidetic intuition is similar to Brentano's intuitive grasping of laws immediately manifested by concepts. However, except for De Boer (1978), there is no in-depth discussion of the topic. Both Brentano's induction in a broader sense as well as Husserl's intuition of essences deal with evident, a priori, apodictic truths. Thus, both allow no exception and are in no way dependent on the existence or non-existence of particular, factual things. The main difference, however, is that for Brentano the apodictic laws analytically stem from empirical concepts, while Husserl's eidetic laws are obtained through the analysis of essences, *i.e.,* of ideal objects. However, Brentano's induction in a broader sense does not commit him to any ontological claim concerning generalities,[25] while Husserl has to defend the *validity* (*Geltung*) of ideal objects.

4. Concluding Remarks

Husserl's method of the intuition of essences assures that phenomenology acquires apodictic truths, characterized by the principle of non-contradiction, like all analytic judgments that arise from concepts. At the same time, these truths are given 'in person,' in a fulfilled intuitive manner. The a priori knowledge phenomenology acquires cannot consist in mere vague, symbolic intentions but in full adequate ones constituting pure intuitive eidetic insights. In Brentano's case, the a priori laws of psychognosy are truths that arise immediately from empirical concepts. What, thus, guarantees their intuitive character is not an intuition of some

sort of ideal object or essence but the direct evidence with which they arise from the concept abstracted from an original perception (be it internal or external). Husserl would hold that precisely this empiric origin is the main problem that jeopardizes the a priori character of any insight drawn from it.[26] For him, an entire series of overlapping intuitive contents of the variations and the infinite possibility of multiplying them lead to the pure eidos and assure its intuitive character.

Both for Brentano and Husserl, on the one hand, knowledge is essentially characterized—with a term belonging to the latter—by intuitive fullness. On the other hand, the role played here by factual experience is the source of their most essential disagreements. In order to reach the standard of purity, the phenomenologist needs to take certain steps to change the natural apprehension peculiar to his starting example and abstain from any sort of such positing apprehension throughout variation. As we have seen in the previous discussion of Brentano's method of descriptive psychology, the psychognost can acquire the necessary material for his analyses from genetical laws and even employ some experimental aids. Nevertheless, the essential steps of his method are centered on the evidence of inner perception. The psychognost maintains the respective psychical phenomenon in recent memory, notices its fundamental parts, inductively generalizes to the highest possible species and establishes by means of intuitive grasping their possible or impossible connections. In this process, Brentano never has in view such a change in apprehension that would separate the analyzed phenomenon from its ties with the real, factual world. In my reading, however, there is a step of this method that, by its nature, is *non-positing*—and that is the step of *intuitive grasping*. Irrespective of the empirical origin of the concepts, the analytic laws that are intuitively grasped, *i.e.*, *vérités de raison* seized immediately and directly, without any kind of inference, are always, for Brentano, disguised *negative judgments* of the form 'S – non-P is not' (PES II, 286). They express impossible connections and do not postulate any existence. Moreover, given the analogies between the sphere of judgments and that of feelings, this also holds in an analogous way also for the laws of ethics. Beyond being a factual science and beyond Brentano's strong empirical claims, descriptive psychology seems thus to agree with eidetic phenomenology in that precise step of its method that determines its distinctiveness and through which the grounding of normative sciences is achieved.[27]

NOTES

[1] In this respect, see Zahavi (2017, 51–76), Cobb-Stevens (1990, 166 ff.)

[2] This perspective has a long tradition in the literature, being already pointed out by Bergmann (1944).

[3] For example, in Book 2 and 3 of PES (see also Ps 53.002 f.).

[4] I have discussed this in greater detail in Bejinariu (2022).

[5] There are also other significant differences between descriptive psychology and the psychology from 1874. For example, the methodological moment of noticing (*Bemerken*) is not as such part of the method presented in PES. Also, the specific mereological task of determining the elements of consciousness and their possible connections is foreign to the positive psychology of 1874. For a detailed account on this subject, see Tănăsescu (2019, 409 f.).

[6] In the 1880's, this is clearly distinguished by Brentano as the task of genetic psychology (see DP, 3).

[7] In a letter to Husserl, Brentano talks about the possible concealing of the necessary contradiction implied by the negation of any analytic law and brings up as an example the negation of Helmholtz's law which "shows, how much the indistinctness of the apperception veils such contradictions" (Hua Dok III/1, 32). See also Bergmann (1944, 281).

[8] On the empirical formation on concepts in outer or inner perception, see *infra* section 2.

[9] For a detailed account on Brentano's induction in a narrower sense and the theory of probability, see Gilson (1955, 110–158), Bergmann (1944, 282 ff.).

[10] Husserl also speaks in *Experience and Judgment* about a hierarchy of both empiric as well as pure generalities (see EJ, 355 ff.).

[11] For a discussion on Brentano's theory of axioms as 'truths of reason' (*Vernunfterkenntnisse*) and their negative character in the context of DP, but also as it is present in the second volume of his 1874 *Psychology*, see Kamitz (1987, 166 ff.).

[12] As Chisholm resumes Brentano's standpoint: "There is a very close connection between the correctness and incorrectness of judgements, on the one hand, and *existence* and *non-existence*, on the other […] an object exists if and only if it is worthy of being accepted or affirmed, and that an object does not exist if and only if it is worthy of being rejected or denied" (Chisholm 1966, 396). In Husserlian terms, this means that, for Brentano, judgements are basically reduced to their positing character. However, this is not the case with apodictic laws, since in their negative formulation (enunciating an impossibility) they do not imply the existence of any object (see De Boer 1968, 196).

[13] As Chisholm sums it up, we understand concepts like 'true,' 'correct,' etc. just like "we come to understand any other empirical concept: we are

presented with something that manifests that concept" (Chisholm 1966, 398). However, Chisholm does not distinguish here an important aspect, namely the fact that there are different ways in which a concept can be manifested. One should not confuse the way in which an external perception of, *e.g.*, a particular color red manifests the concept of redness with the way in which an apodictic experience manifests the concept of 'necessity.'

14 "The emotive attitudes that are immediately manifest to us as right are similar to the judgments that, as we say, are evident *ex terminis*" (PES II, 153).

15 In his *Prolegomena* to the LI, Husserl formulates a critique against thinkers like Mill or Sigwart who seemed at times to found logical norms on the *feeling of evidence* (*Evidenzgefühl*) (LI I, 115 ff.; Hua XXII, 208). Given our discussion so far, it does not come as a surprise that Brentano himself also criticizes Sigwart in respect to this idea of *a feeling of evidence* or, as he also calls it, *feeling of necessity* (*Gefühl der Notwendigkeit*) (see Brentano 2009d, 38).

16 Concerning the sphere of immanence and its significance for the LI, see Bernet, Kern, Marbach (1996, 52 ff.).

17 Lohmar (2005, 76) points out in a note the interesting fact that in order to identify the other descriptive elements of acts and determine concepts like matter, quality, etc., Husserl already implicitly employs in the first edition of the LI a type of variational process.

18 I discuss this subject at length in Bejinariu (2022).

19 For a detailed account of Husserl's understanding of phenomenology as a science of essences and its relation to experiential sciences, in particular with experimental psychology, see Ferencz-Flatz (2018, 170–178). Concerning the actual collaborations between phenomenology and empiric sciences and its further possibilities, see Lohmar (2010).

20 In Husserl's words, we grasp "pure essences on a basis of exemplary individual intuitions of experiences (often freely imagined ones)" (LI, 175). On the complex question concerning the status of the initial example in Husserl's method of eidetic variation, see Ferencz-Flatz (2011, 274–286).

21 However, as Ströker (1987) and Seebohm (1990) show, what it refers to is also to be found in the LI. A thorough account of Husserl ideative abstraction in the context of the LI can be found in Peucker (2002, 239–255).

22 Lohmar (2005) observes that although the syntheses of coincidence "are the groundwork of apprehension (*Auffassungsgrundlage*) (the presentative content) for the intuition of the universal" we are not dealing with synthesis between sensory contents, but with "givennesses that can arise only in the transition between intentional acts" (Lohmar 2005, 76 f.).

23 The pure character of essences acquired through eidetic variation has been contested by Schutz (1959) and Levin (1968) who argued that the eidos still remains bound to the empirical typicalities from which one starts and that, hence, "ideation is continuous with induction" (Levin 1968, 2). For an

opposed view that argues for a "modal disjunction" between the specific apperceptions of eidetic intuition and induction, see Palermo (1978).

24   Lohmar (2005) offers a stronger formulation of the relation between essences and reality when he points out that essences, "the essential structures of consciousness and reality are […] not already real for themselves. They rely upon a sensuous realization in the actual world, the world in which we live" (Lohmar 2005, 74).

25   This fact is considered by some scholars to be the main difficulty with Brentano's account. De Boer (1968) argues that because Brentano rejects essences and accepts only what is given in sense perception (*sinnliche Wahrnehmung*), he cannot properly ground general judgments on empirical concepts (see De Boer 1968, 196). However, Brentano does not ground all concepts on sense perception. As we showed, concepts like 'necessity,' 'true,' 'good' etc. are grounded in experiences of inner perception, which, albeit assertoric, is itself, unlike outer or sense perception, evident.

26   The sharp distinction between the eidetic and the empirical side that such programmatic depictions of the phenomenological method and its goal entail is undoubtedly problematic and requires further discussion. Ferencz-Flatz (2018) offers a comprehensive account concerning the paradoxical relation of phenomenology to experience.

27   I would like to thank Dr. Ion Tănăsescu for his valuable comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

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