MAYNOOTH PHILOSOPHICAL PAPERS ISSUE 6 (2011)

An Anthology of Current Research Published by the Department of Philosophy, NUI Maynooth

Issue Editor: Amos Edelheit
General Editor: Michael Dunne
ISBN 978-0-9563267-4-4
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Foreword

It is, once again, my great pleasure as General Editor of *Maynooth Philosophical Papers* to write the foreword to this year’s edition of our journal which is the sixth volume in the series. I would like to thank my colleague, Dr Edelheit, for his great care and attention in editing the articles which make up this fine collection. In his Introduction, Dr Edelheit makes a personal statement in which he argues for the essential role of historical scholarship in philosophy and, while his views will not perhaps be accepted by all, his contribution in this regard will be found to be thought-provoking at least. My heartfelt thanks also to all of the contributors who each embody in their own way the finest of philosophical scholarship. *Maynooth Philosophical Papers* remains the showcase of a vital aspect of the Department, namely its research activity, and also of its interaction with the wider academic community.

Exactly one year ago we learnt of the death of Prof James McEvoy who was for many years Professor of Philosophy at Maynooth and Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy as it then was. James McEvoy was one of the most outstanding scholars of medieval thought of his generation. His international reputation was established with the publication of his masterly *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982) which became the standard reference work to the thought of this thirteenth-century scholar-bishop of Lincoln. This book was in many ways the culmination of studies which began at Queen’s University Belfast under Rev. Theodore Crowley, whom he was to succeed as Prof of Scholastic Philosophy in 1975. He maintained a life-long interest in studying and promoting the study of Robert Grosseteste, the first Chancellor of the University of Oxford, and was President of the International Grosseteste Society. Prof McEvoy always acknowledged his debt to his alma mater, Queen’s University Belfast, where he was a student from 1960-64 and studied Latin and Greek to second-year level and Scholastic Philosophy to Honours. Equally he acknowledged the importance of the Butler Act which allowed Catholics in Northern Ireland to have greater access to third-level education than had been enjoyed before. He studied theology at St Patrick’s College Maynooth between 1964 and 1968. In 1968 he was ordained priest for the diocese of Down and Connor and then went to study philosophy in Belgium at the Catholic University of Louvain where he defended his PhD thesis in 1974. The theme and practice of friendship also featured in James McEvoy’s curriculum and he published many articles and a number of books on this topic. This was not just a matter of scholarly interest to him since he was surrounded by close friends all of his life and was a loyal friend in turn. His career took him back from Belfast to Louvain in 1988 where he was appointed Professor and was *Directeur scientifique* of the Centre De Wulf-Mansion until 1995. In October 1995 he was appointed to the chair of philosophy at Maynooth where he founded the prestigious Annual Aquinas Lecture Series. Prof McEvoy’s wide-ranging and detailed knowledge of all aspects of philosophy, be it ancient, medieval, modern or contemporary never ceased to amaze colleagues as well as his equally profound knowledge of the Fathers of the Church, Church History, ancient and contemporary languages and, of course, his knowledge and love of music. In August 2000, he was elected President of the Society for the Promotion of Eriugenian Studies. In September 2004, he was appointed to the Chair of Scholastic Philosophy at Queen’s where he organised a conference in 2008 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the subject of Scholastic Philosophy at Queen’s. Throughout a long and busy career, as a priest he took every opportunity to exercise his ministry to colleagues and students, as an inspiring teacher and educator. In September 2009 he retired from Queen’s and at the same time became tutor at St. Malachy’s Seminary, Down and Connor Diocese. He died at Belfast on October 2nd, 2010. The Department of Philosophy at Maynooth
continues to honour his memory by awarding a prize in his name to the best student in Medieval Philosophy in the second year examination. It is entirely fitting that we should commemorate Prof McEvoy in a volume dedicated to scholarship.

As we begin our academic year 2011-12, I wish all the best to our students, tutors, and to the lecturing and administrative staff. We look forward to a new year and to new challenges.

Dr Michael Dunne,
General Editor, Maynooth Philosophical Papers
Head, Department of Philosophy
National University of Ireland Maynooth

October 2, 2011
Once upon a time philosophers were divided into two main groups: theoretical philosophers on the one hand and historians of philosophy on the other. The former were regarded as creative philosophers, or else ‘philosophers’ in the full and demanding sense of this term. The latter were regarded as antiquarians of the philosophical tradition, yet an essential ingredient in any decent department of philosophy. Back in those happy days ‘philosophy’ was one coherent discipline. Unfortunately, this is not really the case today, where we find an essential split between ‘analytic’ and ‘continental’ philosophers, both producing very different terminology and methodology. What is still common to both these dominant trends in most of the departments of philosophy in the English-speaking world and beyond it today is their attitude to the history of the philosophical tradition. While most analytic philosophers simply restrict the importance of the history of philosophy (but they still mention from time to time in their courses and articles some “big names” like Plato, Aristotle, Descartes or Kant for instance, as if it is possible to fully understand those thinkers without a historical reconstruction), most continental philosophers do study some parts of the history of philosophy, but many of them do so without the proper historical methods such as learning the languages in which their sources were written and all the relevant historical contexts. Let us say something about the historian of philosophy and about the relation between scholarship and philosophy.

Who is this creature we call ‘the historian’? He is someone who has a great passion for the past and very little scholarly interest in the present. This is what makes him or her a historian. Being passionate about the past means first of all an implicit and explicit rejection, when dealing with the past, of any scholarly preoccupation with most issues related to contemporary politics, society, economy, and culture. And it is precisely this aspect of the historian’s activity that puts him in direct conflict with the ‘men of the present’, that is, scholars whose focus as scholars is on present issues.

We all, of course, are ‘men of the present’ in the sense that we share this contemporary present life, and we also share some common assumptions which prioritize our time; thus we are used to thinking that our time is somehow better in matters of technology, science, legal systems, and politics; that humanity is – generally speaking – progressing, and in one way or another we are now living in better times. But the first creature to doubt these assumptions is our historian, a strange creature who is living here and now, but from the intellectual point of view he is located somewhere in the past. Having developed a critical perspective on many different aspects of humanity throughout the ages, but living in the present and being conscious of it, the historian is the first to learn from real progress made in the past how to uncover false claims of progress in the present.

These last remarks have a certain theoretical flavour, they seem a bit philosophical. It seems that the historian who is interested in theoretical questions with some philosophical flavour can find himself in a position of critically examining these assumptions regarding progress; the historian can distance himself from contemporary fashions and popular trends, avoiding the tendency to give preference to one scholarly ideology over the other by simply using historical facts and detailed analyses, where a proper scholarly apparatus is implemented.

As we already mentioned it is no secret that the dominant trends in philosophy today are analytic philosophy on the one hand and continental philosophy on the other. This
division has now become somewhat obsolete, since both fashions have become by now part of history. But representatives of both camps still have something in common: they lay a claim to something like philosophical truth, the one and only proper way of doing philosophy in issues of method and practice, and both are usually divorced from any scholarly approach to philosophical texts. While most ‘analytics’ are moved by an almost instinctive repugnance towards any historical and scholarly approach to philosophy, since they regard the philosophical tradition as completely irrelevant when it comes to ‘real philosophy’, the ‘continentals’ have chosen in advance the ‘right approach’ – phenomenological or other – and since they have already marked out what they are looking for, their conclusions are usually reached, consciously or unconsciously by a tacit acceptance of the right approach.

But what do we mean by ‘scholarly approach’? Very simply, that philosophical texts should be read in the original languages; that the philosopher who is truly engaged in a philosophical investigation will be familiar with the texts and contexts he or she discusses, while using proper philological and historical methods. These points have to be made today since after almost a century of analytic philosophy most of the philosophers trained in this fashion are by now completely unaware of some of the elementary scholarly methods and practices necessary for any serious discussion in philosophy and in all the other disciplines belonging to the humanities. They were taught that history and other contextual aspects are not relevant to philosophy, which exists somewhere in a vacuum waiting to be ‘shared’ by the a-historical, eternal, and unchanged mind of the immortal philosopher, as if there were such a thing.

What we urgently need to see among philosophers, now more than ever, is a reintroduction of the phrases ‘field of specialization’ and ‘field of competence’, thus raising philosophy as a discipline once again to a proper level of professionalism and establishing almost anew scholarly standards which have long been forgotten. ‘Field of specialization’ is the specific field of research which each philosopher has; ‘field of competence’ is a broader spectrum of interest which is mainly needed for teaching philosophy on a proper level.

The argument or rationale of this volume is thus that philosophy cannot any more be used as an excuse for an ignorance of history and texts, and that philosophers should once again base their philosophical investigations on proper scholarly methods and practices. This rationale is reflected in all of the articles in the present volume: the first three (by John Glucker, Ivor Ludlam, and Yosef Z. Liebersohn) focus on Greek philosophy (mainly Plato and Hellenistic philosophy) and contain critical questioning of some common scholarly dogmas; one (by Michael Dunne) is focused on the medieval philosopher Richard FitzRalph, who is not widely known among the philosophical public of today, and it brings out his important account of the human mind; one (by Gregorio Piaia) is a reflection on the importance of history to philosophy in the early modern and modern periods; and one (by Cyril McDonnell) is focused on the relation between Brentano and Husserl. Since the historical and philological study of philosophy is pursued by scholars of different periods, living in different countries, this volume includes also articles by some scholars outside the Department of Philosophy, NUI Maynooth.
ABSTRACT

This article discusses some methodological issues concerning the nature of the study of ancient philosophy, and especially the relation between the precise historical and philological reading of the ancient texts and the philosophical speculation about what these texts mean, or (as is often the case) what one thinks that they should, or must, mean. I take as a specimen of the 'more philosophical' approach two articles by Michael Frede, both from his Essays in Ancient Philosophy. In his Introduction, Frede seems to base what he regards as the proper study of the ancient philosophical texts on the detection in these texts of what he calls "good reasons", which he identifies with "what we ourselves would regard as good reasons". This would imply – in this particular case – that the criteria employed by a contemporary analytic philosopher should serve as the acid test of the validity of any historical reconstruction of what an ancient philosopher – who had no idea whatsoever of analytic philosophy (or of any other modern philosophical fashion) – really meant. Purely historical considerations, according to Frede, should only serve in the last resort, in cases where we have failed to detect "good reasons". To illustrate the consequences of such an approach, I discuss some of the features of the other article, "The Original Notion of Cause", showing that, while it makes some very useful contributions to elucidating Stoic concepts of causality, it sheds no light on the earlier meanings of αἴτιος and αἰτία as two of the main, and original, Greek concepts of causation. This is demonstrated through a brief (and very basic) survey of the development of these two concepts from Homer to the early fourth century.

A. THE STRANGE CASE OF THE ACCUSATIVE

Habit makes the world go flat. We take our language for granted, just as we take for granted most things which surround us. One requires the keen eye of a discriminating philologist, philosopher or literary critic to see – and make others realize – that a word or expression we have grown used to is, in fact, somewhat peculiar. It takes, for example, Housman’s Fragment of a Greek Tragedy to make those of us who have been brought up from our youth on the remains of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides even begin to realize quite how strange and ‘unnatural’ their language is. It is only after reading lines like Housman’s,

And, O my son, be, on the one hand, good,
And do not, on the other hand, be bad;
For that is very much the safest plan

– that one realizes the strangeness of the lines Sophocles, Ajax 550-551

\[ \text{ὡ} \text{παί, γένοιο πατρός εὐτυχέστερος, τὰ δ’ ἄλλ’ ὄμως, καὶ γένοι } \text{ἄν οὐ κακός} \]

– and this is far from being the most ‘unnatural’ example one can cite.¹

Let us now take two examples nearer home, which will lead us to our proper subject.

In the last forty years or so, a whole group of ‘Greekish’ words have made their way

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¹ The first line of Antigone springs to mind: Ὡ κοινὸν αὐτάδελφον Ἧλιμήνης κάρα. Or the opening lines of Seven Against Thebes: Κάδμου πολέμιται, χρῆ λέγειν τὰ καίρια/ ὅστις φυλάσσει πράγος ἐν πρῶμην πόλεως/ σίκα νωμών... I wonder if anyone has suggested that τὰ καίρια may refer here not just to καιρός in the sense current in ancient literature, but also to its sense of ‘weather’. The dictionaries tell us that this sense is not attested before the late middle ages. But then, βοῦν ις at Supplices 117 is one of our scanty pieces of evidence for βουνός and cognates in the sense of ‘hill, mount’ in early Greek texts, before they went underground and re-emerged in the modern language.
the sub-category of ‘central and too technical’ Greek philosophical concepts in transliteration. This is part of a tendency, which I have criticized in articles and reviews over the years, to make concession after concession to that newly-arrived denizen of the Republic of Letters, The Greekless Reader. The assumption behind these concessions is that philosophers (or historians, or theologians, for that matter) with a Classical education are becoming rare these days (whose fault, pray?), and if we want to ensure the continuity of the study of ancient philosophy, we have to open the gates to those modern philosophers who have no knowledge of Greek and Latin and can(?) not study the languages and literatures at the advanced age of twenty-three or so. This is done by providing every piece of text in translation (whether or not one also offers the ‘few’ readers of Greek and Latin the original text or a part of it: this has now become optional), and by giving what are supposed to be the Greek key-concepts, which are taken to be by their very nature untranslatable, not in the original — oh, so difficult! — Greek characters but in transliteration. Thus, the English language has been ‘enriched’ by words like arete, agathos, endaimonia, onia, dikaiosyne and the like. One of these ‘ace-words’ is aitia/aition, which is usually translated as ‘cause’. Are these two Greek words untranslatable? If so, why? If all that they signify is ‘cause’, why bother to transliterate the Greek?

The educated reader of English should be familiar at least with one word of Greek origin derived from aitia in this sense: aetiology. The Latin origin of this word, aetiology, is at least as old as the late Latin grammarians and Isidore of Seville. It is not uncommon in mediaeval and early modern texts, not only in English. The connection between aitia and cause is thus firmly embedded in our Western linguistic tradition.

On the Eastern, Greek side, things are not quite as simple. In philosophical texts, ever since Plato, and in medical texts, apton and aitia are frequently used for cause and causation in various senses and contexts. But throughout antiquity and the Middle Ages, and until our own age, the adjective apton has never lost its other meaning of ‘someone taken to be guilty of/responsible for something’. I shall bring some evidence for this later. It may be no accident that aitia in today’s Greek is only one of two words for ‘cause’, and it has been restricted mostly to the literary language (Katharevousa) and to ‘high’ Demotic, while the more usual everyday word for ‘cause’ or ‘reason’ is λόγος. Greek has thus preserved both main meanings of apton and derivatives. Which of these two main meanings came first?

Here, a mistake in the Latin rendering of a Greek derivative, detected less than two centuries ago, may offer us a first clue. Every student of the Classics is familiar with the case in the declensions of nouns and adjectives called ‘accusative’ - from Latin accusativus. This is the case of nouns and adjectives which are direct objects of a verb: cave canem; timeo Danaos and the like, where canem is the direct object of the transitive verb (in Latin) cave, and Danaos are the direct object of the similarly transitive verb timeo. Or take habemus Papam: the new Pope is the object of the transitive verb habemus – as in English, we have him. Well and good, but what have such direct objects to do with accusing and accusations? For hundreds of years, no user of Latin we know of raised this question, even if some educated people here and there may well have quietly wondered about this curious nomenclature. It was only in 1836 that a Classical scholar raised this issue in public and offered a solution which has since been generally accepted.

Adolf Trendelenburg, 1802-1872, was, from 1833 until his death, a professor of

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2 The idiomatic expression ἄνευ λόγου καὶ αἰτίας is telling: both ἄνευ and the use of the genitive with it are pure Katharevousa. But it is a Katharevousa which is already aware of the causal sense of λόγος as a synonym of aitia. Of course, λόγος as ‘reason, explanation’ is as old as the fifth century BCE; but so is aitia as ‘cause’. What is telling is that, probably because aitia and especially apton are still being used in everyday language in the old sense of blame or guilt, the spoken language has preferred the almost all-purpose word λόγος also as the normal term for cause.
ancient philosophy in the University of Berlin. His edition, with apparatus and commentary, of Aristotle’s De Anima (1833) is still not entirely outdated, and his Elementa Logicae Aristotelicae (1836), providing most of the evidence by citing extensive passages from the Greek texts of Aristotle himself, with basic explanatory notes in Latin, was in the hands of most students of Aristotelian philosophy as long as such students’ linguistic horizons were not restricted to one or two modern languages. In the same year, 1836, Trendelenburg also contributed an article on our linguistic issue, the name ‘accusative’, to a collection of essays on ancient Greek subjects published in Leipzig.3 Trendelenburg shows that the term – in the more extended form casus accusandi – is already attested in Varro’s De Lingua Latina 7.37, and as accusativus at 8.67. In Quintilian, Isidore, Priscian and Diomedes it is always plain accusativus. We thus cannot tell who translated αἰτιατική into accusativus. It is, however, clear that in Greek, the name αἰτιατική did not come from αἴτιος, guilty or responsible, or from αἴτιαμαι, to accuse, but from αἴτιον or αἴτία in the sense of ‘cause’. Indeed, Trendelenburg shows that it is derived from the adjective, which had become virtually a neuter noun, αἴτιον, something caused by something else – or in one word, effect. It is already attested in Aristotle’s Post. An. 98a35ff., where it is the passive counterpart of αἴτιον, and it is later defined by Hesychius as αἰτιατά τά ἐκ τοῦ αἴτιου γνώμενα. Had the anonymous Latin translator understood this, he would have rendered the Greek term as effectivus, or at least as causativus. A much later work by Max Pohlenz showed that this term, like the names of most cases in Greek, had its roots in Stoic theories of language. What concerns us at this point is that our anonymous Latin translator, when he had to translate a Greek word related to αἴτια/αἴτιος, naturally took the meaning of ‘accusation’ to be the obvious one, without reflecting on the fact that the nouns and adjectives put in the accusative case are in no way the objects of any accusation, but rather the objects of some sort of causation. The sense of ‘accusation’ was still – some time between the founding of Stoicism around 300 BCE and Varro’s De Lingua Latina of 44/ 43 BCE – ‘going strong’.

Our purpose in this article is not to provide anything like a full-scale survey of the development of the various senses of αἴτιος. We shall briefly survey some major points in this development later. Our main purpose is methodical, and it concerns the various ways of studying ancient philosophy and the possible order of priorities between the various methods. To illustrate the problem and raise some doubts and concerns I shall use two articles by one of the most prominent students of ancient philosophy in the last generation, the late Michael Frede.

B. PHILOSOPHICAL AND/OR HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

It is not all that often that a scholar of ancient philosophy issues a detailed methodical discussion of the problems involved in studying such a field which is also clearly offered as an apologia for his own manner of doing research. In 1987, Oxford University Press and the University of Minnesota Press published a collection of studies by Michael Frede, called Essays in Ancient Philosophy. Chapter 1, ‘Introduction: The Study of Ancient Philosophy’, pp. ix–xxvii, was written especially for this volume, and it is based on over twenty years of Frede’s experience in working in this field. As he does in many of his

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3 ‘Accusativi Nomen quid sibi velit’, scriptis F. A. Trendelenburg, Ph. Dr. Professor publ. extraord. in Universitiae Literariae Fridericae Guilhelmæ Berolinensis, in Acta Societatis Graecae, ediderunt Antonius Westermannus... Carolus Herrmannus Funkhaenel... Volumen I, Praefatus est Godofredus Herrmannus. Lipsiae... MDCCXXXVI, pp. 117-124.

publications, Frede tends to discuss the same points again and again, returning to them every time from a somewhat different angle. On a first – or second or third – reading of this article one may not find it easy to define what, if any, is Frede’s basic attitude and approach to the interpretation of ancient philosophical texts. To be as objective as possible, he says almost at the beginning of this essay (p. ix) that one should look for explanations of facts in ancient philosophy “not just in the history of philosophy, but in many other histories, e.g. the history of theology, the history of political theory, even the history of literature”; and that “it would be a mistake to think that there is only one way to study ancient philosophy”, but that “the different approaches have to be carefully distinguished and kept distinct”. This looks almost like a multi-cultural approach, open to all reasonable disciplines. But these other approaches – especially the theological and much more especially the literary – soon vanish, and by p. x one already begins to notice a few other things. What a student of ancient philosophy investigates (or should investigate) turns out to be mainly (if not exclusively) the reasons why this or that philosopher held certain views. The word ‘view/views’ is so frequent in this essay that I stopped counting when, by the end of p. xi, I reached 15. The other word is ‘reason’ for holding this or that view. This – detecting the reasons for this or that philosopher holding this or that view – seems to be the main subject for discussion – as if all that the works of ancient philosophers contain were views and reasons for holding them. We are soon – p. xi – introduced also to the concept of ‘good reason’, which will play a major role in the rest of the essay, determining whether for the interpretation of this or that ‘view’ we should employ the philosophical or the historical approach. In fact, most of the essay is dedicated to tackling, from different angles, these two approaches, the philosophical and the historical, which seem to be treated as the only two alternative approaches suitable to the study of ancient philosophy. What is more, as one reads on it seems quite clear that, whenever possible, the philosophical approach should be given priority; and, as we have been instructed on the first page of this essay, the two approaches – like all other approaches – “have to be carefully distinguished and kept distinct.”

On p. xi we read: “Now if the historical fact is the fact that a certain agent performed a certain action, we try to explain it in the way in which we normally try to explain why someone did something. We first ask ourselves whether the agent had good reasons to do what he did, and if we see that he did, we think we have understood his action. By “good reason” I mean here and throughout {Emphasis mine. JG.} what we ourselves would regard as good reason.” But hold, is this really the ‘normal’ way of explaining facts and actions of the past? When Innocent III declared a crusade against the Albigensians, which resulted in a long series of expulsions, expropriations of territory, and plain massacres, his official reason was that these Cathars, or Albigensians, were heretics, and should be persecuted and hunted down for being heretics. For most of us today this would hardly constitute a good reason for what followed. For the head of the Western Church in the thirteenth century, this was one of the best possible reasons. But this is to anticipate. Let us read on: “It is of course quite true, that the agent in question may have a different view of what constitutes a good reason and may act on what he considers to be good reasons”. I would suggest that a great multitude of actions performed in the past – and not a few actions performed in various parts of the world in our own days – have been based on conceptions of ‘good reasons’ entirely different from those of most of us, Western academics and ‘intellectuals’, today. But read on: “In the end we have no alternative but to understand what others did or thought in terms of our notion of what constitutes a good reason, though in trying to understand others we may come to realize

5 Why this “even”? Many works of philosophy, from antiquity onwards, have been written in the form of ‘didactic’ epic, dialogue, ‘discourse’, letters, and the like, and many philosophers have been considered as masters of style and literary manner in their own language.
that it is our notion of what counts as a good reason that needs to be changed and that stands in the way of understanding them”. This admission, that people in the past, including philosophers, sometimes had ‘good reasons’ quite different from ours, is made a few times in the course of this chapter, and the tension between it and ‘our own’ conception of good reason permeates the whole chapter. Even the “assumption that, in general, philosophers adopted certain views because they had certain philosophical reasons for doing so” is examined on pp. xvii-xviii, and shown with some examples not to be universally valid. In the last paragraph, p. xxvii, it is even admitted that “to be a philosopher in antiquity was something rather different from what it is today”. But the more one digs, the more one (at least this one reader) becomes convinced that Frede’s basic sentiment – what some would call ‘gut feeling’ – is the one outlined on p. xv:

The historian of philosophy will try to identify the reasons for which he {the philosopher of the past. JG} adopts the view and see whether they constitute a good reason for doing so. Failing this, he will see whether he can reconstruct some line of reasoning that would make it intelligible why the philosopher thought his reasons constituted good reasons and hence adopted the view, a philosophical line of reasoning that even one of us might still avail himself of. Only if this also fails will the historian of philosophy resort to a historical explanation in terms of the history of philosophy.

In other words, one starts by trying to detect ‘good reasons’ as we now know them. If this works, one (the historian of philosophy!) need not bother about the historical – or theological, or literary, or linguistic – background. If, say, Aristotle adopted a position which looks like that of Ryle or Hare, he (the historian of philosophy!) need not ask himself whether he might have adopted it for very different reasons: unless Aristotle makes this explicit in his reasoning. The second step is still within the realm of what we may consider, with some effort, as good reasons: perhaps not good enough in this context, but in other contexts “even one of us might still avail himself of”. (Notice that “even” again) It is only when all has failed, and no ‘good reasons’ which could be approved of as good reasons by “one of us” can be found, that we are forced to look at the historical context and background.

As I have pointed out, there are a few places in this Introduction where Frede comes near enough to admitting that for the ancients, philosophy was not quite the same thing which ‘we now’ – that is, twentieth-century analytic philosophers – would call philosophy. On one occasion at least6 he admits it openly. Yet I feel that the passage just quoted represents Frede’s essential approach to the study of ancient philosophy. I shall now attempt to show how some aspects of this approach are exemplified in action in the more historical parts of Chapter 8, one of Frede’s best and most influential articles.

Before I do this, just another observation. Nowhere in the Introduction does Frede even mention philology as one of the methods of studying ancient philosophical texts, or the need to read the texts in the original language as an ‘entrance requirement’ for research on them. Frede, of course, belonged to a generation of ancient philosophers who had a serious Classical training as part of their basic academic education. He read his texts in the original Greek and Latin as a matter of course, and in his publications Latin words, and Greek words in transliteration, abound. I should also add that no Classical scholar worthy of the name would even suggest that philology in itself is sufficient for the proper study of ancient philosophy – or literature, or history, for that matter. But many Classical scholars would still maintain that without the philological basis any attempt at drawing philosophical, historical or literary conclusions from ancient texts may be lacking.

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6 P. xxvii, cited last page.
This is the title of Chapter 8, pp. 125-150 in Frede’s book. It is included in the section **Stoics**, pp. 99-176. As we are also told on p. vi, it was originally published in the volume called *Doubt and Dogmatism: Studies in Hellenistic Epistemology*, published in 1980. This volume contains lectures delivered in the first Symposium Hellenisticum. When one reads through this article, one soon discovers that most of it is dedicated to elucidating notions of cause, and some texts discussing such notions, in Seneca, Sextus, Stobaeus, Clement and Galen as evidence for the various Stoic concepts, divisions and subdivisions, of what we call cause. The article abounds in transliterated Stoic terms like *aition autoteles*, *sunaition*, *sunergon*, *sunektikon*, and as an attempt at elucidating some of these complex Stoic categories and concepts of cause it is still in many ways unsurpassed. In this field of Stoic dialectic, Frede was clearly entirely at home. My problem is simply with the title and what it implies. Even from the very few references to Plato and Aristotle in this article the reader who is looking for the origins – in the plain, historical sense – of the concepts of cause in ancient philosophy should be able to conclude that ancient notions of cause did not originate with Chrysippus. Yet there are very few allusions or references to pre-Stoic texts. Here and there, Frede refers in passing to Aristotle’s ‘causes’ (e.g., p. 127; p. 137), or to Socrates’ discussion of *aitia* and *aitiai* in Plato’s *Phaedo* – usually even without page references. Nowhere in the article do I find any reference to the Hippocratic Corpus, not to mention such non-philosophical texts as Herodotus or Thucydides. It is now well established – and we shall soon see some of the evidence – that the concepts *αἴτιον/αἰτία* obtained their causal sense some time in the late fifth century BCE, and that the original sense of these Greek words was that of ‘responsibility’ – for better and for worse – or guilt, or accusation. If one had to search for ‘the original notion of cause’, it appears to me, as a student of the history of philosophy, that this is where one should begin.

This is made somewhat more acute by the fact that Frede is well aware of the various senses of these Greek words, and discusses some aspects of them in the course of his article. Let us cite some such discussions:

- p. 128: Now it is true that at least from the fifth century B.C. onwards such propositional items, too, come to be called causes, *aitia*. But throughout antiquity, as far as I can see, it is non-propositional items like Aristotle’s causes which are referred to when causes are discussed systematically.

  cf. p. 137: If, on the other hand, one does not focus one’s thought about causes on entities and their being, but on particular events... it seems natural to make causes causes of propositional items, especially since that corresponds to the ordinary use and the original notion of ‘*aition*’.

For neither of these sweeping statements do we have any references to ancient texts. This is very different from the abundance of references to texts and collections of fragments which we get when we come to the discussion of the various Stoic terms (esp. pp. 140-145).

- p.129: By Chrysippus’ time ordinary usage of ‘*aition*’ and ‘*aitia*’ no longer follow that distinction {the one drawn by Chrysippus between *aition* as cause and *aitia* as the account given of it. JG}. But there was some basis for the terminological distinction in the original use of these words. ‘*Aiton*’ {Sic. JG.} is just the neuter of the adjective ‘*aitios*’, which originally meant ‘culpable, responsible, bearing the blame’, whereas the ‘*aitia*’ is the accusation, what somebody is charged with having done such that he is responsible for what
happened as a result. And if we look at Plato’s remarks on explanation in the *Phaedo* we see that such a distinction between ‘aition’ and ‘aitia’ is still preserved. In spite of its ample use of both the adjective and the noun, the passage reserves the adjective for Anaxagoras’ Nous and Socrates’ bones and sinews, whereas aitia throughout seems to be a propositional item, the reason or explanation why something is the way it is. It is true that Aristotle does not preserve this terminological distinction.

Again, no proper references to ancient texts are given in support of such statements about such ‘ordinary usages’. The allusion to “Plato’s remarks on explanation in the *Phaedo*” is insufficient, and the statement about what happens in these “remarks” not entirely accurate.

Such statements show, however, that Frede is well aware of the long history of the concept of aitios and cognates. Indeed, on pp. 131-132, he argues that the evidence for the Stoic notions of cause “suggests that the Stoic interest in causes arose from their interest in responsibility” (p. 131), and on p. 132 he offers a long explanation of how a Stoic might justify his notion of cause by referring to aition as something which originally signified “legal, moral, or political responsibility”, and was only then “extended beyond the sphere of human or personal action”.

Many of these observations are based on what we find in texts from the fifth century on, and the suggestion that the Stoics may have reverted to a more restricted notion of aition than that of some of their predecessors is not without its value: indeed, it makes it easy to elucidate many of the more detailed, and sometimes intricate, points of Stoic terminology which Frede was one of the first to unravel in this article. But as I said, the reader who has looked for a proper, detailed discussion of “the original notion of cause” is left with indications that quite a few interesting things had happened before the Stoics, but that, for some reason, he has been spared the proper information and discussion of such things.

Let us now return to the opening sentences of this article:

p. 125: However muddled our notion of a cause may be it is clear that we would have difficulty in using the term ‘cause’ for the kind of thing Aristotle calls ‘causes’. We might even find it misleading to talk of Aristotelian causes and wonder whether in translating the relevant passages in Aristotle we should not avoid the term ‘cause’ altogether.

p. 126. Aristotle’s notion of cause, then, is different from ours. But it is by no means peculiar to Aristotle. The same difficulties we have with Aristotle and the Peripatetics we also have with Plato and Epicurus.

A student of the history of philosophy may ask where, in the surviving texts, does Aristotle call anything by the English term ‘causes’. Why should we take our own rendering of aition/aitia – however much it may be the most frequent English rendering – as our starting-point in the discussion of an ancient Greek term? It appears that here, Frede follows as a matter of course the procedure he outlined in his Introduction. We start with our own idea of cause; but if Aristotle’s idea of what we usually render as ‘cause’ does not fit in with ours, then, and only then, do we begin to wonder about the reasons for

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7 He means 96a6 –101b2. This is the story told by Socrates of the dialogue of his own adventures in seeking answers to the problems of being and becoming. Not quite “Plato’s remarks on explanation”.

8 David Sedley, ‘Platonic Causes’, *Phronesis* XLIII/2, 1998, pp. 114-132, esp. p. 115, n. 1, rightly disagrees: “I think that there is a tendency in this direction, although Plato is not entirely consistent about it, cf. esp. 98d7-e1; 101e4-5.” Add 97a6-7.

9 But see again last note. Note also that at 96a9-10 we have εἰδέναι τὰς αἰτίας ἐκάστου, διὰ τί γίνεται ἐκάστον καὶ διὰ τί ἀπολλύεται καὶ διὰ τί ἔστιν. Not just διὰ τί ἔστιν. Similarly 97b5-6; c6-7.

10 See note 7 above.
Aristotle ‘deviating’ from our idea of what a cause is. As Frede remarks on p. 125, we do not have a similar difficulty with Kant’s idea that “a substance, an object, could be the cause of something in another object”. And he goes on to explain why, although ‘we’ may not quite agree with some aspects of Hume’s and Kant’s notions of cause, we take what is essentially the same basic attitude, “a strong tendency to conceive of causes as somehow active”. Some Aristotelian ‘causes’, such as the ‘essential cause’ (τὸ τί ἐίναι, ἡ οὖσία) or the ‘final cause’ (τὸ οὔ ἔνεκα, τὸ τέλος) do not fit this conception. As Frede shows in much of the rest of his article, Stoic causes are antecedent and active, thus conforming more closely to ‘our’ “strong tendency”. It may be this, as well as his undoubted familiarity and empathy with Stoic dialectic, which made him concentrate on Stoic causes. But the reader who has been tempted by Frede’s sporadic remarks on the uses of aitios and cognates in earlier Greek sources, and who has realized – whether through paying some attention to Frede’s remarks, or from his own experience in reading fifth and fourth century texts – that this is where some of the original notions of what later came to be called ‘cause’ are to be found, is left out on a limb. Let us now return to aitios and some other Greek expressions related to causality – this time, from the Greek angle.

D. AITIOS, AITIA AND OTHER GREEK EXPRESSIONS

Frede, as we have seen, was not all that concerned in his article with what was properly the original notion of cause, and his article is really about various Stoic and para-Stoic concepts and terms. But as we have seen, he did realize that aitios and cognates originally meant something like ‘responsible, guilty’. This meaning of aitios – and ‘responsibility’ as the first meaning of aitia – had been available in Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon, revised by Jones and McKenzie, and widely known as LSJ, ever since 1940. Yet even Classical scholars were rather slow to realize that this was one meaning of these words – indeed, that it was their original meaning. A book which was in many ways ground-breaking for its period, Arthur W. H. Adkins’ Merit and Responsibility, A study in Greek Values, published by the Clarendon Press in 1960, does not deal anywhere with the ‘responsibility’ sense of these two words. Even when it comes to passages which are central for understanding the original range of usages of aitios and cognates, Iliad 3. 164ff. and Antiphon’s Tetralogies, he translates aitē (the feminine form of the adjective) as ‘cause’, aitios φόνου as ‘cause... of the death’, and even offers us a solecism like “those who do anything of their own accord are the cause, aitiao, of their own misfortunes.” In a book which has ‘responsibility’ in its title, even the adjective aitios, masculine, is already taken – sometimes with the help of some ‘gentle pressure’ – to mean ‘a cause’. Frede, in 1980, was one of the first to point out that the senses of ‘responsibility, guilt, blame’ came before the causal senses. For him, this was a minor point. The first proper handling – at least in English – known to me of the original sense of aitios/aitia and the emergence and development of the causal sense is an article by Mario Vegetti of 1999.

Vegetti’s article, excellent as it is, has a number of limitations. The first and basic one is that it was written for a “Cambridge Companion”, which consists of sixteen chapters.

11 See the entries aitia and aitios, p. 44.
12 p. 23.
13 Both on p. 103, referring to the second Tetralogy.
14 According to Vegetti (see next note), p. 287, n. 2, he seems to have been preceded by Werner Jaeger, Paideia, the Ideals of Greek Culture, Eng. Trans. by Gilbert Highet, Vol. I, New York 1939, p. 393; but Jaeger’s observation seems to have been generally overlooked by readers of a work which magnitude laborat sua.
occupying 460 pages: that is, the average chapter should be around thirty to forty pages. Vegetti’s article occupies nineteen pages. This might, perhaps, be sufficient for a chapter which sums up a theme extensively studied and expounded in the secondary literature: but Vegetti’s is the first attempt to deal with a field which had hardly been properly explored before him. The history of the development of αἰνίος and cognates from the legal/social/political field to the field of causes, including natural causes which have nothing to do with human initiative or responsibility, requires a book-length study in its own right. That book has still to be written, and the few additions and suggestions I shall offer in what follows are only indications of what appears to me to be a few more steps in the direction pointed out by Vegetti. I should add that, like most Cambridge (and other) Companions, this one also insists on being ‘accessible’ – that is, requiring no significant knowledge of anything, not to mention Greek — and one of the points made in advertising it is that “no knowledge of Greek is required”. Thus all passages quoted are in translation, and all Greek terms quoted are in transliteration. This may make it somewhat easier for The Greekless Reader to follow (if ‘follow’ is the right word) – but at the expense of some more detailed analysis (which would be precluded in any case, ‘for lack of space’).

Some of the advantages of Vegetti’s article may not appear immediately to the reader who is unfamiliar with much of the research in this field. They – like many other important points in his article – are due chiefly to his philological acumen and to his ability to listen carefully to nuances and shades of meaning in the texts in their original language. Such are, for example, his emphasis on other expressions which come near enough to αἰνίος and cognates in their later senses, such as φύσει, ανάγκη, ἔδει (see p. 272); or his discussion of other terms from the social, legal and political terminology which were used by some of the early Greek philosophers, beginning with Anaximander, in explaining phenomena of nature (see pp. 272-274). But the main, and central, aim of his article is – in his own words (p. 274) “to verify... when did the transition occur from the personal language of culpability and moral, political and legal responsibility to the abstract and “neutralized” language of cause”. He claims that he has done this “by correcting the widely shared opinions mentioned at the beginning”. But the opinions of Lloyd, Jaeger and Williams cited in his first paragraph (p. 271) are far from being as explicit and detailed; and I still feel that the very fact of this transition, and of the priority in time of the legal, political and ethical senses, was first clearly stated by Frede, but has been first investigated in some detail by Vegetti himself, in some of his earlier publications in Italian and in the present chapter.

Vegetti’s chapter is divided between “The Philosophers” (pp. 274-276), “The Historians’ (276-279), and “Medicine”(279-286: I include the section on Ancient Medicine). In all these sections, he cites, and analyses, texts from the late fifth and, in some cases, early fourth century BCE. In his first section he comes to the conclusion that “neither in their physics nor in their sophistic debates were early Greek philosophers concerned with any theoretical work on the language and concepts of causation in general”. Indeed, his investigation shows that the few occurrences of αἰνίος/αἵνια in the surviving proper quotations from the Presocratics (the ‘B Fragments’) are exclusively within the range of meanings of ‘culpability’, ‘responsibility’, ‘motive’, or ‘reason’ in the personal sense. In the section on the historians things begin to change. Even here, Vegetti is willing to take αἵνια in the famous opening sentence Herodotus 1 and in Thucydides 1. 23. 5 as ‘accusation’ rather than ‘cause’. This interpretation is entirely in tune with the contexts of these passages and the uses of αἰνίος/αἵνια in connection with such contexts; but it is also based on the first premiss of this chapter, that the original meaning of these words was legal/social/ethical, and therefore one has to make sure that αἰνίος/αἵνια or cognates – but especially the forms αἰνον and αἵνια, which in later philosophical language became the technical terms for ‘cause’ - in this or that fifth-century passage have undoubtedly crossed the line and acquired the new sense, or at least lead some way in the direction of the new
sense. It is only when we come to the medical texts that we find that τὸ αἴτιον or ἡ αἴτια are used in a sense which is clearly causal.

My aim is not to replace Vegetti’s excellent discussions of these passages – however brief and limited in scope the space-limitations of the Companion have made them. But for the sake of further – and more detailed – research, I wish to add a few observations and a few specimens of analysis.

Vegetti begins his investigation with prose texts of the late fifth century, and even there, he hardly deals with the orators (except for two passages on Gorgias’ and Antiphon’s model speeches on p.275). This excludes the epic poets, but also the tragedians. But the epic poetry of Homer and Hesiod was part of the basic literary training of every educated Greek, and Homer was also recited regularly in the Panathenaea and lectured on by sophists and their followers. In tragedy, cases where people’s assumed culpability or guilt is mentioned are only to be expected by the nature of most tragic stories. What is more, both Homer and some works of the great tragedians continued to be read in schools throughout the Hellenistic and Byzantine ages, and the meanings of such words in these texts must have exercised some influence on later usages. Let me begin with epic.

To the best of my knowledge, the words αἴτιος/αἴτια do not appear in Hesiod. If we can trust our dictionaries, αἴτια first appears in Pindar and the tragedians. But αἴτιος, ἀναίτιος and αἰνάμαυε are not infrequent in the Homeric texts, and invariably in malam partem. As the Lexicon Homericum has it, ἀτίαμαυε is “obiurgo, culpa, expostulo cum quo”; αἴτιος is “obnoxius, qui effecit ut alter in malum incidert”; and ἀναίτιος is “culpa vacua, qui non commitit crimen”. Ἀναίτιος appears once in Hesiod, Works and Days 826-7: ...

... ὃς τάδε πάντα εἰδώς ἐγραφηταὶ ἀναίτιος ἄθανάτοιον. Both sense and usage are exactly like those we encounter in Homer.

Let us then cite three Homeric examples which must have remained in the memory of most readers. First, the famous speech from the τειχοςκοπία in Ili. 3. 146 ff. The elders of Troy are sitting on the wall and watching the scene outside the besieged city. Helen approaches, and they remark (156-160) that it is no wonder that both Trojans and Achaeans have been fighting over such a beauty; but, they add, let her go back with them on their boats rather than cause enduring pain to us and our children. Priam interferes, and invites Helen to sit by him and watch her former husband, relatives and friends, for ὅτι ὁ ἄντιτι ἔσσει, θεοὶ νῦν ὁ μοι ἄπτιοι ἔσσειν

οἱ μοι ἐφώρμησαν πόλεμον πολύδακρυν Ἀχαιῶν

Here we have ἀἴτιος in the original, pejorative sense of ‘culpable’’. Like English ‘responsible’, it goes with the dative of the person one offended against. And an explanation follows: it is the gods (rather than you) who have brought this Achaean war on me.”

For ἀναίτιος, one need not even cite the context, the expression itself is enough. Ili.11, 654:

δεινὸς ἄνθρακας κεῖν καὶ ἀναίτιον αἰτόμετο.

Δεινός is used here in the original sense of ‘fearful’, ‘terrifying’; and the reason? He is most likely to ascribe fault even to someone who is faultless.

Who does not remember Zeus’ opening speech to the assembly of the gods – in the absence of Poseidon – at Od. 1. 31 ff.?

.CheckBox πότιοι, ὁλὸν δὴ ὑπὲρ θεοῦ βρότοι αἰτόμεταν.

εἶ ημέων γὰρ φασὶν κακὸν ἐμεμεναν’ οἱ δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ

σφηναὶ ἀπαθαλῆσιν ὑπὲρ μόρον ἄλγε έξοισιν.

Zeus has by now read his Iliad, and this is his response to Priam. You mortals blame the gods for every evil you suffer, but in fact you suffer more than you need to on account

16 Lexicon Homericum... edidit H. Ebeling, Volmen I... Olms, Hildesheim, Zurich, New York 1987, pp. 58 (αἴτιαμαι; αἴτιος), 59 (Ἀναίτιος).
of your own acts of idiocy.

In all these passages, and elsewhere in Homer, we have exclusively the masculine or feminine forms of ἁπίος/ἀναίτιος – never the neuter; and we still have no single specimen of the construction ἁπίος+genitive, so frequent in later texts. Priam’s gods would be, in this later construction, ἀπίοι τοῦ πολέμου, but we can only conclude this from the explanation which follows in 165. Mortals, in Zeus’ speech, claim that the gods are ἀπίοι τῶν σφετρέων ἔλγεων, but again, we have to learn this from what follows. As a commentator with a keen ear for Homeric language, Eustathius,17 has it: ἀπιστεύσης καὶ ὑπὸ μέμψην καὶ ἀπίασαν κειμένος. This is not a minor linguistic point: it implies that, in Homeric language, ἁπίος and cognates seem to describe what is regarded as a quality or a situation rather than a relation: in Aristotelian terms, ποιότης or ἐξειν rather than πρός τι. It is as if this adjective is treated simply as an adjective, describing what the man thus described as ἁπίος ‘is’, rather than something which he has done.

The only relational expression in such contexts is the dative of the person or persons ‘on the receiving side’ of the acts or actions which makes someone ἁπίος. Thus we have, in our first passage, μοι, since Priam has been suffering from the war. Elsewhere, we have τοι (Il. 19. 409; 21,370) or σοι (Od. 2. 87).18 I said ‘on the receiving end’ intentionally. In many cases – as in our first specimen, or in Il. 1. 153ff.; 19. 409ff.; Od. 2. 87ff., and some other places – the statement of who is ἁπίος (and often also who is not ἁπίος) is followed by a description of the act which explains why he/she/they are ἁπίος/ἀπίη/ἄπιος. The gods – not Helen – are ἁπίοι to Priam: because they ‘carried’ the Achaean war to Troy. Penelope – not the suitors – is ἀπίη to Telemachus: because for three years she has kept hoping for the return of Odysseus, making promises to the suitors and putting them off.

Again, this use of the dative is not a mere linguistic quirk. It implies that ἁπίος does not necessarily designate someone who is such by general agreement. On the contrary, ascribing such a ‘quality’ to this or that person is done from the point of view of the speaker or of someone addressed by him. Like most moral qualities, one can dispute – and people do dispute – whether it is right to ascribe it to this or that person.

During the time which elapsed between Homer and Aeschylus, some developments occurred. In Aeschylus, we have already the new noun ἀπία, naturally in the original and pejorative senses (of its source, ἁπίος) of “culpa; crimen”, but also in the ‘good’ sense of “meritum”.19 The adjective ἁπίος, in the surviving plays, retains the pejorative sense of culpability. But both ἁπίος and ἀπία can now go with the genitive of what the blameworthy/praiseworthy party is ‘responsible’ for: e.g., Pers. 895, τῶν ἄπια στεναγμῶν, or Ag. 1505-6, ἀναίτιος εἴ τούδε φόνου. Such usages make clear what the ‘appended’ descriptions of actions in some Homeric texts silently signified: ἁπίος is no longer an ascription of a personal quality or state to someone in connection with some action, but an attribution following directly from the action. What in the Homeric texts came, wherever it did, as an explanation of ἁπίος has now become part of its essence. What is more important for our purpose is that the new word ἀπία, for better and for worse, already abstracts the ‘responsibility’ from the person. One can now be ἔκτος ἁπίας κακῆς or ‘have’ an ἀπία (e.g. Eumen. 99; 579-580). The ἀπία is no longer part of the ἁπίος. It – and, by

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17 Cited in the Lexicon Homericum (see last note), p. 58, ἁπίος.
18 I wonder if anyone has suggested that this – that ἁπίος and cognates are usually connected by the dative to some person to whom someone is ἁπίος – may be the reason why the transitive verb αἴτησα is in the middle voice.
19 See Gabriel Italie, Index Aeschyleus, Leiden 1955, s.v. I do not see why one should add the sense “causa”, as Italie does, citing Prometheus 226-7: ἀπίαν καθ’ ἣντινα αἰκίζεται με. This is clearly an accusation. In any case, it is now commonly accepted that Prometheus, in the form we have it, is not the work of Aeschylus.
imagination, ἀπίος (in its neuter form) — can thus be extended to include anything ‘responsible’ for anything, and finally what we call a cause.  

Sophocles — who, one remembers, was for much of the time Aeschylus’ (younger) contemporary — offers nothing new. For him, too, ἀπίος is used always in malam pattem, and even ἀίτια is always “crimen”. It is only when we come to Euripides that we encounter the neuter form ἀτίον in what, at least in some cases, is clearly a non-personal causal sense. It may be no accident that the old Index of 1892 has ἀτίον as a separate entry, independent of the entry ἀπίος.  

Suffice it to cite one clear example, Hec. 974-975: ἀλλως δ’ ἀτίον τι καὶ νόμος, γυναίκας ἀνδρῶν μὴ βλέπειν ἕναντιον.

Euripides’ Hecuba is generally believed to have been produced around 424 BCE. Vegetti, pp. 281ff., brings a number of examples from some Hippocratic writings assumed to date from the last years of the fifth century where the neuter, ἀτίον, is used in what is clearly a causal sense. On pp. 277-279, he has already shown that in some passages of Thucydides both ἀίτια and ἀτίον are used in a causal sense. Thus, by the time this transformation had taken place, the noun and adjective have both assumed the new meanings. We should add, as a warning, that the new, causal senses did not drive out and replace the older, social and ethical, ones. On this later.

A quick note on the orators. In their speeches one would obviously expect the older meaning, that of blame and culpability, to be the prominent sense. Indeed, it is surprising to find the noun ἀτία occasionally used as ‘cause’: e.g. Isaeus 2. 20. But I should mention James Hankinson’s analysis of some passages of Antiphon, in which he shows

20 Vegetti, p. 274, cites with much approval Frede’s explanation for the change in the application of ἀτίον. Since we are dealing here with issues of method, I offer no apology for citing in full that passage, Frede p. 132.

When then the use of ation was extended [sic. JG] such [ditto] that we could ask of anything ‘What is its ation?’ this [ditto] extension of the use of ‘ation’ must have taken place on the assumption that for everything to be explained there is something which plays with reference to it a role analogous to that which the person responsible plays with reference to what has gone wrong; i.e., the extension of the use of ation across the board is only intelligible on the assumption that with reference to everything there is something which by doing something or other is responsible for it.

Di meliora, vir magne! As we have seen, the neuter, τὸ ἀτίον, does not appear in Homer or in the surviving plays of Aeschylus - nor, we can add, does it appear in Sophocles. If we are looking for an extension of a term from the "person responsible" to "everything which has to be explained", we must refer to an extension in the use of ἀπίος and its masculine and feminine cognates. Then we either have to wait for the neuter to make its appearance — on which anon — or, what may be more promising, take the new noun άτία, which is in a way an 'externalization' and 'objectification' of personal responsibility, already 'outside' the person and 'independent' of it, to be the first step in this direction.

21 See Lexicon Sophocleum... compositum Fridericus E llendt... Editio Altera Emendata Carvait Hermannus Genthe, Berolini MDCCLXXII, s.vv. But again, I do not see why one should hasten to make an exception of O.T. 1236, πρὸς τίνος ποτ’ ἀπίας; and translate it as "causa". The answer at 1237, αὐτὴ πρὸς αὐτῆς points clearly to personal responsibility, and is used in this sense at Tr. 892; 1132.

22 See Index Graecitatis Euripideae, auctore Christ. Den. Beckio, editio accuratio... Cantabrigiac... 1829, s.vv.

23 As he sums up (his p. 286), correcting Frede’s statement (note 19 above):

In conclusion, my study has shown that it is not the case, as has been proposed, that the transition from the words atia/aternity to the adjectival substantive to ation signifies a growth of conceptual generalization. This idea was probably suggested because of Stoic terminology, but in fact Thucydides, Ancient Medicine, and Aristotle himself all use the substantive and the adjective without any difference of meaning.

But I cannot see why the editors of the Index to the Speeches of Isaeus, W. A. Goligher and W. S. Magunness, reprinted from Hermathena, Cambridge 1964, p. 4, s.v., should also take 10. 20, ὡς οὕτη μικρὰς ἔχομεν ἄτίας περὶ τοῦ πράγματος, where it could easily mean “we take no small responsibility for this affair”.  

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how “the adjective aitios, meaning ‘responsible’ or ‘blameworthy’, is the source of the nouns aition and aitia, meaning ‘cause’ or ‘reason’; and their initial connotation of intentional agency is gradually eroded as the term becomes established in a semi-technical vocabulary of causation.”

One further note. I have cited my texts in the original, refusing to present even ‘prime’ concepts such as aitios/aitia/aitnov in translation, not to mention the ridiculous transliteration. In discussing these terms in English, I had – faute de mieux – to opt for some English near-equivalents, sometimes putting them in inverted commas as a warning. One should beware of choosing one English (or German, or Irish, or whatever) word to be the ‘one accredited representative’ of any Greek (or Latin) word. ‘Responsible’ may come near enough to aitnov since it goes with the dative of the person one is ‘responsible’ to, and with a genitive of the thing for which one is responsible: more or less like the English “He is responsible to us for efficiency in the factory”. But here the similarity ends. ‘Responsible’ implies accountability. When Priam says that the gods are μοι αἴτιοι, he does not claim – he could not claim – that they are accountable to him. At the same time, rendering aitnov as ‘guilty’ or ‘culpable’ would also fall short of the fact that, so often in our texts, the dative indicates that the one who is aitnov is ‘culpable’ to, or in the eyes of, someone else. To the elders of Troy, Helen is ‘culpable’: to Priam the gods are. Very often, such ‘standard’ translations turn for “The Philosophical Reader” (who is often a species of the genus The Modern Reader, meaning someone who knows English and, in the best case, one other modern language) into the basis for speculations about the translated Greek text which have nothing to do with the Greek original and its background. Let us then stick to aitnov/aitia/aitnov, and cite Greek in Greek.

Having reached the point where the noun aitia has come into being and the neuter aitnov has begun to be employed in a causal sense, one asks, following Frede, how come a concept which had its origin in ascribing an activity to some person came, by the time of Aristotle, to include such inactive ‘causes’ as the ‘material cause’ and the ‘formal cause’.

Frede (p. 127) seems to suggest one possible explanation:

There is, first of all, a very general use of ‘cause’.

It seems to be this use we have to think of when Stobaeus (Ecl. I, p. 138, 23) says “Chrysippus says that a cause is a because of which (di’ ho)...” Just like the English preposition ‘because of’ and the German ‘wegen’ the Greek dia with the accusative can cover such a variety of explanatory relations that it would rather comfortably accommodate anything that had been called a cause, in ordinary discourse or by philosophers, including the Aristotelian causes (cf. Phys. 198b5ff.).

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25 R. J. Hankinson, Cause and Explanation in Ancient Greek Thought, Oxford 1998, p.73. The full discussion of Antiphon is on pp. 71-74. See also his discussion, pp. 74-76, of these terms in the model speech Ἐξήνες ἐρήμων by Antiphon’s contemporary, the rhetor Gorgias.

26 Learning the Greek alphabet should not take a student more time or effort than learning the German alphabet should not take a student more time or effort than learning the Greek alphabet. But here the similarity ends. ‘Responsible’ implies accountability. When Priam says that the gods are μοι αἴτιοι, he does not claim – he could not claim – that they are accountable to him. At the same time, rendering aitnov as ‘guilty’ or ‘culpable’ would also fall short of the fact that, so often in our texts, the dative indicates that the one who is aitnov is ‘culpable’ to, or in the eyes of, someone else. To the elders of Troy, Helen is ‘culpable’: to Priam the gods are. Very often, such ‘standard’ translations turn for “The Philosophical Reader” (who is often a species of the genus The Modern Reader, meaning someone who knows English and, in the best case, one other modern language) into the basis for speculations about the translated Greek text which have nothing to do with the Greek original and its background. Let us then stick to aitnov/aitia/aitnov, and cite Greek in Greek.

27 I take it that he means aitnov/aitia. In the quotation from Stobaeus which follows (and incidentally, it can also be cited as SVF II, 336, p. 118) the word is aitnov.
There is no need to look for this διά in a quotation from Chrysippus in a late source like Stobaeus. This is obviously done by Frede mainly because of his article’s concentration on Stoic concepts of cause. Frede himself ends with a reference to Aristotle’s discussion of his ἀιτία in Book II of his Ψυχία, where the expression διά τί appears in the context of explaining the four causes and the connection between them. One could do worse than go to our first extended piece of text dealing with ἀιτία and ἀιτία. Plato, Phaedo 96a5ff. At the very first appearance of ἀιτία, 96a9-10, we already have εἰδέναι τὰς ἀιτίας ἐκάστου, διά τι γίγνεται κτέ., and we have διά τό... twice at 96e2-3, corresponding to the ἀιτία which follows at 6ff. The context is that of material elements and qualities, and quantitative considerations, offered in explanation of various natural phenomena. Socrates, the speaker, has reached an impasse in attempting to explain nature through such ἀιτία, and was looking for ‘some other manner’ (τὸν ἄλλον τρόπον: 97b6-7) of explaining them, when he heard of Anaxagoras’ book, which was supposed to explain the world by assuming that there was a – mind? Intellect? The Greek is νοῦς – which organized and controlled everything. This is not the place to recount Socrates’ well-known story of his disappointment with Anaxagoras’ theory. But his discussion of the reasons for rejecting that theory, at 98b10ff., is interesting in that it uses διά a few times for what is being offered as explanation. At e5-6, we have διά ταῦτα as explaining τὰς ἀιτίας of what Socrates does, reducing everything to the structure and various parts of his body – rather than (what Socrates would obviously prefer) ‘the real ἀιτία’, τὰς ὡς ἀληθῶς ἀιτίας for his being now in prison: e1, because The Athenian had so decreed. Because of this – διά ταῦτα: e3 – it seemed to him to be all to the better to sit there. What follows – 99a4-b4 – is probably the first attempt in the literature we have of rejecting the idea of ‘material causes’. It is absurd to call such physical features ἀιτία (a4-5). It would be correct to say that without such things, Socrates would not be able to do what he wished to do (ποιεῖν τὰ δόξαντά μοι: a7); but it would be an insult to right reason to say that Socrates did what he did because of of this (ὡς... διά ταῦτα ποιῶ ἃ ποιῶ). His conclusion is that “proper cause is one thing, and that without which the cause would not be a cause is another” (b2-4). Socrates had read his Leibniz, and had realized that what is called ‘a necessary condition’ is not sufficient to be a proper cause. Thus, one need not go as far as the Stoics to find a position according to which a proper cause should be ‘productive of something in an active manner’ (πρακτικὸν τινὸς ἐνεργητικῶς’ Clement, Strom. VIII, 9 = SVF II, 344, p. 119).

Indeed, what is most interesting about this rejection by Socrates of ‘material causes’ is his emphasis on what he does. The material elements, and the various parts and qualities of his body, are conditions sine qua non (ἀνεύ οὐ... οὐκ ἀν ποτ...), but they cannot answer to the requirement of proper causal explanation, including the famous preposition διά.

Aristotle, in the passage cited briefly by Frede, Phys. 198b5ff., does include the material cause (“the one out of which”, τὸ ἐκ τοῦδε, b5-6) among the aspects of τὸ διὰ τί. He explains his reasons in what follows there, as well as at Metaph. I. 3 ff. (where, at 983a29-30, we have this cause called ‘matter and the substrate’, ἡ ὑλή καὶ τὸ ὑποκείμενον), and at IV. 2, where (1013a24-25) it is called ‘that from which something comes into being as included in it’(ἐξ οὗ γίγνεται τί ἐνυπάρχοντος). Although he must have been familiar with Socrates’ refutation in Phaedo, he does not seem to be anxious about calling these ‘necessary conditions’ causes. This may be due to the wide range of meanings of διά pointed out by Frede. At this point, however, one may add a little qualification about that universality of διά, which “would rather comfortably accommodate anything that had been called a cause, in ordinary discourse or by philosophers”. This may apply to Aristotle, but in ordinary discourse, διά could hardly be used for the ‘active cause’. If we wish to say that “the house was destroyed by the
tempest”, or “by the enemy”, we cannot say that ἡ οἰκία διὰ τὸν χειμώνα/διὰ τοὺς πολέμιους διεφθάρη; we have to say ύπο τοῦ χειμώνος/ὑπὸ τῶν πολέμιων. As the dictionaries put it, διὰ (with accusative) when applied to persons means “thanks to, by aid of”, and it is only when applied to things that it is plainly causal.

This makes things curioser and curioser. What started from an adjective ascribing to persons a ‘quality’ due to something they have done in the past has now become a class of explanations which may include active initiative, but may also include some things which explain other things in a non-active, and even passive manner; and the general preposition which is used, already in Plato’s Phaedo, to refer to all such explanations is one which is not applied in everyday speech to active causes. A logician may complain about such inconsistencies. Language, however, is full of them – which is one reason why logicians have attempted to produce a mathesis universalis, a language more logically consistent than our blundering and erratic everyday language. The task of the Classical scholar, however, is to trace and explain linguistic phenomena as they occur in his texts. As I said, the present essay is only an attempt to make a few steps in the direction of a proper, detailed study of the development leading from the Homeric αἴτιος to the more complex philosophical concepts beginning with Plato and Aristotle. I can only point to something which may be a clue, but may prove to lead us to a dead end.

The very fact that Plato, in Phaedo 96a5ff., already uses the word αἰτία quite freely to refer to such physical qualities as the hot and the cold, or to elements such as air or fire – whatever Socrates’ refutation of the tendency to call these things ‘causes’ may be – may well indicate that for his readers, the use of αἰτία, αἴτιον, or διὰ for such things was no new thing. We may have something like a confirmation of this hypothesis if we compare Phaedo 96b2, where we have the hot and the cold, τὸ θερμὸν καὶ τὸ ψυχρόν, as one of the causes for the nourishment of animals, with a well-known medical passage. In the very opening of the Hippocratic work On Ancient Medicine, the author complains about those who write on medicine and “offer themselves hypotheses for their argument, the hot or the cold (θερμὸν ἢ ψυχρόν) or the moist or the dry, restricting to a limited space the principle of the cause (τὴν ἄρχην τῆς αἰτίας) for humans of disease and death.” Vegetti (p. 284), who translates this last and complex expression as “the starting-point of the causal process”, argues convincingly for taking it to imply a causal, rather than an ethical or social, explanation. The similarity with our Phaedo sentence cannot be accidental. On Ancient Medicine may well not be by Hippocrates – how many works in the Corpus can be safely ascribed to him? But its language and concepts point to some date not much later than the turn of the fifth century. By that time, it appears, there were already some philosophers who regarded the hot and the cold, air and fire, and the like, as αἰτίαι, and both Plato and the Hippocratic writer may be echoing their usage. Vegetti points out that the words αἴτιον/αἰτία do not appear in the genuine remains of the Presocratic philosophers of nature, but we know how limited the range of the ‘B fragments’ is.

APPENDIX: THE SURVIVAL OF ΑΙΤΙΟΣ, ΑΙΤΙΑ AND COGNATES IN THE ‘ACCUSATIVE’ SENSE

In my first section, I recounted the story of the discovery, in the nineteenth century, of the true meaning of the ‘accusative’, αἰτιατική. I told the story not merely as an entertaining case of a scholar explaining what most people did not even suspect was in need of explanation, but also to show that, despite the widespread use of αἴτιον/αἰτία and some derivatives and compounds in the causal sense in philosophical writings, whoever translated the name of this case from Greek into Latin, some time between c.300 and 44/3 BCE, still had the sense of accusation prominent in his mind. I mentioned that this sense of αἴτιος and cognates has been preserved throughout the history of Greek, and
promised to bring some evidence. The evidence one can collect from surviving Greek texts from the Hellenistic period to our own age is vast. I shall be selective, and attempt to present specimens from various types of texts.

**SEPTUAGINTA**
*Deut.* 19. 10; 13; 21. 8; 9: σίμα ἀναίτιον.
*I Reg.* 22. ἐγὼ εἰμί ἄπιος τῶν ψυχῶν σίκου τοῦ πατρός σου.28

**NOVUM TESTAMENTUM**
*Hebr.* 5. 9: καὶ τελειωθεὶς ἐγένετο πάσιν τοῖς ὑπακούουσιν αὐτῷ ἄπιος σωτηρίας αἰώνιου.

**AELIAN, VARIA HISTORIA**
I. 30: κακοῦ μὲν οὐδεπτῶπτε οὐδενὶ γέγονας ἄπιος, πολλοὶς δὲ καὶ πολλά ἀγαθά προϋξένησας.
II.13: ἂτε συκοφαντοῦντες ἄνδρα οὐ μόνον οὐδενὸς ἄπιον κακοῦ τῇ πόλει, ἐκ δὲ τῶν ἐναντίων καὶ κόσμων ταῖς Αθηναίας ὄντα.
III. 15: οὐ διαπεφύγασι δὲ ταυτὴν τὴν αἰτίαν οὐδὲ Ἰλλυριοί, ἀλλ’ ἐκεῖνοι γε προσειλήφασι κάκειν τὸ ἑπίκλημα...
IV. 19: ἄπιος γέγονε πολλῆς καὶ ἄλλης πολυπειρίας, ἀτάρ οὖν καὶ τῆς γνώσεως τῆς κατὰ τὰ ζῶα.

**LIBANIUS, ENCOMIUM THERSITAE**
10: ...καὶ ποτὲ μὲν ἄπιον λοιμοῦ τῷ στρατοπέδῳ γινόμενον...

**AGATHIAS, DE REGNO IUSTINIANI**
I. 1. 14: ...ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ τὸ θείον ἄπιον, ὃς γε ἐμὲ γιγνώσκειν, φόνων τε καὶ συμπλοκῶν ἡγεῖσαι προσήκει.

– And some more recent evidence:

**IOANNIS MAKRYIANNIS (ΣΤΡΑΤΗΓΟΣ ΜΑΚΡΥΓΥΑΝΝΗΣ, 1794 - 1864)**
Απομνημονεύματα. 29
Book I, Ch. 5, p. 167: ᾿Δεν τὸν σκοτώνετε τὸν ἄπιον;
Ibid. p. 174: ... πῆρα καὶ τοὺς δικούς μου νὰ πιάων τοὺς ἄπιους...
Ch. 6, p. 182: ... ὅτι έγὼ εἰμαί ὁ ἄπιος πού δὲν πῆραν τὰ ἄρχεια...
Ibid. p. 192: ... σκότωσε τὸν ἄπιον....
... ὅτ’ ἡμουν ὁ ἄπιος τοῦ κακοῦ ἐγὼ.
– and dozens of other examples throughout the work.

**GEORGIOS VIZIINOS (ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΣ ΒΙΖΥΗΝΟΣ,1849-1896)**
From the story Ποίος ἦταν ὁ φονεύς τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ μου;
Καὶ τὸν ταχυδρόμον τοῦτον δὲν ἐδυνάμην νὰ μὴ θεωρῶ ἄπιον τοῦ φόνου τοῦ...

28 The Hebrew יָרָע is rare, but it is usually taken to refer – as the context should make clear – to accusing David of murder. Jerome translates: “ego sum reus omnium animarum patris tuī”. He may have ‘availed himself’ of the Greek translation where the Hebrew is somewhat awkward; but this would still be evidence for the old sense of ἄπιος being present to his mind.
29 The page references are to the popular Παπαζία paperback edition by Giannis Vlachogiannis, Athens 1964.
δυστυχούς ἀδελφοῦ μου.

FROM RECENT NEWSPAPERS

Ethnos (Έθνος).
9.11.2009: ... Δεν είναι όμως ο Μ. Γκορμπατσόφ ο αίτιος της κατάρρευσης του «υπαρκτού σοσιαλισμού», παρά τον προσωπικό ρόλο που έπαιξε στην κηδεία ...
7.17.2009: ... ακρωτηριασμό (πρόσφατα γράφτηκε ότι ο απόλουτος αίτιος ήταν ο Γκογκέν, αλλά ποιος είναι εκείνος που με βεβαιότητα μπορεί να το ξέρει). ...

Elefterotypia (Ελευθεροτυπία).
7.4.2010: τονίζουν ότι «αίτιος δεν είναι μόνο ο νομάρχης και ο δήμαρχος, αλλά και οι κυβερνήσεις ...
16.3.2011: Για την κατάρρευση και την καταστροφή δεν υπάρχει αίτιος και ένοχος, δεν θα τιμωρηθεί κανείς - λες και όλα έγιναν από μόνα τους, από τη φύση ή έπεσαν από τον ουρανό.
16.3.2011: Αίτιος της σύγχυσης ο Αντώνης Σαμαράς, που αποφάσισε να στείλει τις επιστολές ...

TA NEA, ORIZONTES (ΤΑ ΝΕΑ, ΟΡΙΖΟΝΤΕΣ).
29-30.5.2010, p. 9: κυνηγώντας τους αίτιους των δεινών του...
Αρκεί να θυμόμαστε πάντα πως αιτία του τραγικού είναι η Υβρις...
The learned author of this article, author, critic and poet Kostas Georgosopoulos, gives us here an example of the survival of the two senses of αίτιος and cognates. In the first example, the αίτιοι are clearly those who brought all these sufferings on the subject of the sentence. In the second, Hybris is ‘αιτία of the Tragic’ in the sense of ‘cause’.
ABSTRACT
This is part of a forthcoming book analysing Plato’s *Politeia* as a philosophical drama, in which the participants turn out to be models of various types of psychic constitution, and nothing is said by them which may be considered to be an opinion of Plato himself (with all that that entails for Platonism). The debate in Book I between Socrates and Thrasymachus serves as a test case for the assumptions that the Socratic method involves searching for truth or examining the opinions of interlocutors and that Socrates is the mouthpiece of Plato. Socrates and Thrasymachus are usually assumed to be arguing about justice. In fact, they are going through the motions of an eristic debate, where the aim is not to discover the truth about the matter under discussion but to defeat the opponent by fair means or foul, but especially foul. The outrageous wordplay used by both men is not so obvious in translation, and in any case tends to be ignored or explained away by scholars who assume that Plato the philosopher was writing a philosophical treatise (an exposition of philosophical ideas) and not a philosophical drama (a presentation of philosophically interesting models, to be compared and contrasted by the reader).

1. THE NATURE OF POLITEIA I

Book I of Plato’s *Politeia* opens the dialogue with three increasingly extended discussions apparently pertaining to the subject of justice. Socrates converses firstly with an old acquaintance, Cephalus (328c-331d); then with that man’s son, Polemarchus (331e-336a); and finally with the sophist Thrasymachus (336b-354b). Book I is often regarded as featuring the non-philosophical scene-setting and the cut and thrust of dialectical debate typical of an early aporetic dialogue. Its style is widely acknowledged to contrast strongly with that of the following nine books. The “Socratic” Socrates of the early dialogues thus appears to be transformed into the “Platonic” Socrates of the middle dialogues in one and the same dialogue. This would be unusual for a dramatist of Plato’s calibre, to say the least, and the exercise is certainly not repeated in other dialogues.

K.F. Hermann proposed as long ago as 1839 that Plato had adapted an early dialogue on justice to serve as the first book of the *Politeia*. In 1895, the hypothetical early dialogue even received the name *Thrasymachus*, after its major protagonist. While the theory has had its proponents, many scholars have disputed this view, arguing that Book I was never intended to be an independent work, and could only ever have existed as part of the *Politeia*. Charles Kahn has noted that stylometry, formerly used to support the *Thrasymachus*

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1 The present paper is an adaptation of the second chapter of my almost completed analysis of Plato’s *Politeia* as a philosophical drama. I have chosen to follow Latin rather than Greek transcription of names (Plato, Glaucó, Adímanus, Thrasymachus, not Platon, Glaukon, Adeimantos, Thrasy民宿chos), but Greek transcription of Greek terms, such as *Politeia*.

2 Annas (1981) 4: “The Republic is [...] overtly transitional. Book I has the form of a Socratic dialogue like the early ones; but the rest of the book is a continuous exposition of what we can only take to be Plato’s own views on people and society.”

3 Hermann (1839) 538-40.

4 Dümmler (1895) 229ff.

5 E.g., Friedländer (1962) 50, and 305 n1 for a brief discussion; Smith (2000) 113.

6 E.g., Burrell (1916) 61: “The point of view of Socrates coincides exactly with his point of view in what follows, for practically all the main principles of the Republic are anticipated, if not distinctly laid down, in Book I.” In a stimulating article on proleptic composition in this dialogue, Kahn (1993) provides many references to earlier proponents of an independent *Thrasymachus*, but fails to mention forerunners of his own contrary position; on some of these, see Harrison (1967) 37-38, who refers, among others, to a Dutch article by Henderickx (1945) which he describes as showing, on a larger scale than previous attempts, “how the developments of the later books are here foreshadowed” (38). On the dispute, see further, Blondell (2000)
thesis, actually does no more than place Book I between the early dialogues and the remaining books of the Politeia; furthermore, Book I contains “massive anticipation of the following books”, without which little would remain to constitute an earlier independent dialogue. Kahn is referring to the many topics and comments in Book I which become truly relevant or intelligible only in the later books. Hence Kahn’s designation of Book I in particular as “proleptic”.

The stylistic anomaly between the first book and the remaining nine books remains. The apparently didactic style of Books II-X is often attributed to Plato’s recognition of the shortcomings of Socratic dialectic, used in Book I but explicitly abandoned at the beginning of Book II for the style Plato now appears to favour. Kahn suggests an alternative: “Book I is Socratic not because Plato is leaving the philosophy of the earlier dialogues behind, but because he wants to recall these discussions as vividly as possible, as background and context for his new undertaking.” Plato, he argues, is now equipped with solutions to problems raised in earlier dialogues, and wishes to remind the reader of those earlier dialogues and the problems raised there. Far from establishing the organic unity of the Politeia, Kahn’s argument appears to confirm the stylistic anomaly, and indeed supports the view that the Politeia is not one organic work, but a philosophical treatise sandwiched between two books (I and X), which may be detached without detracting from the import of the central portion. Were Kahn correct, it would be necessary to conclude that Plato has never shown such dramatic ineptitude as he manifests in what is widely regarded as his masterpiece, the Politeia.

Plato himself obviously thought that he was still writing drama in the later books of this work, as some scholars have recently pointed out: Socrates continues, for example, to engage in dialectic, and he uses the opinions of his interlocutors, for the most part Glauco and Adimantus. If, as is sometimes claimed, the dynamics or ground-rules of this drama have changed between the first and second books, then Plato would be guilty of a serious breach of the dramatic consistency he adheres to in other dialogues.

2. APPROACHING THRASYMACHUS

In the view of many scholars, Thrasymachus is the key to understanding Plato’s intent in the Politeia. By the end of Book I, Thrasymachus has been silenced, and Socrates,
who is narrating the conversation, claims that at this point he considered the discussion over. He continues his narrative, however, at the beginning of Book II, with an account of the subsequent challenge by Glauco, who wishes to see Socrates defeat Thrasymachus more convincingly. To this end, Glauco presents the position which he says Thrasymachus and many like him usually advocate, a position somewhat different from anything said in Book I. It is, then, the Thrasymachian challenge as presented by Glauco which Socrates purportedly addresses in the remaining books of the *Politeia*. Many scholars, however, seem to prefer the Thrasymachian challenge of Book I, where, whatever it is that Thrasymachus appears to be saying, it is this which they consider to be Thrasymachus’ true position, and not the one reported by Glauco.

Yet Thrasymachus in Book I has been notoriously difficult to pin down, partly because he appears to advance contradictory positions during his conversation with Socrates. Depending on how one resolves these apparent contradictions, or fails to resolve them, various positions may be, and have been, attributed to him. Since the 1960’s, analyses of Thrasymachus in Book I often begin with the listing of three positions perceived to be held by Thrasymachus in the course of his conversation with Socrates:

   a) Justice is the advantage of the stronger
   b) Justice is obedience to the laws
   c) Justice is another’s good, one’s own hurt

These accounts of justice, goes the argument, are mutually incompatible. From the point of view of the stronger, justice cannot be the advantage of the stronger (himself) and also another’s good (a, c). From the point of view of the weaker, considered as the weaker subject of a stronger ruler, justice as obedience to those laws disadvantageous to the ruler conflicts both with justice as the advantage of the stronger (a, b) and justice as another’s good (b, c).

Many attempts have been made to show that one or other of the statements reflects the position which Thrasymachus is really meant to be holding in Book I, while the other statements are subsumed under the identified consistent position. A subsequent cause for debate is the question whether the statement chosen to represent Thrasymachus’ consistent position is intended to be descriptive or prescriptive. Furthermore, there is no agreement over the cause for the consistency: some, for example, seem to regard the identified

to answer the challenge set by what he claims. This is made explicit at 358b-c. Unfortunately, there is much less agreement over what it is that Thrasymachus says."

15 Kerferd (1947) 19 lists Ethical Nihilism, Legalism, Natural Right and Psychological egoism as positions previously attributed by scholars to Thrasymachus, of which he chooses Natural Right as the correct attribution (27). Kerferd’s article seems to have been the forerunner for a spate of articles in the same vein, whereby lists of attributed positions are examined and whittled down to one or other correct attribution. Lists can vary widely; e.g. Chappell (1993) 2 identifies previous interpretations according to which Thrasymachus: 1. makes no clear point; 2. is a revolutionary; 3. is a Thucydidean cynic; 4. agrees with Callicles in the *Gorgias*; 5. is a Nietzschean immoralist; 6. believes that justice means obedience to the laws; 7. means to recommend injustice as a way of life.

16 Explicitly stated by Thrasymachus at 338c, 339a, 341a, 344c.

17 Inferred from the argument at 339b7. Hourani (1962) seems to have been the first to formalize this apparent position (see his presentation below). It is now customary to mention this along with the other two contradictory positions if only to explain it away; but see, e.g., Chappell (1993) 3 for a slightly different list which replaces this position with two others drawn from statements made by Thrasymachus at 338e in his first set-piece argument.

18 Explicitly stated by Thrasymachus at 343c.

19 Thrasymachus essentially advocated:
   b) Justice is obedience to the laws: Hourani (1962); Anscombe (1963);c) Justice is another’s good, one’s own hurt: Kerferd (1947); Sparshott (1966); Henderson (1970); Nicholson (1974); Annas (1981) 46; Reeve (1985) 247; Chappell (1993); Scaltsas (1993).
consistent position as historical fact, being that of the actual sophist, Thrasymachus; others require from Plato nothing less than a consistent position to serve as decent opposition for the serious arguments presented by Socrates-Plato. Not everyone has argued for a consistent Thrasymachus. Many have found Plato’s Thrasymachus inconsistent, but again there is much disagreement, this time over the nature of the inconsistency. Whether arguing for consistency or for inconsistency, scholars tend to share the assumption that the matter is to be settled by subjecting Thrasymachus’ arguments to logical analysis, as if this would determine Thrasymachus’ level of comprehension or confusion. In other words, scholars on both sides of the divide tend to treat Thrasymachus as a thinker, or even philosopher, who is fairly or unfairly treated by Plato the dramatist.

3. Is Thrasymachus Confused?

A brief survey of a logical analysis of Thrasymachus’ first argument should suffice to show that judging Thrasymachus according to the criterion of logic is misguided.

Thrasymachus begins the argument proper with an assertion which he enunciates in one form or another four times in all (338c, 339a, 341a, 344c). It is usually translated as “Justice is the advantage of the stronger”. To distinguish this from many other assertions which Thrasymachus makes, I shall call it the slogan. It is with this slogan, in one form or another, that Thrasymachus concludes his major arguments. This slogan, in the form “Justice is the advantage of the stronger”, is transformed in modern philosophical analyses into the first of the three “accounts of justice” listed in the previous section. Hourani’s

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20 E.g., Henderson (1970) 218: “I believe that the interpretation I shall give is the position Thrasymachus held, that Plato understood it in this way, and that in the dialogue Socrates addressed himself to it directly. If his arguments fail to refute Thrasymachus, as I think they do, it is not because the disputants are arguing at cross-purposes, but rather because Socrates’ arguments are defective.” Reeve (1985) 263: “Plato doesn’t tell us in so many words whether he thinks these Thrasymachean arguments are successful or not, but his subsequent practice in the Republic suggests that he thinks they are.”

21 Annas (1981) 35 argues that creating a confused Thrasymachus would be a pointless procedure for Plato to follow, and continues (35-36): “It is clear from the beginning of Book 2 that Plato took Thrasymachus to be defending a theory which was a real and dangerous alternative to what he took to be the truth about justice. If he were deliberately presenting the opposition as being weaker than in fact he took it to be, he would be guilty of intellectual dishonesty.” Chappell (1993) 1: “Thrasymachus’ statement of an alternative to standard views about justice in Republic Bk. I sets the challenge which Republic Bks. II-X must answer. If this is not a serious challenge, if Thrasymachus’ alternative view of justice is not interesting, plausible or coherent, it is not clear why moral philosophers should bother with The Republic at all. Here I will offer an interpretation of Thrasymachus’ alternative view of justice which does make his view out to be interesting, and plausible, and coherent.”

22 E.g., Sparshott (1966) notes two inconsistencies. He maintains that Thrasymachus’ fundamental position is that just action is action good for another (430) but (432) “he really does begin by saying that justice depends on law (and is therefore conventional)”; secondly, “he maintains to the end the coincidence of ‘another’s good’ and ‘the interest of the stronger’ in the sense of the rulers’ interests, even while adding examples of just action that refute the equation.”

23 Guthrie (1969) 94: “But what consistency, it may be asked, is there in contending that (a) justice is the interest of the ruling power (which Thrasymachus states simply and without qualification), but (b) it is not just for the ruler to seek his own interest, i.e. justice?” Maguire (1971) 163: “(Thrasymachus’) third assertion, ‘right is another’s good, or advantage’, adapts the first, ‘right is the advantage of the stronger’ (which is a consequence of the second, ‘right is obedience to the laws’) to state a moral theory. This third assertion is quite incompatible with the other two, and does not, in fact, belong, by origin, with them. It is, rather Plato’s device to move from political statements about ‘right’ to the very different question, whether observance of ‘right’ (i.e. justice), is more or less advantageous than non-observance (i.e. injustice).”


25 338e1-2 τὸ δίκαιον (“the just”, “what is just”, “justice”) is nothing other than τὸ τοῦ κρατίου συμφέρον (“the advantage of the stronger/superior”).
influential analysis of Thrasymachus’ first supporting argument (338d7-339a4) well exemplifies the modern philosophical mode of interpretation in which this transformation takes place:

The explanation is given briefly (338-339a) in three premisses and a conclusion.

[i]: Then it is the government (τὸ ἀρχον) which is master in each city, is it not?
Certainly.

[ii]: Well, every government lays down laws for its own advantage — a democracy democratic, a tyranny tyrannical laws, and so on.

[iii]: In laying down these laws they have made it plain that what is to their advantage is just for their subjects. They punish him who departs from this as a lawbreaker and an unjust man.

[Conclusion]: And this, my good sir, is what I mean. In every city justice is the same. It is what is advantageous to the established government. But the established government is master, and so sound reasoning gives the conclusion that the same thing is always just — namely, what is advantageous to the stronger.

Hourani restates this argument schematically on the next page:

[i]: The rulers in each city are the stronger. [Fact of politics]
[ii]: The laws are always made by the rulers for their own advantage. [Fact of psychology]
[iii]: Justice is obeying the laws. [Definition]

[Conclusion]: Therefore justice is the advantage of the stronger.

Hourani’s third premise, the definition of justice as obeying the laws, is henceforth in the literature the second “account of justice” held by Thrasymachus, an account usually explained away or subsumed to one of the other two “accounts of justice”. Thrasymachus, however, proposed no such definition in the first place. It has been read into the text in order to make logical sense of the argument, as becomes more apparent at the end of Hourani’s analysis:

Although the definition is not very clear in this premiss as stated by Thrasymachus, we know that it is present — as a definition — for these reasons: (a) It is basic to the argument, which would collapse without this link; for without it there would be no connection between justice and the rulers. (b) In the passage which follows immediately afterwards (339b-c), Socrates in cross-questioning Thrasymachus makes it plain that he understands obedience to law as one of the supposed definitions offered by Thrasymachus...

Ever since Hourani’s article, this definition of justice has been generally accepted as part of Thrasymachus’ argument, whether it is treated as Thrasymachus’ “true” position or not. Logic requires its presence, whether Thrasymachus gave this definition or not. The

26 Hourani (1962) 111.
27 Hourani (1962) 112.
28 Hourani (1962) 112-13. The emphases are Hourani’s.
argument falls logically without it. Is Thrasymachus so confused that he failed to provide such an important link in the chain? Or could it be that his argument does not actually require this definition? A comparison of Hourani’s scheme with what Thrasymachus actually says is instructive:

3. 1. Thrasymachus vs. Hourani’s step [i]

We recall that Hourani’s step [i] was, “The rulers in each city are the stronger, [Fact of politics].” Is Thrasymachus simply presenting a fact of politics here? A literal translation of the first part of Thrasymachus’ argument runs as follows (338d7-11):²⁹

Don’t you know then, said he, that of cities, some are “tyrannized”, some are “democratted”, and some are “aristocratted”? How could I not? Therefore this “crats” (rules over others) in each city, the governing power (to archon)? Quite.³⁰

We may note immediately that had Thrasymachus simply been describing a fact of politics, as Hourani designates his step [i], he could have begun with the second question, that it is the governing power (to archon) which rules in every city. This he does not do. He feels the need to begin with another question.

What, then, is the point of the first question? Thrasymachus observes interrogatively that cities are tyrannized, democratted and aristocratted. Thrasymachus wishes this first observation to appear to lead to the conclusion that what rules in each city is the governing power. This first question, therefore, is intended to appear to be general and applicable to every city. Indeed, it refers to the rule of the individual (tyrant), the rule of the many (demos), and the rule of the few (aristocrats). Why, however, are the verbs Thrasymachus employs not more general in scope? Instead of τυραννοῦνται (“are ruled by a tyrant”), Thrasymachus could have chosen to say μοναρχοῦνται (“are ruled by one”), to denote all forms of rule by one person.³¹ In the same way, ὀλιγαρχοῦνται (“are ruled by a few”) would have been more general than ἀριστοκρατοῦνται (“are ruled by aristocrats”), the verb which Thrasymachus chooses to use. Consider the following exchange, using the more general verbs, which Thrasymachus should have done had he been aiming at a logical argument:

Don’t you know then, said he, that of cities, some are “monarchied”, some are “democratted”, and some are “oligarchied”? How could I not? Therefore this “crats” (rules over others) in each city, the governing power (to archon)? Quite.

The verbs now stress not ruling over others (kra#:t), but governing (arch), and it would

²⁹ 338d7-11: ἐὰν οὐκ οἴσθη, ἔφη, ὅτι τῶν πόλεων αἱ μὲν τυραννοῦνται, αἱ δὲ δημοκρατοῦνται, αἱ δὲ ἀριστοκρατοῦνται; πῶς γὰρ οὐ; οὐκοῦν τὸ οὕτω κρατεῖ ἐν ἑκάστῃ πόλει, τὸ ἄρχον; πάνυ χ.³⁰ The passage may sound forced in English, but it sounds perfectly natural in Greek.
³¹ Furthermore, in being specific, Thrasymachus preferred τυραννοῦνται to βασιλεύουνται (“are ruled by a king”). Both verbs can be used together, and are, e.g., at Resp. 576d2. Thrasymachus clearly wished to stress the tyrant.
indeed have been a more natural observation to make, that the governing power (to archon) in each city governs (arche), an observation which could easily have followed upon the use of the more general verbs with the arch suffixes. Rather than use the more natural coupling of a cognate noun and verb (to archon, arche), Thrasymachus has chosen to insinuate that the governing power (to archon) rules over others (kratei).32 This is particularly interesting since the coupling is not submitted to scrutiny in Thrasymachus’ questioning. The verb kratei follows from Thrasymachus’ choice of verbs in the first question: rule by a tyrant implies kratos, power over others,33 while the other two verbs have krat suffixes. The order of the verbs, ending with the two krat verbs, allows the smooth verbal transition to the second question. The second question asks whether what krats in each city (apparently a given that something “crats”) is to archon. Attention is directed to answering what the thing is which “crats” (rules over others) in every city, and away from the unasked question whether something does indeed “crat” in each and every city.

The notion that something does rule over others in every city has been slipped in (using the verb kratei) while asking whether it is the governing power that rules over others in every city. Furthermore, the second question moves the governing power from being over the city (it is the city which is tyrannized, etc., in the first question) to being in the city, and now ruling over — it may be inferred already — subjects, the other inhabitants, in the city. This small change prepares the way for the subsequent claim that the ruled in the city are exploited by the governing power.

3.2. Thrasymachus vs. Hourani’s step [ii]

Hourani’s step [ii] was, “The laws are always made by the rulers for their own advantage. [Fact of psychology].” Here, however, is a literal translation of Thrasymachus’ argument (338e1-3):34

Each regime (arche) lays down the laws with a view to the advantage for itself, a democracy democratic (laws), a tyranny tyrannical (laws), and in this way the other (regimes).

The argument concerns the governing power (to archon is now he arche), and not, as Hourani claims, the rulers (hoi archontes). The ruling power is conceived to be the constitution itself, such as a democracy or a tyranny.

A democracy does always lay down democratic laws, but only in the sense that the laws are those laid down by a democracy, regardless of any advantage or disadvantage accruing therefrom to the democracy. Similarly, tyrannical laws are always tyrannical in that they are laid down by a tyranny, regardless of any advantage or disadvantage accruing therefrom to the tyranny. Thrasymachus, however, clearly wishes his audience to confuse this sense of the adjectives, “pertaining to a democracy/tyranny”, with another sense, “advantageous to a democracy/tyranny”. This is achieved by mentioning advantage before using these adjectives in the argument.

It is, however, a historical fact of politics that a democracy can lay down undemocratic laws, leading to the downfall of that democracy; similarly, a tyranny can lay down untyrannical laws, leading to the downfall of that tyranny. This argument, therefore, has nothing to do with a fact of psychology (indeed, there are no people involved), nor even a fact of politics, but rather an argument based on simple wordplay. It continues the construction of an argument which has the appearance of a general truth regarding all

32 On the distinction, see Glucker (1987) 142-45.
33 Plato’s Thrasymachus would no doubt have used тυραννοκρατέω had there been such a verb, but he had to make do with what there was.
34 338e1-3: ἔθετο δὲ γιὰ τοὺς νόμους ἑκάστη ἢ ἀρχὴ πρὸς τὸ αὐτῆ συμφέρον, δημοκρατία μὲν δημοκρατικοῦς, τυραννίς δὲ τυραννικοῦς, καὶ αἱ ἄλλαι οὔτως.
3. 3. Thrasymachus vs. Hourani’s step [iii]

We turn now to Hourani’s step [iii], “Justice is obeying the laws. [Definition]”. Here is Thrasymachus’ argument (338e3-6): 35

In laying down [the laws], [the regimes] have made it apparent that this is [what is] just for those ruled, the advantage to themselves (i.e., the regimes’ advantage), and they punish anyone transgressing it (i.e., the regimes’ advantage) as someone both lawbreaking and unjust.

We have already seen that Hourani acknowledges that the alleged definition is not actually in the text. To be more precise, I submit, the definition is deduced from a misinterpretation of the text. Hourani regards the ruling power as rulers who intentionally and arbitrarily define their own advantage as just. Hourani is not alone in this interpretation. Scholars have usually taken the verb ἀπέφηναν (“made apparent”) to mean “declared”, “called”, etc., 36 adding a parallel passage which is to be found in Legg. IV. 714c-d. While the argument there is indeed yet another one supporting the advantage of the superior, the superior in that instance is the superior man, and it is the superior man there who expressly calls his laws just. This is not the case in our passage, despite the apparent similarities. 37 The verb ἀποφαίνω may mean “declare” in certain contexts, but it cannot have that meaning here. Simply by laying down laws peculiar to its type of constitution, and punishing those who transgress those laws, a political regime does not declare that its own advantage is just for the ruled; rather, by doing so, it reveals, quite unintentionally, that its own advantage is just for the ruled. It is, furthermore, inconceivable that regimes in the abstract would look to their own interest, let alone declare what is to their own advantage. The superior man of the Laws passage, being human, is able both to look to his own advantage and declare it to be just for the ruled. The sense of the sentence in our passage requires ἀπέφηναν to have its more usual meaning of “they made apparent”.

The argument, then, is as follows. Regimes lay down laws to their own advantage; for, as we see, laws are peculiar to the type of regime which laid them down (we have already noted the wordplay in step [ii]). By this action, the regimes (unintentionally) make apparent that this is just for the ruled, the advantage to the regimes themselves; and furthermore (here comes another observation), the law-breaker is punished as unjust.

Even on this interpretation, it might be argued, it is necessary to supply Hourani’s deduced definition in order to make sense of the argument. As Hourani suggests, without obedience to the laws being considered just, there is no connection between justice and the rulers. It might be added that if the law-breaker (mentioned) is punished as unjust, the law-abider (not mentioned) is surely not punished, and is considered just for obeying the laws. Therefore, the argument would go, obedience to the laws is itself just, and by the same token, the laws themselves might be considered just. The fact is that in his first argument, the only thing Thrasymachus describes as just is the advantage to the regime, and this advantage is not the laws themselves, nor is it obedience to them. Laws are only a means to

35 338e3-6: θέμεναι δὲ ἀπέφηναν τούτῳ δίκαιον τός ἀρχωμένος εἶναι, τὸ σφίσι συμφέρον, καὶ τὸν τούτῳ ἐκβάλοντα κολάζουσιν ὡς παρανομοῦντα τὲ καὶ ἁδικοῦντα.

36 E.g., Hourani (1962) 111: “In laying down these laws they have made it plain that what is to their advantage is just for their subjects.” Kerferd (1964) 13: “... ‘Justice is obedience to the laws’ is something which the rulers have brought about by declaring it to be the case, cf. ἀπέφηναν in 338c3, ὄνομασι in 359a3 and Laws 714d.” Guthrie (1969) 93: “All governments make laws in their own interest, and call that justice...”

37 To quote, e.g., Sparshott (1966) 421: “Plato is in any case discernibly a philosopher of multiple connections and ambiguities: arguments and analogies are repeated from dialogue to dialogue with changed emphasis and point.”
the end, the advantage of the regime.

Thrasymachus gives two reasons why the advantage of the regime is just. One is that the regime lays down laws to its own advantage. The assumption here is that the laws are laid down to promote what is just; hence, since the laws promote the regime’s own advantage, what is just turns out to be the regime’s own advantage. The second reason is the observation that anyone transgressing the law is punished as someone unjust. This second reason seems to have been added to make the link with justice explicit. If someone not carrying out the advantage of the regime is considered unjust, then this shows — so Thrasymachus with superficial plausibility — that the advantage of the regime is just. We may ask ourselves why Thrasymachus prefers to point to the unjust man rather than the just man, and why he does not say that obedience to the laws is just, or that the laws themselves are just. The answer might be that were he to do any of these things, he would no longer be able to call the advantage of the regime \textit{\textit{t}ό \textit{δ}ί\textit{kai}ον ("the just thing", "what is just", "justice"), but only \textit{δ}ί\textit{kai}ον ("just", "something just"), one of a plurality of things that are just.}\footnote{The slogan supported by this argument is about \textit{t}ό \textit{δ}ί\textit{kai}ον, “the just thing”, or “justice”: the definite article does not appear, following Ancient Greek usage, in the predicate. In any case, even if the present passage might appear to be referring only to “something just”, the word “just” is predicated of the one and only thing called just in this argument — the advantage of the superior, and the intent is that this exclusively is what is just.}

3. 4. Thrasymachus vs. Hourani’s Conclusion

And finally, Hourani’s fourth step: “[Conclusion]: Therefore justice is the advantage of the stronger.” Thrasymachus’ argument is as follows (338e6-339a4):\footnote{338e6-339a4: \textit{t}ότ’ \textit{ο}ὖν \textit{ἐ}στιν, \textit{ὡ} βέλτιστε, \textit{ὁ} \textit{λ}έ\textit{γ}ω \textit{ἐ}ν \textit{ἀ}π\textit{ά}σαις \textit{τ}άς \textit{π}ό\textit{λ}ε\textit{σ}ιν \textit{τ}α\textit{ῦ}τ\textit{ό}ν \textit{ἐ}\textit{ναι \textit{δ}ί\textit{kai}ον, \textit{τ}ό \textit{t}ής \textit{κ}α\textit{θ}ε\textit{ς}κ\textit{ή}κ\textit{ι}ας \textit{ἀ}ρ\textit{χ}ής \textit{s}ύ\textit{m}φ\textit{έ}ρ\textit{ο}ν \textit{α}τ\textit{ή} \textit{δ}ε \textit{p}ο\textit{u} \textit{k}ρα\textit{τ}ε\textit{i}, \textit{ώ}σ\textit{t}ε \textit{s}ύ\textit{m}β\textit{α}\textit{ι}νε \textit{t}ώ \textit{φ}ρ\textit{ό}ν \textit{λ}ο\textit{γ}ι\textit{ξ}ώ\textit{m}έ\textit{n} \textit{p}α\textit{n}τ\textit{α}χ\textit{ῷ}ο\textit{u} \textit{ἐ}\textit{nαι \textit{t}ό \textit{a}τό \textit{δ}ί\textit{kai}ον, \textit{t}ό \textit{t}ό\textit{u} \textit{k}ρ\textit{e}ί\textit{t}ό\textit{n}ο\textit{s} \textit{s}ύ\textit{m}φ\textit{έ}ρ\textit{o}ν. Instead of \textit{t}ό \textit{t}ό\textit{u} \textit{k}ρ\textit{α}τ\textit{o}ν\textit{t}ο\textit{s} \textit{s}ύ\textit{m}φ\textit{έ}ρ\textit{o}ν we are given \textit{t}ό \textit{t}ό\textit{u} \textit{k}ρ\textit{e}ί\textit{t}ό\textit{n}ο\textit{s} \textit{s}ύ\textit{m}φ\textit{έ}ρ\textit{o}ν.}

This, then, O best of men, is what I say is the same just [thing] in all the cities, the advantage of the established regime (\textit{arχe}); and this [i.e., the regime] anywhere “crats” [\textit{k}r\textit{a}t\textit{e}i — rules over others], so that it follows for anyone reasoning rightly that everywhere the same [thing] is just, the advantage of the superior (\textit{t}ό \textit{u} \textit{k}r\textit{e}ί\textit{t}ό\textit{n}ο\textit{s}).

Having already insinuated into the argument that the regime (\textit{b}e \textit{arχ}e) or ruling power (\textit{t}ο \textit{a}ρ\textit{χ}ον) rules over others (\textit{k}r\textit{a}t\textit{e}i) in the city, and having argued that what is just is the advantage of this regime, Thrasymachus now restates in his peroration firstly, that in every city the same thing is just, the advantage of the established regime, and secondly, that the regime anywhere rules over others (\textit{k}r\textit{a}t\textit{e}i). From these premises he concludes that everywhere the same thing is just, the advantage of the superior (\textit{t}ό \textit{u} \textit{k}r\textit{e}ί\textit{t}ό\textit{n}ο\textit{s}), which is the slogan the argument is intended to prove. He appears to have proved it, but this does not mean that he has proved it logically.

The first point to note is that the earlier insinuation that the governing power rules over others (\textit{k}r\textit{a}t\textit{e}i) is now vital to the argument. It is part of the second premise from which the conclusion appears to be drawn, and a listener could be forgiven for thinking that it was a premise based on the earlier argument.

The second point to note is that the conclusion which follows from this premise should pertain to the advantage of the power that rules over others (\textit{t}ο \textit{u} \textit{k}r\textit{a}t\textit{a}νο\textit{t}ος \textit{s}ύ\textit{m}φ\textit{έ}ρ\textit{ο}ν), Thrasymachus substitutes \textit{t}ό \textit{t}ό\textit{u} \textit{k}r\textit{e}ί\textit{t}ό\textit{n}ο\textit{s} \textit{s}ύ\textit{m}φ\textit{έ}ρ\textit{o}ν, the advantage of the superior.\footnote{39}
The whole argument depends upon our conscious or unconscious acceptance of this substitution. The slogan pertained to the superior, yet Thrasymachus has chosen throughout the argument not to mention the superior, only substituting it for the *krat*-verb in the very last stage, the final conclusion. The *krat*-verb was insinuated early into the argument in order to be substituted at the last minute. The similarity between *krat*-stems and *kreitt*-stems, both in meaning and in sound, eases the transition from one to the other. Yet in Attic they are not identical. Indeed, had they been identical, there would have been no need for the subterfuge: Thrasymachus could have used *kreitt*-stems throughout to prove his slogan. Thrasymachus has been careful to insinuate that the regime everywhere “crats” without asking Socrates whether every regime is *kreitton* (“superior”). Had he done so, it is unlikely that Socrates would have agreed without first settling the identity of the inferior. Thrasymachus’ argument identifies the inferior as all those who are subject to the laws. In a democracy, the democratic regime comprising the citizens of the polis would turn out to be superior to (some of) themselves — and this would have ruined Thrasymachus’ argument. Partly in order to avoid exposing this absurdity, Thrasymachus has taken care not to identify the “superior” with the rulers, and offers an argument which effectively equates the “superior” with the similar sounding “ruling power”.

Is Thrasymachus confused? It would seem that he is not. His subterfuges, word-games, equivocations and subtle hints all serve one grand design, to make his slogan appear true. Whatever it was that Thrasymachus wished to prove by his first argument, he has not proved it by philosophical means. The argument is intended not to be logical, but persuasive.

4. The Slogan

The slogan itself still eludes our understanding. It is the truth of this slogan which Thrasymachus would have his audience persuaded of by his first argument, but we have seen that the argument itself is not a reliable indicator of the meaning of the slogan. The conclusion to the first argument, strictly speaking, should apply to the ruling power; but this is clearly not what Thrasymachus has in mind, since had it been the case, he would have had no reason to switch from “the ruling power” to “the superior” precisely in the conclusion. Furthermore, the slogan, first enunciated before the argument we have analysed, referred to “the superior” and not “the ruling power”. It is this earlier slogan which the first argument is intended to prove, and it is “the superior” rather than “the ruling power” which Thrasymachus wished to prove something about. The “superior”, therefore, remains something of a mystery. If the first argument is unreliable, perhaps we can learn more from the rest of the discussion, especially the Socratic elenchus. After all, Socrates is always attempting to reach the truth, is he not? A brief examination of the debate, focussing on the substitutes for “the superior”, reveals that it is not only the first argument of Thrasymachus which persuades at the expense of logical consistency.

4. 1. Preliminaries

Before Thrasymachus presents his slogan for the first time, he pretends for a while that he wants Socrates to say what justice is. He forbids Socrates to give simple definitions such as “the beneficial”, “the profitable”, “the gainful”, or, finally, “the advantageous” (*to sumpheron* — “advantage”, 336d2). His own slogan, however, says that justice is nothing other than the advantage of the superior (*to tou kreittonos sumpheron* — 338c1-3). After Thrasymachus’ first argument, Socrates will begin his cross-examination by drawing attention to Thrasymachus’ simple addition of “of the superior” to one of the forbidden definitions “the advantage” (339a6-9). Having drawn attention to this, however, he does
not immediately ask what “the superior” signifies, but merely wonders whether the resulting claim — that justice is the advantage of the superior — is true (339b2-3).

The strategy Socrates adopts in his cross-examination is to show that justice is the advantage of the inferior, or that justice is no more the advantage than the disadvantage of the superior; but his “superior” is as slippery as that of Thrasy machus, and no attempt is made to clear this point up. One might almost imagine that the term is left deliberately vague. It is Clitopho who finally mentions “the superior” in the masculine singular (340b7), clearly signifying “the superior man”, and this in a political context, but he appears to assume that this has been the subject of the slogan all along. We shall see later that all the participants have assumed this to be the case.

4. 2. The Superior — not the physically stronger man

When Thrasy machus introduces his slogan (“For I say that what is just is nothing other than the advantage of the superior” 338c1-2), he clearly expects his audience to be impressed by it. It is as if he assumes that his audience understands what he means by it, and that what he means by it is something clever, even astonishing. Indeed, they should be astonished were they to know Thrasymachus’ usual position. And in fact, at least Glaucos knows Thrasymachus’ usual position — on which more later (§5).

Socrates’ first reaction upon hearing the slogan is to feign incomprehension; but he appears to know what Thrasymachus has in mind, since he successfully annoys Thrasy machus with his counter-example (338c6-d2):

“I don’t suppose you mean that if beef gives advantage to the body of Pulydamas the all-round athlete who is superior/stronger than us (ἡμῶν κρείττων), this food is both an advantage to us and just for us who are weaker than him”.

Thrasymachus thereupon indulges in some name-calling, and accuses Socrates of interpreting the logos where he could do it most harm (d3-4). Such an accusation could not be made without it appearing that Socrates knew exactly what Thrasymachus actually intended. Furthermore, it would seem that Thrasymachus does intend something specific, even if it is hard to pin him down by sheer philosophical analysis of the argument.

Among the points which Socrates may have misinterpreted, we may note the following:

a) Thrasy machus was making a general claim about justice, or what is just; the whole of what is just is the advantage of the superior. Socrates does identify “just” with “advantage”, but these terms are particular, being merely predicated of the subject “beef”.

b) Socrates construes what is of advantage to the superior to be of advantage (not only just) also to the inferior. Had Thrasy machus intended the advantage to be to both the superior and the inferior, he would not have specified only the superior.

c) Socrates posits a physical, common and mundane, advantage. We do not yet know what sort of advantage Thrasy machus had in mind, but it was probably somewhat more than mere beef.

d) Socrates uses kreitton in the sense of ischuroteros — “physically stronger”. The ambiguity between “superior” and “physically stronger” is the basis for an entire argument in Plato’s Gorgias, but the opportunity for a thorough

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41 338c6-d2: οὐ γάρ που τὸ γε τοιόνδε φής· εἰ Πουλυδάμας ἡμῶν κρείττων ὁ παγκρατιαστής καὶ αὐτῷ συμφέρει τὰ βόεια κρέα πρὸς τὸ σῶμα, τότε τὸ σπέρον εἶναι καὶ ἡμῖν τοῖς ἡπτοσιν ἐκεῖνον συμφέρον ὅμα καὶ δικαίουν.

42 In the Gorgias, Socrates finds himself eventually arguing with his host, Callicles, on a theme very
philosophical examination seems to have been thrown away here.

Thrasymachus, therefore, intends his slogan to pertain to the advantage specifically of the superior, where the superior is not a physically stronger man. Socrates appears to know what Thrasymachus means, by stating explicitly that his counter-example, the beef of Pulydamas, is probably not what Thrasymachus had in mind. Socrates’ counter-example leads to ‘Thrasymachus’ first argument in support of his slogan.

4. 3. The Superior — the ruling power

We have already seen in our examination of ‘Thrasymachus’ first argument (§3) that although the conclusion matches the slogan (...it follows for anyone reasoning rightly that everywhere the same [thing] is just, the advantage of the superior [tou kreittonos] — 339a2-3), “the superior” is a late substitution for “the ruling power” which has been the superior entity throughout the argument proper. The established regime (arche), identified with the ruling power (to kratoun), becomes in the conclusion the superior (to kreitton). Apart from the similarity in sound and in sense (krat-kreit, ruling over others, superior), we may suspect further word play here. Logically, Thrasymachus has been talking about the superior thing. His argument, however, pertains to the superior man. He can get away with this sleight of hand because the form of the genitive case — “of the superior” — is identical for all genders; tou kreittonos may be interpreted by the audience as masculine, in alignment with their expectations, although it is logically neuter according to the argument supporting the slogan.

4. 4. The Superior — the rulers

Thrasymachus has presented his first argument in support of his slogan, and by sleight of hand has substituted throughout the argument “the regime” and “the ruling power” for “the superior” which only appears finally in the conclusion. Socrates’ refutation is swift and easily achieved. He begins by asking Thrasymachus whether it is also just to obey the rulers, and Thrasymachus agrees that it is (339b7-9). It appears to be assumed in the subsequent argument that the rulers are superior, and the ruled are inferior; but this is not made explicit. By observing that while it is just to obey the laws, rulers mistakenly make laws not to their own advantage, Socrates arrives at the conclusion (339d1-3):

“...it follows for anyone reasoning rightly that everywhere the same [thing] is just, the advantage of the superior (tou kreittonos), but also the opposite, namely to

similar to that offered by Thrasymachus, and it takes Socrates a while to push Callicles to express his true opinion regarding the superior man. Having shown that Callicles does not distinguish between the terms “superior” (kreittonos, opposed to ήπτων), “better” (βελτίων, opposed to χείρων), or “worthier” (αμείνου, opposed to φαυλότερος — Gorgias 488b2-6), Socrates finds that Callicles also fails to distinguish between “superior” and “physically stronger” (συμφέροντος), even when Socrates reasons that the Many, being numerically stronger than an individual, are “superior”, and their laws are therefore those of the naturally superior and better. Finally, when Socrates reaches the logical conclusion that, since the Many are those who establish laws in pursuit of equity (το ίνον Εξερωμενικον κατα τον σων λόγον το του kreittonos συμφέρον ποιειν ἄλλα και τούναντιον, το μὴ συμφέρον.

That this is the case will become clearer in §5 below, but we have already noted in §4.1 that Clitopho assumes that “the superior” of the slogan is the superior man.

43  339d1-3: οὔ μόνον ἄρα δίκαιον ἔστιν κατά τόν σῶν λόγον τό τού kreittonos συμφέρον ποιειν ἄλλα καὶ τούναντίον, τὸ μὴ συμφέρον.

44
do] what is not the advantage [of the superior]"

This is considered a refutation of the slogan, since justice is now associated not only with the advantage but also with the disadvantage of the superior. Interestingly, the refutation refers to the superior in the singular, although it was Socrates who had shifted the discussion from the ruling power to the rulers themselves. The singular superior entity is treated in this argument as the plural rulers.45

Thrasymanthus reacts to this refutation in a fairly predictable way ("What are you saying?" d4). Unfortunately for him, it allows Socrates to recapitulate his argument (e1-8). This time he explicitly identifies the rulers with "the superior" in the plural (tous archousi te kai kreittosi — 2), but remarkably, this does not prevent him from reverting to the singular form of "superior" in his conclusion, made all the more remarkable by the appearance there of "inferior" in the plural (339e6-8):46

"Then, most wise Thrasymanthus, doesn’t it necessarily follow that it is just (dikaion) to do the opposite of what you say? For it seems that it is the disadvantage of the [singular] superior which is laid upon the [plural] inferiors to do."

This restated refutation is even stronger than the original, since the conclusion, taken on its own, appears to prove that the inferior subjects are (always?) commanded to do what is to the disadvantage (never the advantage) of the superior ruler.

The debate between Socrates and Thrasymanthus breaks down here, allowing the intervention of members of the audience. Polemarchus, for one, seems satisfied by this refutation.

4. 5. The Superior — a superior man, a ruler

Polemarchus sides with Socrates. He repeats the plural to singular phenomenon, mentioning "the superior" in the plural during the argument (tous kreittous — 340b2), but reverting to the singular in his recapitulation of the refutation (340b4-5):48

"the advantage of the superior [tou kreittonos] would be no more just than the not-advantage."

Clitopho in a cameo performance pitches in to help out Thrasymanthus. His interpretation of what Thrasymanthus means is that what is just is what seems to the superior man to be the advantage of the superior, whether it is actually advantageous or not (340c1-5). Thrasymanthus immediately rejects this appeal to mere appearance, and offers his own counter-proposal. In the process, a new element introduced by Clitopho is implicitly accepted. On the way to his proposal, Clitopho referred for the first time in this dialogue to the unambiguously masculine form ho kreitton (ὁ κρείττων 340b7), meaning the superior man. This is remarkable, given that the previous arguments have been dealing with the

45 We might note in passing some of the other underhand manoeuvres Socrates executes. He has somehow obliged Thrasymanthus to agree that more than one thing is just (obedience to the laws is also just); but the slogan is about the one thing that is just, the advantage of the superior. Why Thrasymanthus has to agree to this will become apparent later (§§4.7, 6.4 below). Furthermore, Socrates has shifted the significance of what is just, from being to doing. This is a shift which is reflected in subsequent formulations of the slogan.

46 339e6-8: ἀρα τότε, ὦ σοφώτατε Ἐθρασύμαχε, οὐκ ἀναγκαίον συμβαίνειν αὐτῷ ὀὐτωσί, δίκαιον εἶναι ποιεῖν τοῦτον τοῦτον ἢ δ σὺ λέγεις; τὸ γὰρ τοῦ κρείττωνος ἀσύμφορον δήπου προστάτηται τοῖς ἐπίτοιχοι ποιεῖν.

47 I.e., the inferior subjects are commanded to perform what is actually to the disadvantage of the superior ruler.

48 340b4-5: οὔτεν μάλλον τὸ τοῦ κρείττωνος συμφέρον δίκαιον ἢ τὸ μὴ συμφέρον. The formulation "no more X than Y" is a common mode of refutation in eristic debate, on which see §6.1 below.
regime or with rulers in the plural. Could it be that Clitopho (along with the rest of the audience) has been aware all along that “the superior” of the slogan is intended to be the superior man?

4. 6. The Superior — a strictly expert ruler

Thrasymachus strongly disagrees with Clitopho’s suggestion (340c6). His counter-proposal implicitly introduces yet another new element, expertise, and it is this, rather than the implicitly accepted shift to the superior individual, which becomes the centre of attention. Thrasymachus gives examples of various craftsmen, and he slips easily from craftsman to expert to ruler (demιουργος, sophος, архον). His new argument is as follows. While rulers in the loose sense make mistakes, the ruler qua ruler does not make mistakes. Mistakes betray a lack of expertise in the agent at the moment that the error is made, and a person lacking expertise is not an expert. The ruler worthy of the name of ruler is the one who is not mistaken when he legislates; this is what Thrasymachus meant by the ruler who legislates what is best for himself, and it is this (the best for the ruler) which must be done by the ruled (singular!). Thrasymachus concludes (341a3-4): “So that I say what I said from the beginning was just, to do the advantage of the superior”

Thrasymachus appears to have successfully countered Socrates’ refutation. Those who legislate to their own disadvantage are mistaken, and hence not rulers at all. Those who legislate to their own advantage are not mistaken, but rather are expert rulers, and hence rulers tout court. No ruler, therefore, legislates to his own disadvantage. And since the ruler is the superior, what Thrasymachus originally claimed still stands.

Thrasymachus clearly wishes his audience to believe that he is making the same claim that he made originally. He asserts that what he said then is what he says now. Indeed, the slogan — to tou kreittonos sumpheron — is still discernible, and an inattentive listener might not spot the differences. However:

a) an additional word has been inserted into the slogan, the infinitive “to do” (poiein). It was Socrates who shifted the field of justice from being to doing (§4.4 above), and Thrasymachus has adapted. Of course, being the advantage of the superior is not the same as doing it; yet Thrasymachus has now asserted that each of these is (exclusively) what is just.

b) the argument supporting the slogan has shifted from treating the superior as a regime to the superior as a ruler in the strict sense. Neither substitute for the superior is what really intended by the term.

4. 7. The Superior — crafts, a craft in the strict sense

Socrates does not question the notion of ruler qua ruler. On the contrary, he

49 340c4-5: δημιουργος ἢ σοφος ἢ ἄρχων...
50 340c8-341a1: τὸν ἄρχοντα, καθ’ ὅσον ἄρχων ἔστιν... “the ruler, so far as he is a ruler...” The point Thrasymachus is making is that a craftsman who makes a mistake is not, strictly speaking, a craftsman at the moment that he makes a mistake. The mistake arises from a lack of knowledge.
51 The argument is sophistic and relies on the acceptance of a black and white dichotomy: a person when performing something without error is an outright expert in that field; but when performing with error is entirely lacking in that expertise, and undeserving of the name associated with that expertise.
52 341a2: τῷ ἄρχομένῳ. This ruled individual is explicitly identified with the inferior (τῷ ἤτοιν) for the first time only at 341b7, and by Socrates, but again apparently incidentally, in a question designed to clarify whether the individual superior ruler under discussion is a ruler in the loose sense or in the strict sense.
53 341a3-4: ὥστε ὅπερ εξ ἀρχῆς ἔλεγον δίκαιον λέγω, τὸ τοῦ κρείττονος ποιεῖν συμφέρον.
develops the idea of craftsmen in the strict sense of the word, and crafts (technai) in the strict sense — and an already bizarre conversation becomes positively surreal (342c8-d2): 54

“Yet indeed, Thrasymachus, crafts govern (archousi) and rule over (kratousi) that of which they are crafts (technai).”
He agreed with great difficulty.

“So no body of knowledge (episteme) looks to, or demands, the advantage of the (singular) superior (to tou kraitonon sumpheron), but rather the [advantage] of the (singular) inferior ruled by it.”

He also agreed to this eventually...

What might appear at first sight surprising is that Thrasymachus actually agrees to these claims, albeit with difficulty. The terms of reference have never been so remote from what Thrasymachus intended by “the superior”. But Socrates seems to be playing the same game that Thrasymachus has been playing, using substitutes instead of the real thing, substitutes which may be replaced by “the superior” in the conclusion, in such a way that the arguments of Thrasymachus and Socrates appear respectively to support and refute the slogan. Since they are playing the same game, Thrasymachus cannot but accept Socrates’ blatantly outrageous claims. We may note that:

a) Socrates manages to retain the impression that he is still talking about Thrasymachus’ original claim by using terms which have already been used by Thrasymachus, including part of the slogan itself (“the advantage of the superior”) and the verbs “govern” and “rule over others”.

b) techne is variously translated as “art”, “craft”, “trade”, or “skill”. I have elsewhere observed that it would be more useful to consider techne as the synthesis of mathema and epitedeuma, a learned knowledge and its practice. 55 The knowledge, once acquired, is episteme, which is what Socrates refers to here. Socrates has Thrasymachus agree that the theoretical side, the knowledge, exists not for the benefit of the craft itself, but for the thing practised by the craft: for example, the theory of horsecraft does not benefit horsecraft, but horses. This claim appears even more reasonable since Socrates has earlier emphasized that he is talking about craft in the strict sense (342b5-7), just as Thrasymachus had earlier postulated a ruler in the strict sense. Craft in the strict sense is perfect, with anything less being no craft at all, and as such, it can receive no benefit from anything, not even its own theoretical side. Socrates is paying back Thrasymachus in his own sophistic currency, not just because it is a form of poetic justice, but because this is, as it were, a currency which Thrasymachus must honour because of his own heavy stake in it.

c) Socrates portrays craft in the strict sense as superior to its subject which he portrays as inferior to it. This he achieves by portraying craft as somehow governing or ruling over its subject. Thrasymachus used the same verbs to establish the superiority of the regime over those ruled by it. In the context of a craft, the use of the verbs is somewhat strained. Are horses ruled over by horsecraft, or rather by more mundane horsemasters? Is a ship ruled over by shipcraft, or by a captain?

d) The subject treated by a craft is assumed to derive benefit from that craft. This assumption is questioned neither by Socrates nor by Thrasymachus. 56 One

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54 342c8-d2: ἀλλὰ μὴν, ὦ Θρασύμαχε, ἄρχοντες γε αἱ τέχνας καὶ κρατοῦσιν ἕκαστην οὐπέρ εἰσιν τέχναι. — συνεχώρησαν ἐνταῦθα καὶ μᾶλλα μόνης. — οὐκ ἄρα ἐπιστήμη γε οὐδεμία τὸ τοῦ κρατοῦσιν συμφέρον σκοπεῖ οὐδ᾽ ἐπιπάτει, ἀλλὰ τὸ τοῦ ἡπτονὸς τε καὶ ἄρχομένου ὑπὸ ἕκαστης. — συνωμολόγησε μὲν καὶ ταῦτα τελευτῶν...
56 The assumption here that crafts only benefit may be contrasted with an earlier assumption
need only think of a doctor skilled in poisons and working as an assassin to wonder whether the recipient of such a craft would agree. In fact, a craft is neutral, since it may be used for good or ill. Socrates, however, here emphasizes advantage, since his present intent is to refute Thrasymachus by demonstrating that the advantage falls not to the superior (as claimed by Thrasymachus) but to the inferior.

4. 8. The Superior — a craftsman in the strict sense

Socrates is nearing his refutation of the slogan. He continues to ask questions which Thrasymachus finds increasingly difficult to answer. The gist of the argument is this. Just as crafts, strictly speaking, look to the advantage of the subjects over which they rule, so too do craftsmen in the strict sense look to the advantage of their subjects. Socrates portrays each craftsman as the ruler (archon) of his subject, and indeed his field of expertise is called his arche — a word which in Thrasymachus’ first argument we translated as “regime”. Here “domain” might make better sense. For the Greek audience, however, there is only the one word arche, and they might be forgiven for thinking that Socrates is referring to the same thing that Thrasymachus was. We could perhaps interpret this wider notion which includes “regime” and “domain” as, for example, the dominion of the archon or ruler. The final stage of the argument before it is curtailed appears at 342e6-11:

“Therefore,” I said, “O Thrasymachus, neither does anyone else in any dominion (arche), so far as he is a ruler (archon), look to, and demand, the advantage to himself, but rather the [advantage] to the (singular) ruled and whatever he is a craftsman of; and looking to that, and to what is an advantage and fitting to that, he says all the things which he says, and does [all the things] which he does.

The refutation of the slogan, had it followed, would have mentioned justice. Socrates has already demonstrated that the superior is concerned not with his own advantage but with that of the inferior, and the refutation is imminent. Indeed, Socrates now remarks that at this point it was clear to everyone that the argument about what is just had been turned upside down (343a1-2). That is, even the audience could anticipate the next couple of steps which would have ended with the refutation “What is just is the advantage of the inferior”.

The reasoning behind the refutation might have been as follows: the ruler of a polis is also a ruler of his craft, a craftsman in the strict sense, and as such is superior. By virtue of his craft, he makes laws which are always to the advantage of the subject of his craft, the inferior; justice, therefore, is the advantage of the inferior.

This refutation would not be all that consistent or realistic, of course, but we have seen throughout that logic, reality, and a philosophical desire for truth are not major factors in this debate:

a) It has not been determined that the ruler of a polis has a craft, which he requires in order to be — according to the argument — superior.

b) Even if the ruler of a polis is a craftsman, and hence superior, it has not been determined what is the inferior. The tendency in this argument would be to assume that the other inhabitants of the polis are inferior to the ruler, as in Thrasymachus’ first argument, but that type of inferiority would be political,

prominent in the discussion between Socrates and Polemarchus that craftsmen are beneficial to friends, but harmful to enemies (332d10-e2).

See the many examples in Plato’s Hippias Minor.

342e6-11: οὐκόν, ἴν δ’ ἔγω, ὦ Θρασύμαχε, οὐδὲ ἄλλος οὔδεις ἐν οὐδεμιᾷ ἀρχῇ, καθ’ ὅσον ἄρχων ἔστιν, τὸ αὐτῷ συμφέρον σκοπεῖ οὔδ’ ἐπιτάττει, ἀλλὰ τὸ τῷ ἄρχωμεν καὶ ὦ ἄν αὐτός δημιουργή, καὶ πρὸς ἐκείνῳ βλέπων καὶ τὸ ἐκείνῳ συμφέρον καὶ πρέπον, καὶ λέγει ἢ λέγει καὶ ποιεῖ ἢ ποιεῖ ἀπαντᾷ.
while the craft argument has used “inferior” to describe that to which a craft is applied (as horsecraft is applied to horses). Is statecraft applied to citizens, or is it applied to the polis as a whole? Are the laws to the advantage of the inhabitants of the polis, or rather to the polis in all its aspects?

c) The ruler in this argument is infallible, since he is a ruler in the strict sense; it is only when his actions conform with his craft that he is a ruler.

d) His craft, being a craft in the strict sense, is perfect (anything less would not be a craft).

4. 9. The Superior — injustice, the unjust man

When Socrates notes that it was clear to everyone that the argument about what is just had been turned upside down (343a1-2), “everyone” must have included Thrasymachus, for the latter is immediately described as launching into an unpleasant exchange with Socrates, which leads to his second speech in support of his slogan. Thrasymachus had intended to leave after his speech, but he is restrained by the audience (344d1-5). That is to say, Thrasymachus’ strategy was to avoid the refutation following his first argument, provide new persuasive support for his slogan, then leave before Socrates could threaten him again with a second refutation.

It is the second speech which yields the “position” that justice is another’s good, one’s own hurt (position c on p. 420). While this indeed can be consistent or inconsistent with the first “position”, that justice is the advantage of the superior (the slogan), depending on the point of view of the one performing justly in each case (the superior or the inferior), it should be noted that Thrasymachus intends the argument as a whole to support the slogan (“and as I said from the beginning” 344c6-7). The speech is long enough (343b1-344c8) to allow “the superior” to assume a variety of guises, some already familiar to us, and some new:

343b1-c1: [Implicit] The superior = the rulers (archontes) in the strict sense.

Shepherds look not to the advantage of their animals but of their masters and of themselves. Similarly, in cities, the rulers in the strict sense (here “those truly rulers”) look to their own advantage, not of those ruled by them.

c1-5: [Explicit] The superior = the ruling power (archon).

Socrates is so far from understanding justice and injustice that he does not know that justice is really another’s good, the advantage of the superior and the ruling [element] (tou kreetonon te kai archontos sumpheron), the hurt of the [element] obeying and serving...

c5-6: [continued] ... and injustice is the opposite.

That is, injustice is one’s own good, but still the advantage of the superior.

c6-7: [Implicit] The superior = injustice (adikia).

Injustice rules (arbei) “the truly simpleminded and just” (plural).59

c7-d1: [Explicitly superior man, vague designation] The superior = the ruler? the unjust man?

“The ruled do the advantage of that (man), him being superior, and make that (man) happy by serving him, but themselves [they make happy] not at all.”60

In the context, “that man” would logically be the ruler, the one served by the ruled; but injustice has just been mentioned, and “that man” could well be the unjust man; an unjust man is indeed about to be mentioned explicitly in the next sentence, although not

59 343c5-7: ἢ δὲ ἀδικία τοῦναντίον, καὶ ἄρχει τῶν ὡς ἀληθῶς εὐθηκίων τε καὶ δικαίων. (“but injustice is the opposite, and rules the truly simpleminded and just”).

60 343c7-d1: οἱ δ’ ἄρχόμενοι ποιοῦσιν τὸ ἐκείνου συμφέρον κρείττονος ὄντος, καὶ εὐδαίμονα ἐκείνον ποιοῦσιν ὑπηρετοῦντες αὐτῷ, ἐαυτοὺς δὲ σοῦ ὑπωσιοῦν.
immediately in the context of ruling. Finally, “that man” could mean the unjust ruler.

d1-6 [Explicit] An inferior = a just man

“It must be looked at in this way, O most simpleminded Socrates, that a just man is everywhere inferior to an unjust.”

d6-e6 The just man always gets a bad deal in every transaction with an unjust man. Even when he holds a position of power (archē) he loses out, if only because he neglects his personal business.

343e7-344a1 [By Inference] The superior = the unjust man

“The unjust man has all the opposite of these. For I mean by the one I’ve just mentioned the one who can outdo (pleonektein) in great things.”

344a2-b1 [Implicit] The superior = the most perfect injustice, tyranny

To assess how much more worthwhile it is to be unjust than just, Thrasymachus recommends going to the most perfect injustice (ἐπὶ τὴν τελευτάτην ἀδίκιαν — a.3). This thing is tyranny (ἔστιν δὲ τούτῳ τυραννικῷ). It is this tyranny itself, rather than the tyrant, which Thrasymachus describes as performing the greatest injustices.

b2-c2 [Implicit] The superior = the perfect tyrant

While petty criminals, the unjust on a small scale, are condemned when caught, “someone” who performs the most extreme acts of injustice openly, instead of base names, “they are called happy and blessed” (the change from singular and plural is in the text), not only by [his citizens], but by all who realize that he (singular) has committed the complete injustice (τὴν ὅλην ἀδίκιαν ἡδικήκότα).

c3-4 [Implicit] The inferior = those too weak to prevent injustice to themselves = the just

“For those who criticize injustice criticize it because they are afraid, not of doing acts of injustice, but of suffering them.”

This reflects what Glaucocyrtēs portrays as Thrasymachus’ usual position.

c4-8 [Conclusion] The superior = injustice, unjust tyranny?

“Thus, O Socrates, injustice is something stronger, freer and more masterful than justice, when it has come about sufficiently, and, as I was saying from the beginning, what-is-just happens to be the advantage of the superior, and what is unjust is profitable and advantageous to itself.”

This is where Thrasymachus ended his speech and intended to get up and leave. He appears to have justified his slogan (underlined), but as usual, what stands in for “the superior” during the argument is not necessarily what Thrasymachus or his audience intend or expect it to designate.

The others listening to the debate between Thrasymachus and Socrates physically restrain Thrasymachus so that Socrates can refute him properly. The refutation is easy, employing terms already agreed upon in the earlier cross-examination. Socrates reverts to

61 343d1-3: σκοπεύοντας δέ, ὃς ἐνυπέστατο Σώκρατες, οὕτως χρή, ὅπι δίκαιος ἄνηρ ἄδικου πανταχοῦ ἔλαπτον ἔχει. It follows that an unjust man is everywhere superior to a just man. We may note in passing that Thrasymachus, in calling Socrates most simpleminded, is mockingly insinuating that Socrates is most just.

62 343e7-344a1: τὸ δὲ ἄδικω πάντι τοῦτων τάνατι ὑπάρχει. λέγω γὰρ ὄντερ νυν ἐλεγον, τὸν μεγάλα δυνάμενον πλεονεκτεῖν. We shall see later that Thrasymachus consistently equates injustice with pleonexia, outdoing; that is, gaining at the expense of others.

63 344c3-4: οὐ γὰρ τὸ ποιεῖ τὰ ἄδικα ἀλλὰ τὸ πάσχει φοβούμενοι ὀνειδίζουν οἱ ὀνειδίζωντες τὴν ἄδικιαν.

64 344c4-8: οὕτως, ὃς Σώκρατες, καὶ ἵσχυρότερον καὶ ἐλευθεριώτερον καὶ διεσπαρτικώτερον ἄδικια δικαιοσύνης ἐπὶν ικανος γεγομένη, καὶ ὅπερ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐλεγον, τὸ μὲν τοῦ κρείττονος συμφέρον τὸ δίκαιον τυγχάνει ὑπὸ τὸ δ’ ἄδικον ἔαστι τυπιτελοῦτε καὶ συμφέρον.
the position that the ruler/craftsman _qua_ ruler/craftsman is concerned with the advantage of what is ruled by him. Strictly speaking, any payment accruing to himself is the result of the wage-earning craft, which he has along with the craft by which he is known as a craftsman. It is interesting that Thrasymachus feels obliged to agree to this, albeit with great difficulty (esp. 346c9-12).

Socrates eventually turns to another point Thrasy machus had raised during his second account (345a), and claims that he regards it as more important:

“To this, then, I in no way agree with Thrasy machus, that what is just is the advantage of the superior. But we shall examine this on another occasion. What seems to me greater by far is what Thrasy machus now says, asserting that the life of the unjust man is superior to that of the just man” (347d8-e4).

What does Socrates mean by saying that they will examine Thrasy machus’ first claim on another occasion? Has Thrasy machus’ slogan not already been examined and found wanting? Socrates is implying that the claim has not been examined at all, and we are now in a position to see that indeed, the slogan has been dealt with in such a way by both antagonists that nothing of substance has been clearly stated, defended, or refuted. Is Thrasy machus’ claim, then, not worthy of examination in this of all dialogues? To answer that question, we would need to know what exactly the slogan meant. And, of course, there’s the rub.

5. **Thrasy machus in Book II**

It should be fairly clear by now that Thrasy machus does not say what he means, but is prepared to use verbal trickery to appear to support his slogan. Worse still, there is no reason to believe that he even takes his slogan seriously. To cap it all, Socrates is no real help to us, as he is just as willing as Thrasy machus to play word games, and appears intent only on refuting the slogan by any means. Having refuted it, he is prepared to abandon it.

So what does Thrasy machus mean? What does he intend by his slogan? We already have reason to believe that his slogan is understood in a certain way by at least some of his audience, although we do not yet know what that way is, beyond the notion that the superior is a man (so Clitopho, §4.5 above). Bearing in mind that our questions refer not to the historical Thrasy machus, but to Plato’s dramatic character, Thrasy machus, we should look to the drama for our answers.

5. 1. Who Speaks for Thrasy machus?

Near the beginning of Book II, Glauco states that he will go over Thrasy machus’ account once again. It is sometimes doubted whether Glauco gives an accurate account of Thrasy machus’ views; but Thrasy machus is still in attendance during Glauco’s presentation. Had Plato the dramatist wished the reader to understand that Thrasy machus objected to Glauco’s presentation of his views, he could have had Thrasy machus object to them, or have Socrates describe members of the audience restraining an irate Thrasy machus in the manner of his description of Thrasy machus preceding the debate between them in Book I, or any other elementary dramatic device of this sort. For the

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65 [358c1-2: ἐπανανεῶσομαι τὸν Ἰρασμάχου λόγον, καὶ πρῶτον μὲν ἐρῶ δικαιοσύνην οἷον εἶναί φασίν καὶ δὴν γεγονέναι.]

66 Having been restrained when he intended to leave earlier (344d1-5), he is listening, and even enters the conversation for a few lines in Book V (450a-b). Contrast the early exit of Cephalus, “leaving the way open to a new phase in the discussion to which he is not similarly suited” — Harrison (1967) 29. On entrances and silent presences in Platonic dialogues, see Liebersohn (2005) 309-10 and n. 16.
purposes of the drama, the position Glauco attributes to Thrasymachus is the one Thrasymachus is normally considered to hold.\textsuperscript{67} The dramatic ‘Thrasymachus’ true position, as expounded by Glauco in Book II, should be regarded as the criterion by which to assess Thrasymachus’ performance in Book I.

5. 2. Thrasymachus’ account of justice

Here is the relevant part of Glauco’s presentation in which he describes the account of justice given by Thrasymachus and “tens of thousands of others” (358c7-8). I give a fairly literal translation (358e3-359b6):

> “It has come about by nature (πεφυκέναι), they say, that to commit injustice (ἀδικεῖν) is a good thing (ἀγαθόν, henceforth “benefit”), and to suffer injustice (ἀδικεῖσθαι) is a bad thing (κακόν, henceforth “harm”), and the harm in suffering injustice exceeds the benefit from committing injustice, so that when people mutually commit and suffer injustice, and have a taste of both, it seems to those who are unable to escape the one and choose the other, that to agree amongst themselves to do neither is profitable; then (they continue) they began to lay down their own laws (νόμους) and agreements (συνθήκας), and called what is demanded (τὸ ἐπίταγμα) by the law (ὁ νόμος) customary (νόμιμον) and just (δίκαιον); and this (they say) is the origin (γένεσις) and the essence (φύσις) of justice (δικαιοσύνη)—that it is between what is best, namely, not to pay the penalty for committing injustice, and what is worst, namely, being unable to avenge oneself for injustice suffered; (they say that) the just thing (“what is just”—τὸ δίκαιον), being in the middle of these two, is loved not as something good, but—because of a weakness [i.e., because they are too weak] to commit injustice—as something honoured; for the one who is able to do it, and is truly a man, would never (they say) make any agreement with anyone not to commit or suffer injustice; he would be mad. So this and such is the nature (φύσις) of justice (δικαιοσύνη), Socrates, and from which things such things have come about by nature (πέφυκε), so the argument goes.”

Thus injustice (adikia) was the natural condition subsisting between all men, until, by a natural evolution, weaker men, for whom the harm of suffering injustice outweighed the benefit of committing injustice, made agreements among themselves to desist from injustice. The agreements were laws. What was demanded by the law they called customary and just (dikaion). What is just (to dikaion) is neither a harm nor a benefit, but something neutral, and preferable to suffering injustice. Weaker men prefer to do what is just not because they are forced to do so by the law, but because of their natural (individual) inability to control injustice and commit it without suffering it. Injustice (adikia) is the original natural condition; but justice (dikaiosun) is the natural condition subsisting between weaker men accepting laws designed to prevent injustice.\textsuperscript{69}

\textsuperscript{67} For claims of misinterpretation, see, e.g., Sparshott (1966) 431: “But Glacon and Adeimantus plainly misinterpret Thrasymachus on the issue of the conventionality of justice, for they take him to hold that the just man could be unjust if he dared (360c), whereas in fact he had attributed justice to ‘an honest simplicity’ (pann gennaia enethnia, 348c12).”

\textsuperscript{68} “Harm” and “benefit” were the normal senses of κακόν and ἀγαθόν in presocratic usage: cf. e.g. the opening argument of Diotis Legai.

\textsuperscript{69} Thrasymachus’ account as presented by Glauco emphasizes the prior natural state of injustice (πεφυκέναι 358e3) and the natural evolution of justice: φύσις δικαιοσύνης 359b4 πέφυκε 359b5. Thrasymachus does not seem to be bothered by the discrepancy between the chronological priority of injustice to justice and the logical priority of justice to injustice (injustice is the negation of justice, in Greek as
Glaucos has now fulfilled the first task he had set himself, to present Thrasymachus’ usual account of the nature of justice. He now moves on to the second task, to present Thrasymachus’ argument that the just man would behave exactly like the unjust man were he able. He proceeds to tell the famous myth of the ring of Gyges, during which we learn a little more about the nature of justice and injustice as seen by Thrasymachus and tens of thousands of others. Injustice is equated with pleonexia, which is often translated as greed or self-seeking. What needs to be emphasized is the connotation of gaining at the expense of others. Sometimes “outdoing” will do. Injustice is contrasted with justice, which is equated with honouring equity (to ison = the equal).

According to Glaucos’ report in this second section, it is claimed that the pursuit of pleonexia is natural, while the pursuit of equity is forced by nomos (359c2-6). What is meant by nomos here? Many sophist accounts of oppositions between what is real and what is conventional oppose things which are “by nature” with things which are “by convention”. The word for convention is nomos, the same word we have seen used in the first section of Thrasymachus’ account to mean “law”. Thus the opposition here between pleonexia and equity seems to be between the natural and the merely conventional. Yet in the first section, the naturally inferior individuals are forced — by their inability to prevent suffering injustice — to come to a mutual agreement (henceforward the law) to cease committing injustice and pursue equity instead; the new relationship between men is as natural as the old, although they are mutually opposed. It might appear, therefore, that the opposition in the second section is between the natural and the merely conventional, but the actual opposition might well be between that which “all nature naturally pursues as a good”, and what is forced by law, a naturally evolving agreement between weak men, a natural second best for the naturally inferior.

We see, therefore, that the “notorious nomos/physis antithesis”, the convention/nature antithesis, when it finally appears, is not so clear-cut as it is in some other sophistic accounts of justice. Injustice and justice are both natural, although it is less natural to be just than unjust. Given the opportunity (such as a ring of invisibility), the just man would commit pleonexia to the same degree as the unjust man (360b3-c3).

Interestingly, the account does not refer to the superior individual explicitly, but the unjust man is the one everyone would like to be; they praise justice out of fear of being the victim of injustice. We may equate the inferior with the just (those unable to derive more benefit than harm from injustice), and the superior with the unjust (the individual who somehow manages to get away with his pleonexia). In these terms, justice is clearly the

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70 The equation was not uncommon at the time; the term is in democratic political contexts meant something like “equal [rights]” and could appear in conjunction with dikaios, e.g. Demosthenes 21. 67; cognates of pleonexia are to be found opposed to cognates of isotēs, e.g. ὁ ὡμόν ison, ἀλλὰ καὶ πλέον ἔχειν Isoc. 17. 57. It is not accidental that the only appearance of the word isotēs in the Politics occurs at the end of the account of democracy which is portrayed there (flatteringly or unflatteringly according to one’s inclinations) as providing blanket equality to equal and unequal alike (ηδεία πολιτεία καὶ ἀναρχός καὶ ποικίλης ἀνθρώπων πίνα ὡμός ἐστι καὶ ἀνήστρεος διανέμουσα — 8. 558c5).
71 359c5: ὁ πάσα φύσις διώκειν πέρυκεν ὡς ἄγαθον...
72 Harrison (1967) 33.
73 E.g., in Antiphon the Sophist, On Truth (B44 DK), injustice is by nature, justice is by convention. In Plato’s Gorgias, Callicles distinguishes between two types of justice, natural and conventional.
74 The ring of invisibility (359c6-360b2) is essentially another way of acting without witnesses. Cf. Antiphon the Sophist’s recommendation to follow the laws when there are witnesses, but to follow nature when there are not (B44 col. 1, lines 12-23 DK).
75 Cf. the superior individual and the inferior individuals in Callicles’ account. The inferior, he says, equating them with the Many, are those who establish the laws. The laws and the pursuit of equity, he continues, are just by convention, but what is just by nature is for the better man (ὁ ἀρετικὸς) to outdo the
advantage of the inferior, and not of the superior. Thrasymachus is explaining the origin of justice. Justice came about when the inferior, for their own good, mutually agreed to desist from pleonexia.

We may now appreciate the novelty of the actual slogan in Book I, that justice is the advantage of the superior. Not only is it a complete reversal of his usual position, but it also removes the nomos/physis antithesis, at least to the extent that it is precisely the naturally superior individual who is actually deriving benefit from nomos. The law is working in favour of primal nature, rather than being opposed to it. The lack of a nomos/physis antithesis according to the slogan would explain why no such antithesis appears in Book I, but does appear in Book II in the absence of the slogan, and in the context of Thrasymachus’ usual position.

Who is Thrasymachus’ superior individual? Who is the naturally unjust individual who is supposed to be hampered by the laws of the inferiors seeking equity? Thrasymachus in his second speech in Book I regards the most perfect practitioners of injustice to be tyrants. These would seem to be extreme and successful examples of the more usual naturally superior individual hemmed in by obstructive law-abiding democrats and oligarchs, namely the aristocrat.

6. Returning to Book I

To conclude this paper, we shall attempt to appreciate the novelty of Thrasymachus’ slogan in Book I, and the ingenuity of the arguments he uses to support it. Once we understand Thrasymachus’ slogan (Book I) together with his usual position (Book II), we may finally be able to decide whether the rest of the dialogue is indeed — formally at least — a reaction to a Thrasymachaean position, and what this position might be. The behaviour of Socrates should be of some concern to us. Logic seems not to be uppermost in the minds of the participants in this debate, and it is unlikely that we will understand it through logical analysis of the arguments alone.

6. 1. Eristics

The debate between Thrasymachus and Socrates is eristic, a battle of words in which the outcome is decided by the audience. Sophists taught eristics to those who wished to gain an edge in debates, for example in the context of the lawcourts, or in the public assembly. The techniques were aimed at tripping up the opponent and refuting him with all the means at one’s disposal, on the understanding that the judges of the debate would not detect any trickery, or if they did, would accept it as par for the course. The more that sophists taught eristics, the more aware people were of the tricks. Thrasymachus expected worse (ὁ χείρων), the superior man (ὁ κρείττων) to outdo the inferior (ὁ ἤττων). Callicles regards the superior man as the frustrated aristocrat (like himself), shackled by the democratic, conventional, laws of the Many; it is the law of nature that he should burst his bonds and rule as a tyrant. This “law of nature” (another way of overcoming the nomos/physis antithesis) is exemplified by Xerxes and his father (Gorgias 483a8-484c3). This is the first extant appearance of the expression “law of nature”: Plato may have invented it himself, but he may alternatively have taken it along with the general argument presented by Callicles from a sophistic source lost to us.

76 Not only democrats but also oligarchs sought equity, according to Isocrates, Niche 15: οἱ μὲν τοῖνυν ὀλιγάρχαι καὶ δημοκρατίαι τὰς ἰσότητας τοῖς μετέχουσι τῶν πολιτείων ἔμποροι, καὶ τοῦτ’ εὐδοκιμεῖ παρ’ αὐτάς, ἂν μηδὲν ἐπικάρτιον ἔρνημι πλέον ἔχειν. — “Oligarchies and democracies seek the equalities for those participating in the constitutions, and it is considered a good thing among them [the constitutions] if no one can outdo (πλέον εχειν) another.”

77 As already noted above, Callicles chose to exemplify his aristocratic superior individual with two Persian kings, tyrants in all but name (Gorgias 483d6-7). He sees the rise of the tyrant to power as the triumph of natural justice over conventional justice; Thrasymachus in his usual account sees this rise as the triumph of natural injustice over natural justice.
his slogan and consequent eristic display to delight the crowd and earn him some money, demanded by him up front.  

6. 2. The intent of the slogan

“Justice is nothing other than the advantage of the superior” (338c1-3). We have already seen that Clitopho had assumed that the superior was a superior man, despite Thrasymachus’ first argument in support of this slogan (§4.5), and in Book II we realize that Glauco is also well aware of Thrasymachus’ usual understanding of “the superior” in such arguments: namely, the unjust man, possibly an aristocrat, or preferably, tyrant, unshackled by the laws to which the inferior democrats or oligarchs have committed themselves (§5.2). According to Thrasymachus’ usual position, justice is the advantage of the inferior (the weak who created law to prevent pleonexia). The slogan is apparently declaring the opposite. Since the usual position is not only that of Thrasymachus, but also that of tens of thousand of others, according to Glauco, it would seem that Plato’s Thrasymachus is justified in his confidence that the slogan will be understood as expressing the opposite of a widely held view. His slogan, then, has novelty — even shock — value.

6. 3. Why anti-logical arguments are required to support the slogan

Thrasymachus’ account (as delivered by Glauco in Bk. II) of the origin of justice quite clearly places the initiative for the creation of law on the inferior. Justice is abiding by the law and desisting from pleonexia, and there is no doubt that this is to the advantage of the inferior who could not avoid suffering injustice otherwise.

Thrasymachus (in Bk. I) sets himself the task of claiming the opposite; but what exactly? Is he claiming simply that, given the laws and system of justice which the inferior have developed, the unjust man can take advantage of justice for his own unjust ends? This would be a truism, and could even fit in with his usual account. But “justice is nothing but the advantage of the superior”, as he introduces his slogan, suggests a stronger claim, in which justice is never at all the advantage of the inferior.

What Thrasymachus is proud to present is the claim that justice has come about through the agency of the perfectly unjust man for his own unjust ends. He could make a realistic case for a limited instance of this claim by pointing to the tyrant, his ideal unjust man. Justice, he could argue, is abiding by the laws. There are tyrants who make laws which allow them to gain at the expense of their subjects. Such a tyrant is unjust, and the unjust man is superior to those who obey laws. Therefore justice is the advantage of the superior. This, however, is not enough for Thrasymachus. He claims that always, everywhere (339a2-3, cf. §4.3), justice is the advantage of the superior. That is, all law has been made by the unjust man for his own gain at the expense of those who obey the law; and the just, in obeying the law, are playing into his hands — not just in a tyranny, but in oligarchies and democracies as well. This is a strong claim, and one which would make an audience sit up and take note. They would want to hear how Thrasymachus defends such a perverse and counterintuitive claim. Thrasymachus’ first set speech is designed to satisfy that expectation. The speech overcomes the facts of the matter with an impressive display of sophistry.

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78 For another view of eristic in this debate, and in Plato generally, see the outstanding article by Klosko (1984), esp. 16ff.
79 “Justice is the advantage of the superior” (...το του κρείττονος σύμφερον). Thrasymachus had forbidden Socrates earlier to define justice as merely “advantage” (336d2, see §4.1), and it is his addition (“of the superior”) which he must think makes his own reply “very fine” (ἀπόκρισιν παγκάλην 338a7); Socrates and Thrasymachus discuss the fact of the addition at 339a5-b5.
80 Cf. Isocrates, Nikes 15, quoted in n. 76, p. 32 above.
The main problem which Thrasymachus must overcome in his speech is that in fact not all superior unjust people are in a position to pass laws to their own unjust advantage. His solution is to pass off as the superior for most of the argument the general concept of the regime which passes laws in every city. The superior person (kreitton) appears only in the concluding slogan as a late substitution for the ruling power (kratoun), but the transition is concealed by the similar sense and sound of the words, and by the use of the genitive, a case in which there is no difference in form between the masculine and the neuter. The ruling power (kratoun) is a transitional bridge between superior (kreitton) and regime (arche), and Thrasymachus has had to begin his presentation with some specious arguments demonstrating that the regime in every city does indeed rule over (krad) something in the city. Another problem to be addressed is that regimes in fact do not always pass laws to their own advantage. Thrasymachus has cleverly demonstrated that they do by playing on an ambiguity in adjectives (e.g., “democratic” meaning “pertaining to a democracy”, which is always true of a law passed by a democracy; and “of advantage to a democracy”, which is not always true). Thrasymachus inclines his audience to assume that the adjectives he uses mean “of advantage to...” by prefacing the descriptions of laws passed by various regimes with the bald statement that all regimes pass laws to their own advantage.81

When Thrasymachus sees that Socrates is about to refute his slogan, he changes tack and produces another speech designed, as was the first, to prove that justice is nothing but the advantage of the superior man. This time, however, he abandons the regime in every city as his path to a universal truth, and chooses instead to generalize using every unjust man in every transaction with a just man. Then, having established that in every transaction the unjust man outdoes the just man, Thrasymachus leaps to the best example of the unjust man, which just so happens to be the tyrant who not only outdoes everyone in his transactions with them, but is even admired by everyone for succeeding where they do not dare (since they are weak and for that reason just). Thus, justice yet again is seen to be the advantage of the superior. In the jump to the tyrant, who appears merely to be the best example of a general rule, it might seem that Thrasymachus has somehow forgotten that many criminals are actually caught and punished, that indeed some tyrants are removed from power, and that not all tyrants are as unjust as Thrasymachus would like. Thrasymachus, however, seems to be talking about unjust people in the strict sense — successful criminals throughout the time that they successfully exploit naive just people and escape being caught and punished for their crimes.82 This argument differs significantly from the first in that justice is only exploited, but not created, by the superior. Justice is indeed always the advantage of the superior, but only because the unjust (in the strict sense) always succeeds in outdoing the just in transactions and flouting the laws.83 The first, prepared, argument was stronger, in that the laws were actually made by the superior unjust individual for his own unjust ends, and the very obedience of the just inferiors led to the unjust superior individual outdoing them. The weaker claim of the second argument is compensated for by the apparently stronger content, including the notion that injustice itself is superior to justice, the reference to the supremely unjust tyrant and the spectacular

81 On Thrasymachus’ first speech, see §3 and §4.3.
82 Sophistic claims serve their immediate argument but should not be pressed too hard. For example, we have already seen that the ruler in the strict sense is someone who acts only in accordance with the ruling craft in the strict sense. Whenever he makes a mistake in ruling, he is at that moment not a ruler. Thus a ruler in the strict sense never makes mistakes in the ruling craft. Pressing the parallel, it should be argued that an unjust man in the strict sense is someone who acts only in accordance with the craft of injustice, and if he makes a mistake (such as being caught and punished), he is not at that moment an unjust man.
83 This is to ignore all those transactions in which only just people are involved. In such instances, justice is surely the advantage of the inferior. Such an objection, however, is beside the point, since Thrasymachus is not arguing about facts. He has engineered the appearance of a general claim precisely by ignoring the wider context.
crimes he commits with impunity, and the generally stronger language which was unnecessary in the first speech. Thrasymanus, who intended to leave immediately after his second speech, may have hoped that the pyrotechnics would create the impression that he had proved here exactly what he had proved the first time (“as I was saying from the beginning” 344c6-7, §4.9).

6. 4. The Thrasymanus challenge

We return now to the passage considered at the end of §4.9:

“To this, then, I in no way agree with Thrasymanus, that what is just is the advantage of the superior. But we shall examine this on another occasion. What seems to me greater by far is what Thrasymanus now says, asserting that the life of the unjust man is superior to that of the unjust man” (347d8-e4).

It should be clear by now that Thrasymanus’ slogan, intended merely as a shocking inversion of part of his usual position, can only be supported by sophistic arguments, and were it not for the eristic debate, would not be considered a serious challenge at all. If Socrates returns to the theme of justice and its advantage to the superior man later in this dialogue, he does so implicitly.

Although Thrasymanus makes many things superior in his second argument (cf. §4.9), he does not refer explicitly to the life of the unjust man as superior. This, however, may be inferred from his claim that the most perfect injustice (we may understand this to mean injustice in the strict sense) makes the unjust man most happy, and those suffering injustice most miserable (344a4-6). Thrasymanus frames the claim with depictions of pleonexia on a grand scale. In this argument, happiness is predicated upon continuous large scale profiteering, at the expense of others, with impunity.

Working towards an apparent proof of his slogan, Thrasymanus introduced the tyrant as if he were merely the clearest example of the unjust man (and not the unjust man in the strict sense he actually is in this argument). Socrates appears willing to go along with Thrasymanus’ sophistic intentions, extrapolating from the example of the tyrant that all unjust men live lives superior to those of all just men. Socrates does not call the life of the unjust man simply more profitable, but actually superior, and this may be justified if he is also supposed to be happier. Glaucu emphasizes the element of profit. Socrates introduces the new claim during an interlude with Glaucu (347a7-348b7). When Socrates asks him which life he thinks [is superior], Glaucu states that he thinks that the life of the just man is “more profitable” (347e5-7). When Socrates reverts to questioning Thrasymanus, he begins by asking whether perfect injustice is more profitable than perfect justice (348b9-10).

The bulk of the dialogue is formally a reply to the challenge set by Glaucu and Adimantas at the beginning of Book II. The presentation of Thrasymanus’ usual position by Glaucu reveals that the slogan is an inversion of part of the usual position. Can the claim which Socrates has just introduced, derived from an argument supporting the slogan, be compatible with Thrasymanus’ usual position?

6. 5. Socratic elenchus?

As if it is not enough that we have on our hands an antagonist prepared to pervert logic and the Greek language simply in order to prove the opposite of his usual position, Socrates lets us down from the point of view of logical refutation. He appears to understand as soon as he has heard the slogan for the first time that Thrasymanus is playing with words, and he indulges in the same tactics himself. He engages Thrasymanus
not with careful analysis of the arguments, but with counter-arguments as outrageous as those of Thrasymanachus, in keeping with an eristic debate (cf. §§4.2, 4.4, 4.7-8). And for the most part, Thrasymanachus is obliged to accept this nonsense. His gallant attempt at extricating himself from the imminent refutation of his slogan by means of a second speech supposedly supporting the same slogan in the same way, after which he has every intention of escaping, indicates how seriously Thrasymanachus takes Socrates’ arguments; they are sophistic enough to cause Thrasymanachus to lose the eristic debate. His answers come with increasing effort, until, eventually, sweating profusely as he does so, he blushes — something Socrates had never seen him do before (350c12-d3). This is clearly a significant event, and we may suspect that this comes instead of an aporia. Although there has been no serious philosophical debate in the usual sense of the term, something serious has happened; something perhaps even more serious than many an aporia in other dialogues.

In order to discover the significance of the eristic debate, the display of such a wide range of emotions, and many other features besides, the dialogue needs to be analysed not as a philosophical treatise comprising arguments of varying degrees of consistency and clarity, but as a conversation between characters with motives and feelings. Such an analysis does not thereby ignore the philosophical content of the dialogue, but actually takes a step towards its discovery as an organic, working, whole.

7. Bibliography


84 The blush is significant, but beyond the scope of this paper.


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ABSTRACT
This paper criticizes one of Vlastos’ well-known articles, in which he purports to reveal what he takes to be one of Socrates’ great achievements in ethics. By using what I take to be a more appropriate way of analysing Plato’s dialogues, I show how the same paragraph which is used by Vlastos to corroborate his case proves, in fact, the opposite. What Vlastos regards as “Socrates’ Rejection of Retaliation” turns out to be nothing but an instrument used by Socrates to make Crito look at his own behavior towards the polis. In a wider context, Plato’s Crito is shown to be a severe criticism of democracy, where the lex talionis is rather one of its dominant tools used both by the state and its citizens.

1. INTRODUCTION
Gregory Vlastos has ascribed to Socrates the opinion that ‘if someone has done a nasty thing to me this does not give me the slightest moral justification for doing the same nasty thing, or any nasty thing, to him’.¹ He goes even further, considering this view to be Socrates’ own innovation: ‘So far as we know, the first Greek to grasp in full generality this simple and absolutely fundamental moral truth is Socrates’ (ibid).² Yet there is only one place in the whole Platonic corpus where Vlastos can find support for his argument - a single and short passage in the Crito where Socrates makes Crito agree that one should not retaliate with injustice for injustice suffered (49b4-c9).³ Indeed, Vlastos bases his argument exactly and entirely on this single passage. Hence the title of his article ‘Socrates’ Rejection of Retaliation’.

The title of the present paper - ‘Rejecting Socrates’ Rejection of Retaliation’ - speaks for itself. In what follows I shall challenge Vlastos’ argument, which I shall rename as the ‘non-retaliation decree’. Refuting Vlastos, however, is of secondary importance, as befits secondary literature. The main issue is with the way Plato is read. The paper addresses Vlastos’ analysis of the passage in the Crito, but only as a test case for an issue much wider than a single passage in the Crito, or even the whole of the Crito. Choosing Vlastos out of many other scholars is not arbitrary. Gregory Vlastos is without question one of the most dominant scholars of the last century.⁴ No one dealing with Socrates and Plato can ignore what this great scholar has to say. Indeed, almost every study of anything

² Vlastos does not seem to distinguish between the historical Socrates and Plato’s Socrates in the Crito. For Vlastos, Plato’s Socrates in the Crito is simply the mouthpiece of the historical Socrates. On this issue and its implications see n. 6 and p. 17 below.
³ See n. 12 below.
⁴ To cite but one example, out of countless others: “Of twentieth-century Plato scholars, none has done more extensive work on Socrates, or influenced his study more profoundly, than Vlastos. (John T. Kirby, “A Classicist’s Approach to Rhetoric in Plato,” Philosophy and Rhetoric 30 (1997), 190-202, p. 198 n. 8).
in Plato begins with Vlastos’ opinion on the subject under discussion. Hence instead of offering a general discussion of the way one should analyse Plato’s dialogues,\(^5\) I shall focus on criticizing a dominant interpretation of a limited and concrete passage of Plato. My refutation of Vlastos’ approach to Plato through a close examination of one of his analyses will help to bring into relief what I take to be a preferable way of reading, analysing and understanding Plato.

Let me begin by asserting that Socrates of this dialogue\(^6\) does not merely not necessarily believe in the ‘non-retaliation decree’ but rather does not accept this decree at all, as I shall demonstrate. This ‘decree’, however, does appear in the *Crito*, and it is Socrates who offers it to Crito, who accepts it. Does this not indicate that Plato presents Socrates’ own opinion, and that he does so favourably? To answer this question, it will be necessary to remind ourselves that Plato wrote dialogues.

2. Crito and the Platonic dialogues

As the analysis I shall present below is based on reading the *Crito* as a drama, a few comments should be introduced already at this stage. Moreover, as the phrase ‘dramatic method’ is very prevalent in research on Plato nowadays,\(^7\) comprising various and different, sometimes even contradictory, ways of reading the dialogues, one should explain exactly what one means by claiming to use the ‘dramatic method’.

The dramatic method in reading Plato attaches great importance to the Platonic form of writing - the dialogue - and sees it as the context in which the text should be analysed. According to this approach, the arguments appearing in the dialogue are not Plato’s, but rather those of the characters appearing in the dialogue - or should we say, drama? Plato is not a character in any dialogue, simply because he was the dramatist, and in antiquity, the dramatist was never part of the drama.\(^8\) The characters appearing in the

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5. It has become popular in discussions of Plato’s dialogues to remain at the general level of methodological and literary theories, only occasionally providing various examples, taken out of context, from the dialogues. An outstanding example of this approach is Gerald A. Press (ed.), *Who speaks for Plato?*, Rowman & Littlefield, Maryland, 2000.

6. Wherever Socrates is mentioned in the present paper, the reference is exclusively and strictly to Socrates of the specific dialogue being dealt with. In other words, it is not only that nothing which is said by Socrates in any of Plato’s dialogues is to be automatically attributed to Plato himself, but it is not even to be attributed - at least not automatically - to the historical Socrates. See further our next chapter.


8. The next two paragraphs are based on things I have published elsewhere dealing with the *Gorgias* (Yosef Z. Liebersohn, ‘Art and Pseudo-Art in Plato’s *Gorgias*, *Arethusa* 38 (2005), 303-329).

9. The παράβασις (parabasis), in ancient comedy, where the chorus addresses the audience on behalf of the author, is no exception, since the author is referred to in the third person and is not even mentioned by name. Moreover, this is an intermediate section, a pause in the play’s plot in order to give the dramatist the opportunity to have his say, i.e. to praise the author and ‘settle scores’ with his rivals. Another issue is the Aristotelian dialogues, which, according to Cicero (*Att. 13.19.4*), had Aristotle himself appearing as one of the

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play/dialogue have their own personalities including both characteristics and behavior patterns, and also their own knowledge or ignorance, opinions and assumptions, all bound up together. All these factors are taken into account by Socrates, who also appears as a character. The more traditional question about the opinion of Plato (the dramatist) - the ‘Platonic Question’ - is not irrelevant to this sort of research, but the answer to it should be based on the results of individual analyses of each dialogue treated holistically. These include the characters and their personalities, the opinions they express, and the philosophical and less philosophical discussions between them.

One conclusion stemming from this method should be singled out and clarified before we begin our analysis. The Socrates with whom we are dealing here is not the historical Socrates, and any inference we may reach in this study refers solely to the Socrates of the specific dialogue we are analysing. Furthermore, even within the narrow confines of the dramatic Socrates of this or that dialogue, every statement made by Socrates is by the nature of its context ad hominem, since Socrates is always speaking to somebody. Socrates can, therefore, present various arguments, statements, examples, comparisons and even sheer fallacies, none of which represents his own views. Why Socrates speaks in this way is another question, but for now it is sufficient to be aware that Socrates speaks as he does ad hominem, and in those dialogues where there are more than one interlocutor or where he has an audience, ad homines. In the Crito, Socrates is speaking to Crito alone, and he formulates what he says and how he says it for the ‘benefit’ of Crito. I contend, therefore, not only that the ‘non-retaliation decree’ is not to be ascribed to the historical Socrates (as Vlastos tends to do), but also that it is not to be ascribed even to the Socrates of the Crito.

speakers in the dialogue and giving himself the last word. However, these dialogues lacked the dramatic plot of Plato’s dialogues. Aristotle’s dialogues (none of which has survived apart from a few fragments) were probably - like Ciceros’ dialogues which claim to be modelled on them - a series of speeches ‘for and against’. Even if there was some drama, there is no comparison with Plato’s dialogues. This distinction is confirmed by the testimony of Basil of Cappadocia (St. Basil), who says in letter 135 that Aristotle and Theophrastus used their own dialogue form because they understood they could not compete with Plato.

Even Socrates himself has a different personality in each dialogue. It is true that even those who use the dramatic method sometimes have an a priori tendency to see Socrates as a teacher trying to teach his interlocutors, and therefore as a character exemplifying the perfection of the philosophical requirement raised in the dialogue. However, even if such a tendency has some basis (and of this I am not certain), we should remember that a serious analysis of the dialogue cannot be made on the basis of such general presuppositions. The specific behavior and opinions of Socrates must be examined in each dialogue separately.

The very justification of this question has been called into question in the last few decades. This would imply that there is not much point in searching for Platonic doctrines, and that perhaps such doctrines do not exist. One of the most well-known books presenting this approach is Debra Nails, Agora, Academy and the Conduct of Philosophy, Dordrecht, 1995. Nails sees the solution to the ‘Socratic Problem’ and the ‘Platonic Question’ in studying the various ways Socrates and Plato conduct philosophy. Indeed, this trend has some support already in antiquity, in the activity of Arcesilaus (316/5-242/1 B.C.E.), the head of the Academy in the second quarter of the third century B.C.E. This philosopher revolutionized the Academy by claiming that Socrates, and even Plato himself, were essentially open and skeptical philosophers, and thereby began the Academy’s skeptical period. However, it seems to me that the current study of Plato, and especially the dramatic study of the dialogues, tends in the opposite direction. Most of the proponents of the ‘dramatic approach’ (see n. 7 above) would maintain that a full, ‘organic’, analysis of a dialogue would usually yield some positive results which could serve as some indications of the author’s view. Some would also claim that once all the dialogues have been fully analysed in all their aspects, we may arrive at some more general conclusions concerning Plato’s philosophical views or orientations. On this see especially the concluding section of Stokes’ (1986) book (n. 7 above).
3. THE ‘SOCRATIC NON-RETALIATION DECREE’ AND ITS PROBLEMS

We began this paper with Vlastos’ formulation of ‘the non-retaliation decree’: ‘if someone has done a nasty thing to me this does not give me the slightest moral justification for doing the same nasty thing, or any nasty thing, to him.’ Such expressions prima facie make a great impression on the reader. A closer reading of the text, however, as well as Vlastos’ own comments in his article, will reveal not a few difficulties related to this ‘great decree’. I shall confine myself to two.

1) Vlastos’ discussion presents no comprehensive analysis, even of the small fraction of the dialogue he uses to prove his claim (49b4-c912). Out of the twenty pages of the article, fifteen are dedicated to proving both that what Vlastos calls lex talionis was prevalent throughout Greek culture, and to tracing a few precursors of what Vlastos takes to be Socrates’ innovation. It is only on the last five pages that Vlastos at last gets down to Socrates and to this single paragraph from the Crito. Moreover, the analysis itself is hardly as strict as one would expect. Vlastos lists five principles on which Socrates bases his argument leading to the ‘decree’ (T22, p. 194), but according to the analysis Vlastos presents, Socrates could have been satisfied with the first principle alone. Thus Vlastos himself writes: ‘So the full weight of the justification of Socrates’ rejection of retaliation must fall on Principle 1. {\textit{we should never do injustice.}}’ p. 197\}. From this alone, without appeal to any further consideration whatsoever, Socrates derives the interdiction of returning wrong for wrong ...’ (ibid). In view of this it is hard to understand why Socrates, having gained Crito’s assent at 49d9 to the principle that ‘we should never do injustice to an injustice’ (Principle 2. in Vlastos’ list), continues with three other principles.

2) Vlastos is so captivated by his own finding that he simply dismisses many pieces of evidence to the contrary, both from other dialogues and from the Crito itself.13 At p. 195 n. 52 Vlastos is well aware of the fact that the lex talionis is ascribed to Socrates by Xenophon in no less than three different places in the Memorabilia, yet he still prefers Plato’s testimony to that of Xenophon.14

I have been perhaps dealing too harshly with Vlastos, dwelling upon the maneuvers he employs in his attempt to sustain his finding, but I believe that this is necessary and worthwhile in order to show how even a great scholar can be unwilling to let go of an idea despite all the objections.

4. THE ‘NON-RETALIATION DECREE’ AND ITS IMMEDIATE CONTEXT

The dramatic method of reading Plato’s dialogues not only dispenses with the notion that anything said by Socrates in any of Plato’s dialogues should be automatically ascribed to the

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12 On p. 194 we have “48b4-c9”, but this must be a misprint.
13 See also Stokes’ 2005 (n. 7 above) brilliant criticism of Vlastos’ position concerning the difference between the Crito and the Republic, p. 97 n. 151 (the note appears on p. 222).
14 At 7.1 (pp. 297-300) Vlastos goes out of his way to recruit Xenophon to corroborate Socrates’ avowal to the ‘decree’, and he does this on the basis of a single passage in the Cyropaideia. A ‘sophist’ who represents there the ‘decree’ is identified by Vlastos with Socrates. Yet one can ask oneself whether Xenophon may simply have used what he had read in Plato’s Crito, not necessarily ascribing this view to the historic Socrates.
historical Socrates (let alone to Plato himself), but also calls into question whether anything said by Socrates should be considered as his own personal view even within the dialoge in which he says it. As I have already mentioned, I shall be arguing that the ‘non-retaliation decree’ is not to be ascribed even to Socrates the character who appears in the Crito. The argument will be presented in two distinct stages. Firstly I will show how the ‘non-retaliation decree’ is needed for handling Crito and his special problem; the ‘non-retaliation decree’, therefore, is part of an ad hominem argument. Secondly, by taking into account a wider context, I hope to demonstrate how the lex talionis plays a crucial role in pitching Crito and the Laws against each other. Let us begin, then, with the immediate context of the ‘non-retaliation decree’.

The passage where the ‘non-retaliation decree’ appears is at 49a4-c11. Socrates has just brought to conclusion a crucial stage in the discussion, namely that the only thing which has to be taken into account is whether it is just to try and escape despite the Athenians or not: Οὐκοῦν ἐκ τῶν ὁμολογουμένων τοῦτο σκεπτέον, πότερον δίκαιον ἐμὲ ἐνθέντε πειράσθαι ἔξεναι μὴ ἀφιέντων Ἀθηναίων ἢ οὐ δίκαιον - ‘Then we agree that the question is whether it is just for me to try to escape from here without the permission of the Athenians, or not just’ (48b10-c1). Crito agrees, but he is not sure what exactly has to be done now: Καλῶς μέν μοι δοκεῖ λέγειν, ὡς Σύκρατες· ὁρὰ δὲ τί δρῶμεν. (‘I think what you say is right, Socrates; but think what we should do’) (48d7-9). Socrates suggests a κοινὴ σκέψις (koinē skepsis), i.e. a dialectical discussion where one asks and the other answers. Crito agrees - Ἁλλὰ πειράσομαι ‘I will try’ (49a3) - and our passage begins.

Someone reading the Crito for the first time would now expect a discussion dealing with the question whether escaping is just or not. However, Socrates decides to preface that discussion with a whole and apparently self-standing passage whose aim is to obtain Crito’s consent that Οὔτε ὁρὰ ἄνταδικεῖν δὲι οὔτε κακῶς ποιεῖν οὐδένα ἀνθρώπων, οὔδὲ ἃν ὑπὸν πάσχῃ ὑπ’ αὐτῶν. (‘Then we ought neither to repay injustice with injustice nor to do evil to anyone, no matter what he may have done to us.’), and again at the end of the same passage: ὡς οὐδέποτε ὅρθος ἔχοντος οὔτε τοῦ ὁδικεῖν οὔτε τοῦ ἄνταδικεῖν οὔτε κακῶς πάσχοντα ἀμύνεσθαι ἄντιδρόώντα κακῶς, (‘that it is never right to commit injustice or to repay injustice with injustice, or when we suffer evil to defend ourselves by doing evil in return.’) (49c10-11; 49d7-9 respectively). Why this apparent digression?

At 49e9-50a3 Socrates asks Crito the famous question which leads to the ‘Laws’ speech: ἀπὸντες ἐνθέντε ἡμεῖς μὴ πείσαντες τὴν πόλιν πότερον κακῶς πινακοῖ ποιοῦμεν, καὶ ταῦτα οὔς ἥκιστα δεῖ, ἢ οὐ; καὶ ἐμέμνομεν οἷς ὑμολογήσαμεν δικαίος οὔσιν ἢ οὐ; (‘if we go away from here without the consent of the polis, we are doing harm to the very ones to whom we least ought to do harm, or not, and whether we are abiding by what we

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15 Or perhaps 49d9. See immediately below.
16 All English translations are taken from Vol. 1 of Plato’s works in the Loeb series, translated by Harold North Fowler (latest printing 1982), with some necessary modifications.
17 One might even wonder why there is no discussion of ‘what is justice’. This is a typical procedure in several of Plato’s dialogues. For a possible explanation see Stokes 2005 (n. 7 above), pp. 91-94.
18 These two versions of the ‘non-retaliation decree’ can be seen as a repetition, since the message is identical. Yet the differences are important for understanding the way in which Socrates achieves Crito’s assent to the ‘decree’. As this article deals with the aim and function of the ‘decree’, rather than the way by which it is achieved, I cannot go into a detailed discussion of these two versions. See also n. 31 below.
agreed was just, or not’). This question hints at two premises Crito had assented to, of which the first is our ‘non retaliation decree’. Indeed, immediately after Crito’s assent to the ‘non-retaliation decree’, Socrates obtains Crito’s assent to a second premise: πότερον ἢ ἄν τις ὑμολογήσῃ τῷ δίκαιῳ δόντα ποιητέον ἢ ἐξαπατητέον; (‘ought a man to do what he has agreed with someone that one should do, provided (or rather ‘because’) it is just, or may he violate his agreements?’)(49e6–7). These two premises which comprise the question which leads to the Laws’ speech (cited above), constitute, therefore, the very basis for the ‘Laws’ speech’. I shall not deal here with the second premise. For my purpose it is enough that the ‘non-retaliation decree’ is - at least formally - an indispensable step in the argument of the ‘Laws’ speech’.

Going back to the beginning of this whole discussion at 48b11–49a3, where Socrates obtains Crito’s assent to focus on the one and only question, whether it is just to try and escape from jail, we can now see the immediate context of the ‘non-retaliation decree’. The ‘Laws’ speech’ is intended to prove that escaping from jail is not just, and the ‘non-retaliation decree’ is necessary for the ‘Laws’ speech’.20

So far, we have pointed out the formal connection between the ‘non-retaliation decree’ and the ‘Laws’ speech’. Our next stage will be to try and expose the exact relation in matters of content between the ‘non-retaliation decree’ and the ‘Laws’ speech’. This is to be done by exposing Crito’s motives in suggesting that Socrates should escape. Once we have exposed those motives, we shall be able to understand not only how the ‘Laws’ speech’ is a proper reply to Crito, but also how the ‘Laws’ speech’ cannot achieve its aim without the ‘non-retaliation decree’.

5. CRITO: BETWEEN MOTIVES AND JUSTIFICATION

The relations between Crito and the laws are reflected on three levels. Firstly, Crito is presented throughout the dialogue as one who breaks the law. Secondly, and what is most interesting, Crito is fully aware of his breaking the law. Thirdly, that he breaks the law does not seem to bother him.

Already at the very beginning of the dialogue Crito has no qualms about bribing the guard in order to get into jail earlier.21 He is even proud of it and of his connections with the guard. When we come to Crito’s speech at 44e1–46a9 things become clear and straightforward. Throughout the whole of Crito’s speech there is no hint whatsoever that by escaping Socrates would be doing anything wrong or unjust. This fact should be clearly distinguished from Crito’s awareness that Socrates would be breaking the law. It means that Crito does not regard breaking the law (≡escaping from jail) as an unjust act. Crito’s way of thinking now needs to be considered.

19 The question is preceded by four words: Ἐκ τούτων δὴ ἀθρεῖ. (“Then from these consider whether”), which means that what will come immediately (the ‘Laws’ speech’) is based upon these two premises.

20 Weiss 2001 (n. 7 above) argues that Socrates’ argument against the escape is complete before the ‘Laws’ speech’. In her view the ‘non-retaliation decree’ has a greater task, since it is the argument itself.

Here I detect two levels: motives and justification. In Crito’s speech at 44e1-46a9 one discerns two different motives, his friendship with Socrates and his concern - or rather fear - for the bad reputation he might get in the eyes of oi polloi (hoi polloi; ‘the Many’). It is not our concern here to decide which motive is dominant. Crito’s justification is our next concern.

6. THE ‘NON-RETALIATION DECREE’ AND ITS GENERAL CONTEXT

Where exactly the ‘Laws’ speech’ begins is an interesting question. There are two alternatives. Either it begins simply where the Laws start speaking, i.e. 50a8, or at 50c5, where the formal speech is seen to start. The second alternative is preferable, but in that case what are we to do with the section in between (50a8-c5)?

Dividing the first appearance of the Laws (50a8-b5) from the main bulk of the speech (50c5-54d2) is an innocent and simple question Socrates asks Crito. In my opinion this question should be regarded as the key to the understanding of the whole dialogue. Socrates asks Crito: ἐροῦμεν πρὸς αὐτούς {sc. τοὺς νόμους25} ὃπι “Ἡδίκει γάρ ἡμᾶς ἡ πόλις καὶ οὐκ ὁρθῶς τὴν δίκην ἐκρίνειν;” ταῦτα ἢ τί ἐροῦμεν; (‘Or shall we say to them {sc. the Laws}, “the polis has done us an injustice and has not judged the case justly”?’ Shall we say that, or what?’)(50c1-3)

In order to reveal what hides behind this question we should go back to the first part of the dialogue, namely to Crito’s famous speech, in which he tries to persuade Socrates to escape from jail (44e1-46a9). Crito is aware that Socrates will not accept the suggestion to escape easily. Crito offers many and various reasons for Socrates to run away. Among them we find Crito reminding Socrates of his children; the fact that he - Socrates - has ἀρετή (aretē; virtue) and the ἀνδρεία (andreia; courage); the fact that he will be welcomed in every other polis, and the like. What is interesting is what does not appear here and bad to appear - indeed, should have appeared at the top of the list: Socrates is simply not guilty, since the polis did him an injustice, and in such a case Socrates has the right to run away, i.e. to retaliate with injustice for an injustice done to him. Let us call this argument the ‘measure for measure argument’. Crito, then, uses many arguments, but not the most obvious one, the ‘measure for measure argument’. Why not?

Yet this is only one side of the coin. The other side is Crito’s response when, later,
Socrates does suggest using the ‘measure for measure argument’ against the polis: Ταύτα νὴ Δία, ὦ Σωκράτες. (‘That is what we shall say, by Zeus, Socrates.’)(50c4). The enthusiasm with which Crito embraces this argument when presented by Socrates may be contrasted with the total absence of this argument in Crito’s original attempt to persuade Socrates to run away. Moreover, the fact that Socrates is the one who later raises this argument means, in this philosophical drama, that Crito would not have raised it on his own initiative. It may be inferred from all the above that the ‘measure for measure argument’ is Crito’s unconscious justification for his behavior; it is what enables him to break the law while continuing to consider himself a loyal citizen of a democratic city, but that, precisely because this argument feels so natural and obvious to him, he does not even think of raising it consciously.

In a democratic regime, where laws are approved by a majority of votes, the opinion of the minority is never deleted, but only dismissed. In such a case the ‘measure for measure argument’ is always ready for use. A citizen can always maintain that the city has done him an injustice if his opinion has not been accepted. This is better understood when one remembers the means by which one opinion is accepted in preference to others, namely speeches and rhetoric in general. Thus when another man’s opinion is accepted by virtue of a ‘nice’ speech and a ‘talented’ rhetor,28 one could justifiably see oneself as a victim of an unjust act done to him by the polis, and, consequently, according to the lex talionis, feel justified in repaying injustice with injustice.

Crito, an average citizen of a democratic regime, is generally a law-biding citizen, but whenever he breaks the law he has an excuse Ηδίκει γὰρ ἡμᾶς ἢ πόλις καὶ οὐκ ὄρθως τὴν δίκην ἐκρινεν (‘the polis has done us an injustice and has not judged the case justly’).29 Yet he is not fully aware of this excuse. Had he been aware of it, he would have been forced to decide even in such cases between breaking the laws or abiding by them. Crito, who wants to help his friend and to take care of his reputation even by breaking the law, does not consciously invalidate the laws. Had this been the case, bringing the ‘Laws’ speech’ would have been futile and redundant. Indeed, Socrates develops the ‘Laws’ speech’ exactly because it is valid for Crito. Yet the laws pertain only to his consciousness. In his behavior and de facto they have no absolute validity.

Now we can fully understand the place of what Vlastos calls ‘Socrates’ rejection of retaliation’: if, indeed, what really hides behind Crito’s behavior is the ‘measure for measure argument’, this argument has to be dealt with. Yet, as Crito is not aware of the ‘measure for measure argument’, Socrates has to look for manipulative ways of dealing with it, and the ‘non-retaliation decree’ is the best way. The ‘Laws’ speech’ emphasizes the central theme, that even if the Laws have done Socrates an injustice, he would not be entitled to pay them

27 Dramatic method pays attention not only to the content of conversations, but also to the manner of the interlocutors.

28 Indeed, this is hinted at by Socrates in his first part of the Laws’ speech: πολλὰ γὰρ ἄν τις ἔχωι, ἀλλὰ τε καὶ ρήτωρ, εἰπεῖν ... (‘For one might say many things, especially if one were an orator ...’)(50b6-7). This point has been emphasized by Weiss 1998 (n. 7 above), pp. 84-95).

29 The ‘measure for measure argument’ is not employed in each case separately. It is rather a sweeping justification enabling one to break the law ‘here and there’ without giving up one’s principal loyalty to the polis and its laws. Moreover, ‘here and there’ should not necessarily indicate a small amount of cases. Habitual breaking of the law can still be felt as only occasional law-breaking ‘here and there’.

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back in kind. The success of such a procedure is conditioned on Crito’s assent - in advance - to the principle that in no case should injustice be repaid with injustice.

If Crito is helped to break the law by an unconscious argument, Socrates has first to uncover the argument in order to handle it. Socrates has to cause Crito to declare, first, what Vlastos rephrased: ‘That if someone has done a nasty thing to me this does not give me the slightest moral justification for doing the same nasty thing, or any nasty thing, to him’. This does not necessarily mean that the ‘non-retaliation decree’ can, or should, be attributed to Socrates.

7. Socrates and the ‘non-retaliation decree’

Up to this stage we have demonstrated that the ‘non-retaliation decree’ does not necessarily have to be attributed to Socrates, since it is part of a typical ad hominem argument, and we have shown its necessity in dealing with Crito’s problem. In this section I wish to go a step further and argue that the ‘non-retaliation decree’ cannot be ascribed to Socrates. On the contrary, it is rather the lex talionis which plays a crucial role in pitching Crito and the Laws against each other.

The first thing to consider is the fact that Socrates has to work very hard and use various manipulative ways in order to bring Crito around to assenting to the ‘non-retaliation decree’. This by itself proves that in fact it is rather the lex talionis which dominates Crito’s behavior. Moreover, it is the same Crito who, having assented to the ‘non retaliation decree’, accepts so enthusiastically the ‘measure for measure’ argument (=lex talionis) suggested by Socrates. How, then, can Crito accept the ‘non retaliation decree’ and a moment later contradict himself?

The answer is to be found by revealing the exact meaning of ‘justice’ and its exact relation to the polis so far as Crito is concerned. Let us start with the polis. Crito agreed that one should not repay injustice with injustice. Does this include the polis as well? The question is not that easy to answer since, strictly speaking, Crito’s assent to the ‘non-retaliation decree’ refers only to men. This is clearly emphasized several times during the discussion of the ‘non retaliation decree’: at 49c7 we read: Τὸ γὰρ που κακῶς ποιεῖν ἀνθρώπους τοῦ ἄδικεν οὐδὲν διαφέρει. (‘For doing evil to people is the same thing as doing them injustice.’). Again at the conclusion: Οὔτε ἀρα ἀνταδικεῖν δεῖ οὔτε κακῶς ποιεῖν οὐδένα ἀνθρώπων ... (‘Then we ought neither to repay injustice with injustice nor to do evil to anyone [literally “to any man”]...’)(49c10-11). And finally, referring to the obligation to keep what has been agreed upon, we read: πότερον ἄν τις ψηφιστέον ἢ ἐκτιμητέον; (‘ought a man to do what he has agreed with someone to do, provided it is right, or may he violate his agreements?’) (49e6-7). Thus we should

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30 See especially 50e4-51a7.

31 This involves sophisticated wordplay between two pairs of terms: ἄδικειν-ἀνταδικεῖν; κακουργεῖν-ἀντικακουργεῖν (which are better left here untranslated), but this need not concern us here. For an interesting discussion of the ambiguity of these terms, especially of κακουργεῖν, see Stokes 2005 (n. 7 above), pp. 97-105.

32 This is shown by Crito’s hesitant answer at 49c1 οὗ φαίνεται (‘Apparently not’), and is rightly emphasized by Stokes 2005 (n. 7 above), p. 96.

33 The importance of this point (cf. below) has been totally overlooked by Vlastos and the secondary literature in general.

34 The fact that until 49c7 (from 49b6, the beginning of the move) we do not find any mention of
rephrase our previous question. Is the polis to be regarded as a human being? In order to answer this question we should reexamine Socrates’ anticipatory question leading Crito to the ‘Laws’ speech’: ‘ἀπόντες ἐνθένδε ἡμεῖς μὴ πείσαντες τὴν πόλιν τὸπερον κακῶς πινας ποιοῦμεν, καὶ ταῦτα οὐς ἡκιστα δει, ἢ οὐ; καὶ ἐμένομεν οίς ὑμολογήσαμεν δικαίος οὐσίν ἢ οὐ;’ (‘if we go away from here without the consent of the polis, we are doing harm to the very ones to whom we least ought to do harm, or not, and whether we are abiding by what we agreed was just, or not.’)(49c9-50a3). To this question Crito does not actually offer an answer; he simply does not understand the question: Ὅυκ ἐξω, ὠ Σώκρατες, ἀποκρίνασθαι πρὸς ὅ ἐρωτάς; οὐ γαὶρ ἐννοώ. (‘I cannot answer your question, Socrates, for I do not understand.’)(50a4-5). The underlined words in Socrates’ question, cited above, may give us the explanation. In Crito’s consciousness concepts of justice and injustice refer only to people, and this is why he cannot understand who might suffer injustice by Socrates’ escape. The polis, so it seems, is not even a hypothetical possibility for Crito.

Now we can expose Crito’s problem in all its intensity. The ‘measure for measure argument’ on the one hand and excluding the polis from concepts of justice and injustice on the other hand together enable Crito to break the law while not regarding it as an act of injustice. On the one hand, when he has to break the law he has an excuse (albeit unconsciously), namely that ‘the polis has done us an injustice’, but he does not even consider breaking the law an injustice, since he does not consciously regard the polis as a human being. Crito, however, does de facto treat the polis as a human being, and this leads to tension.

Socrates makes explicit what Crito does de facto and unconsciously. If by using the ‘measure for measure argument’ Crito regards the polis as a human being, Socrates will impersonate the Laws. If principles of justice and injustice refer in Crito’s consciousness only to human beings, personifying the laws will turn them and the whole polis into human beings.35

Yet, does Socrates want Crito to apply bis justice towards the polis? Let us have a look at Crito’s concept of justice. This term is first used by Crito at 45a1-3: ἡμεῖς γὰρ που δίκαιοι ἐσμεν σώσαντες σε ... (‘since we will be justified to run this risk ...’); and a few lines below at 45c6-7: Ἐν δὲ, ὠ Σώκρατες, οὐδὲ δίκαιον μοι δοκεῖς ἐπιχειρεῖν πράγμα, σαυτὸν προδοῦναι, ἔξων σωθῆναι ... (‘And besides, Socrates, it seems to me the thing you are undertaking to do is not even just - betraying yourself when you might save yourself’). These two examples suffice to show that for Crito justice is simply taking care of one’s own interests in every way possible.36 If this is what Crito regards as justice, why does Socrates go to all the trouble of making Crito refer to the polis in terms of justice and

35 Most of the secondary literature regards the personification of the Laws not as something to do with Socrates’ argument itself, but rather as a tool by which Crito could find himself free and under no pressure to think. That is, Crito, so thinks Socrates, would not be able to think freely if attacked directly by Socrates’ questions concerning his readiness to break the law. Yet, as an advisor to Socrates who is attacked by the Laws as a law-breaker he might feel more comfortable. See M. Miller, “The Arguments I seem to Hear: Argument and Irony in the Crito”, *Phronesis*, 41 (1996), pp. 125-126.

36 One of the basic meanings of the Greek verb ἔξωτο (exesth) is ‘it is in ones power’. See LSJ s.v.
injustice? This brings me to my last claim in this paper: not only does Crito exercise the lex talionis against the polis, but the polis also does so against Crito.

The ‘Laws’ speech’ is nothing but a mirror placed before Crito. Crito who uses his power to take care of his interests treats the polis as his enemy. According to the moral code of τούς μὲν φίλους εὖ ποιεῖν, τούς δ’ ἐχθροὺς κακῶς, (‘to benefit friends and harm enemies’), justified by the ‘measure for measure argument’, he can easily break the law. In order to achieve his goal, Crito exercises his power: this includes inter alia personal connections, money, and above all speeches. The personified Laws use the same means in their exercise of power over Crito. They also apply the moral code of τούς μὲν φίλους εὖ ποιεῖν, τούς δ’ ἐχθροὺς κακῶς (‘to benefit friends and harm enemies’), and they do it by means of their speech. Perhaps this is the hint Socrates gives Crito at the very beginning of the speech πολλὰ γὰρ ἐν τις έξοι, ἀλλως τε καὶ ῥήτωρ, εἴπειν ... (‘For one might say many things, especially if one were an orator ... ‘)(50b6-7). And again towards the end of the speech we read: ἀλλὰ νῦν μὲν ἡδικημένος ἀπει, ἓν ἀπής, οὕχ υφ' ἡμῶν τῶν νόμων, ἄλλα ὑπ' ἀνθρώπων. (Now, however, you will go away wronged, if you do go away, not by us, the laws, but by men){54b9-c2}. The laws do not excuse themselves but rather attack: if you, Crito, exercise your power, we do the same. In a word, Crito was the one who came with a fine and persuasive speech to ‘force’ Socrates to escape, but he now finds himself ‘forced’ by a counter speech to remain quiet with nothing to say. Crito who treats the polis de facto as an enemy, gets equal treatment. The message is clear, and here we might refer to one of Plato’s hidden messages in the Crito: democracy is a vicious circle where everyone is apparently law-abiding. In practice, however, what we have is nothing but a large group of disguised tyrants who take care of themselves alone at the expense of their fellow-men. And all this is made possible by the ‘measure for measure argument’.

8. CONCLUSION

In section 3 we dealt with a few problems Vlastos himself mentions, all of which testify to a view which should be ascribed to Socrates and which is the opposite of the one Vlastos ascribes to him. However, even if we ignore the contrary evidence, and simply consider the ‘non-retaliation decree’ in its own right, it is very difficult to attribute such a code to Socrates. Indeed, Vlastos himself, as usual, is well aware of it. Referring to Principle v. in his list of principles which comprises Socrates’ reasoning, Vlastos writes: ‘What reason would he give us to agree that to do any evil to anyone is no different from doing that person injustice? There is no fully satisfactory answer to this question anywhere in Plato’s Socratic dialogues ... The one thing that is made clear in this passage - and this is what we must settle for (emphasis mine) - is Socrates’ intuition that true moral goodness is incapable of

37 The polis in executing Socrates stands against his interests.
39 Every theme used by Crito in his speech to persuade Socrates to escape is used by the Laws to dissuade him from escaping. For example the argument using Socrates’ children appears in Crito’s speech at 45c10-d4 and in the ‘Laws’ speech’ at 54a2-8 for opposite aims. The argument from ὀμοιότης (aretē; virtue) is used by Crito at 45d7-9 and by the Laws at 54a1-2, again for opposite aims.
40 Note that this statement is part of a section (50a6-c3) we regarded as the preliminary part of the ‘Laws’ speech’. See pp. 10-11 and n. 28.
doing intentional injury to others, for it is inherently beneficent, radiant in its operation, spontaneously communicating goodness to those who come in contact with it, always producing benefit instead of injury, so that the idea of a just man injuring anyone, friend or foe, is unthinkable ... Let us then accept it as such, as a powerful intuition whose argumentative backing remains unclear in Plato’s presentation of Socrates’ thought.’ (pp. 196-197). We may, however, ask ourselves: must we really settle for this?

In reading Plato’s dialogues, a clear distinction should be made between Socrates the character who appears in Plato’s dialogues, the historical Socrates, and Plato. Socrates, the character who appears in Plato’s dialogues - each dialogue in its own right - is the mouthpiece of nobody, neither of the historical Socrates nor of Plato who composed the dialogues. Moreover, even the opinions, thoughts and ideas he presents should not necessarily be attributed to him (Socrates the character), but should be taken as ad hominem statements. The ‘non-retaliation decree’ does appear in Plato’s Crito and Socrates is the one who raises it, but he raises it for the sake of Crito, and we have found plausible reasons why it is needed for dealing with Crito’s special problem. Should it be attributed to Socrates the character himself? To the historical Socrates? Or to Plato? I think it would be better to leave the historical Socrates out of any discussion of Plato’s dialogues. The historical Socrates has many virtues, but as a human being living in the 5th century BCE it is not to his disadvantage if a moral code we wish to endorse nowadays was not, and probably could not have been, accepted by him. Regarding Plato the case is different. Plato’s opinion can and should be learned from his dialogues - again, each dialogue in its own right - but this should be done through a comprehensive analysis of each dialogue as an organic whole.42

41 As Socrates the character is by no means different from any other character who appears in any of Plato’s dialogues qua character, he has no priority regarding Plato’s view. In a sense he is even less to be identified with his views since all his statements are ad hominem.

42 The maximum one can say in favor of the ‘non retaliation decree’ is to credit Plato - and see it as an achievement on his part - that he makes his Socrates announce such a new principle in the absolute manner (οὐδαμῶς) in which he formulates it. Yet even here I am skeptical. Perhaps in Socrates’ eyes (and Plato’s as well) such a principal would be unacceptable, and it was inserted into the discussion only as a tool for Crito.
In *De Trinitate* VIII-XV St. Augustine carries out a series of investigations into what the image of God in human persons can reveal, both of God’s inner life as well as of the human calling to be a likeness of the Trinity. Moreover, reflection on Genesis 1.26, that human beings are made in the image and likeness of God, becomes a search for triadic human activities that are distinct and yet somehow one. In particular, Augustine explores the trinity of memory, understanding and will.

However, when a medieval author of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries came to deal with these ideas it was most commonly not in the context of a reading of the *De Trinitate* itself but rather in examining what Peter Lombard had written in this regard in the *Sentences* I, dist. 3. As Marcia Colish comments, Peter Lombard in seeking analogies of the Trinity in the human mind especially the analogy of memory, understanding and will does so in ways more authentically Augustinian than some of his contemporaries:

In the first place, he gives full weight to the analogy of memory, intellect and will, as well as bringing in the analogy of *mens*, *notitia*, and *amor*. Secondly, he pursues with Augustine, the limits of these analogies as well as their suggestive force as similitudes.¹

For Peter Lombard, memory, understanding and will provide a good analogy because here there are not three minds, three lives or three essences, rather each is a function of the same, single subsistent mind. He adds that these three functions of mind are understood in relation to each other and are thus relative or relational concepts. At the same time the relationships involved are not accidental qualifications but are part of the essential make-up of the human person. Thus, memory, understanding and will are one and have a oneness as mind. However, they are three with reference to each other, co-equal, and each is equal to the other three because they contain each other, and all are contained by each.² The mental trinity of remembering, understanding and loving is a natural image of God but yet even the best image is inadequate to represent a Triune God who is both simple and eternal.³ Lombard points out that a man may possess these three faculties of memory, intellect and will but together they do not comprise the sum total of his being (since the human mind inheres in a spirit attached to a body and its modes of knowing and acting are conditioned by this fact) whereas the three persons of the Trinity do comprise the totality of God’s being.

By the time Richard FitzRalph came to give his lectures on the *Sentences* at Oxford in 1328-29, it had become had become the custom to deal with certain topics from the *Sentences* which were of contemporary interest rather than commenting on the *Sentences* itself. Moreover, as Courtenay has pointed out, in the first decades of the fourteenth century up to 1332, questions on the divine nature and attributes were one of the most popular topics, occupying a third of FitzRalph’s commentary and almost a quarter of those

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² See, AUGUSTINE, *De Trinitate*, 10.11.18.
³ See, AUGUSTINE, *De Trinitate*, 15.27.50.
of Wodeham and Holcot. It seems that around 1334, the practice of exploring Trinitarian problems from the perspective of logic crumbled and along with it the dominant place that Trinitarian theology held in the Sentences commentaries of the early fourteenth century. However, one shift in emphasis can be observed in FitzRalph where we see extensive discussions emerging concerning acts of the will. In combination with other acts of the soul, specifically cognition, memory, love and enjoyment, this theme occupied a third of the questions in FitzRalph’s Lectura. These two themes, that of Trinitarian theology and human psychology come together in FitzRalph’s Lectura, Book I, q. 5 where he asks «Is the human mind an image of the uncreated Trinity?»

The text of FitzRalph’s Lectura was only partially revised for publication by the author, presumably after he returned from Paris in 1330 and before he became Chancellor of the University in 1332. After this he seemed to have shown no further interest in the text which continued to circulate, often it would appear as isolated questions on different topics. Indeed, the text originally seems to have consisted of individual articles which FitzRalph later worked together into quaestiones, i.e., a text containing a principal topic, followed by articles and then a conclusion.

The structure of the question which interests us here, namely question 5, is as follows:

Eight arguments against the principal question, «That the human mind is an image of the Trinity»; followed by one argument for the question. Then we have the decisi questionis where the various subsections are outlined:

art 1. «Whether memory, understanding and will are really distinct from each other»
art. 2. «Whether actual cognition is really distinct from the species in memory»
art. 3. «Whether knowledge and willing are really the same»
art. 4. «Whether the parts of the image are equal»

Then FitzRalph concludes «And once we have dealt with these, which seem to be the major difficulties relating to the central question, finally I will state what I think with regard to the proposed question.»

This, at least, for our purposes is reasonably straightforward. It should be noted, however, that there are also ‘floating’ articles which are listed by many manuscripts as separate questions following this one. One of them, q. 8 «Whether the agent intellect is a part of the image» is clearly related to our q. 5 since FitzRalph says there: «but I have already spoken of this above in the first article «Whether memory, understanding and will are really distinct from each other». One manuscript, Oriel College 15, actually incorporates this into a separate q. 12 «Whether man in respect of his mind is made in the image of the Creator» where it appears as article 3.

Returning, however, to our text and to the first article: Whether memory, understanding and will are really distinct from each other? The answer which FitzRalph gives, that they are not really distinct but are diversified in terms of their actions is essentially that of Duns Scotus and the one argued by Walter Chatton against Ockham. Chatton may have been lecturing on the Sentences for a second time at Oxford at much

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5 FitzRalph’s treatment draws heavily upon the authorities of the thirteenth century, Aquinas, Henry of Ghent, and Duns Scotus but he uses these to take up his own positions, for example to oppose Ockham’s views that cognition and volition are not distinct from the soul itself.
6 It is interesting to note that the manuscript Vatican Ottoboni 179 regarded this quaestio as a self-contained work.
7 References are to the text of the Lectura as contained in MS Worcester, Cathedral Library Q.71, hereafter referred to as W and to MS Paris BN lat. 15853, referred to as P. Et istis pertractatis que uidentur maiores difficultates tangentes questionem principalem, ultimo dicam quid sensero ad questionem principalem (W., f. 17rb).
the same time as FitzRalph. Chatton generally supported the positions of Scotus and attempted to refute Ockham’s critiques of Scotus. These in turn were argued against by Wodeham in his Lectura secunda on Book I, dist. 5. FitzRalph does not seem to have taken Ockham head on and this seeming lack of interest in Ockham and his supporters had led some to suggest that FitzRalph was such a traditionalist that he was not engaged with contemporary debates. However, it does have to be remembered that FitzRalph was lecturing in the very year that Ockham fled Avignon and as a young secular aspiring master in theology who did not yet have a patron prudence may have dictated a less controversial stance than that which the mendicants could indulge in. Again, he may simply have felt that these were squabbles internal to the Franciscan school and of little interest to him. If one could point to an influence of Ockham, that might be FitzRalph’s method, characterised as it is by what we might call ‘hypothetical theology, that is, its use of the though experiments which FitzRalph seems to have delighted in. As examples of his approach, take the following arguments which he puts. The first argument, incidentally, will be quoted word for word by William Crathorn.⁸

Arg. 3: Thus I argue that understanding and will are not distinct because if that were so then one could propose the following situation (casus possible). An angel or a man could see God clearly and without any impediment and yet would not take delight in this, which seems impossible. That this follows is clear given that God could annihilate the will of the angel while the angel continues to exist together with his understanding and memory. God can do this if the will is something other than understanding and memory and given that God shows himself clearly to the understanding of that angel …⁹

Arg. 6: If they are distinct, then the following possible situation would follow: a just will could be eternally punished even if it had never sinned and a will which had sinned to the greatest degree would never be punished. I prove this as follows: Let us say that God transfers the will of a dying non-baptised child into the mind of a damned person who is dying, while everything else remains the same as before (for this is possible if the will is something other than the substance of the mind). Once this has happened the will of the child which had never sinned will be punished eternally according to the amount of sin of the other person and then this other person would end up not being punished …¹⁰

In a digression FitzRalph then argues against the position of Aquinas in his Commentary on the Sentences, I, dist. 3, a. 3, q. 2 where Aquinas states that understanding and memory are one power but that understanding and will are two powers. Among the arguments against Aquinas’s position is one drawn from Henry of Ghent where Henry states that all the

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⁸ G. CRATHORN, Quaestiones in Primum Librum Sententiarum, ed. F. Hoffmann, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, Neue Folge Band 29, Münster 1988 [= Quaestiones], q. 7 concl. 4, pp. 336-337.

⁹ 3o arguo sic quod intellectus et voluntas non distinguantur: quia si sic, tunc posito casu possibili aliquis angelus vel homo posset deum videre clare et a nullo impeditus, et tamen non posset gaudere: quod videtur impossibile. Consequencia patet: posito quod deus adnichilaret voluntatem alium angeli manente ipso angelo et intellectu eius et memoria: hec enim bene potest deus facere ex quo voluntas est alia res ab illis: et ponatur quod deus se ostenderet clare intellectui illius angelii. Tunc enim ille angeli gaudere non potest, cum gaudium vel delectacio sit subjectae in voluntate: vel si dicatur quod potest, tunc potest esse beatus absque voluntate: quia potest habere claram visionem cum summa delectatione, et per consequens beatificari sine voluntate. Sed hoc est impossibile secundum omnes. (W., ff. 17rb-va)

powers of the soul are the very substance of the soul. This again allows FitzRalph to
digress commenting that «it does not seem to me that this Doctor (Henry), saving his
reverence, speaks well since then all of the sensitive and intellectual powers would derive
from the one substance of the rational soul in man.» He then repeats in some detail the
condemnation of the unicity of substantial form in man by Kilwardby:

For this reason the following article was condemned by brother Robert Kilwardby in the
general council of the King at Oxford: that the vegetative, sensitive soul, and intellectual
are one simple form. And there is another article condemned by the same Kilwardby in the
common council of the regent and non-regent masters, namely that the vegetative,
sensitive and intellectual are in the embryo at the same time. However, in the records
which I personally examined, it does not say that all who hold those theses are
excommunicate, but rather the ruling is that anyone who teaches and defends any of these
theses as his own opinion, if he is a master then he should be expelled from the common
council; if a bachelor then he should not proceed to the masters degree but should be
expelled from the university. Thus, this position (sententia) can be stated as probable.

Was FitzRalph perhaps defending someone who had got into trouble from a more serious
charge? It was not his own opinion since he argues that given that the intellectual soul is
created by God and not by man, if we could not ourselves produce a sensitive soul in
reproduction our position would be less than that of the animals who can do that at least.
He continues «Whether one posits only one soul in man or two, I state that the sensitive
powers are the sensitive soul itself and the intellectual powers are the rational soul itself
… thus it seems to me that it is best to say that all of the sensitive soul is its power … and
that the activity of any part is that of the totality as such and is only of the part in an accidental
way». Thus, the powers of the soul are not really distinct from the soul but are
distinguished only in an accidental way through being exercised, for example, through one
organ rather than through another.

The second article is «Whether actual knowledge is really distinct from the species
in memory». It should be noted that elsewhere in the text (in Book II, q. 1, a. 2: ‘Whether
time and motion are really distinct from their subjects and from each other’) FitzRalph
makes a digression and defends the species theory but refers to a respected contemporary (a
valens), who held a different view. The valens in question could well be Ockham, since

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11 Unde quantum ad illum secundum dictum, non videtur michi quod iste doctor salva sua reverencia dicat
bene: sed quantum ad primam partem, scilicet quod omnes potencie sensitive et eciam intellective sint una res
indistincta secundum hoc quod ista potest in varias operaciones, scilicet ipsa substantia anime rationalis in
homine, et in brutis ipsa substantia anime brutalis, videtur michi satis probable in brutis: et in homine
similiter, si non sit anima alia sensitiva in homine, distincta ab intellectiva et prius generate. (W., f. 18ra)

12 Unde a fratre Roberto de Kilwarby est articulus dampnatus in consilio generalis regis oxoniensi: Quod
vegetativa sensitiva intellectiva sint una forma simplex. Et est alius articulus dampnatus ab eodem ex
communi consilio regencium et non regencium, scilicet quod vegetativa sensitiva et intellectiva sint simul
tempore in embrione. In libro tamen quem vidi non dicitur quod excommunicati sint omnes sustinentes istas, 
se percepit ut sustinens docens et defendens aliquam istarum ex propria intencione, si esset magister, de
communi consilio deponeretur: si bachelarius, non promoveretur ad magisterium, sed ab universitate
expelleretur: iego potest ista sentencia dici probabiliter. (W., f. 18ra)

13 Unde videtur michi melius dicere quod tota anima sensitiva est sua potencia, scilicet viritus ymaginativa et
virtus sensitiva, etc., quam dicere quod pars sensitiva que est in oculo vel in cetera parte eius est viritus visiva, 
et alia pars eius sensus communis, et ita de alitis. Quia ex quo tota anima sensitiva tocius animalis est una
forma indistincta specie in suis partibus, accio cuiscunque partis est accio tocius per se, et partis tantum per
accidens. Et iego tota per se vocatur potencia anime denominata ab illa accione quam exerceat per organum
certum, et alia potencia quatenus exercet accionem per organum alium. (W., f. 18ra)

14 Puto dico quod isti si non sentirent species in oculis suis nec sonos participent in auribus omnino non
credent tali esse, set dicerent quod visus esset sua visio et auditus audicio et aer lucidus esset lumen sicud
ego quendam valentem aliando audui dicentem sic. Et dicunt aliqui quod omnis color est lux et omnis
sapor est qualitates prime conmixte et odor est sapor, immo ego aliquando non credebam aliquid esse nisi
FitzRalph was old enough to have heard him speak before the former left Oxford in 1324. Nor was FitzRalph alone in defending the theory of the *species*. As K. Tachau points out: ‘Ockham’s attack on the species elicited an almost immediate and prolonged negative response’. Ockham’s position was criticised by John of Reading and also by Walter Chatton, Robert Holcot, William Crathorn, and Adam Wodeham. Thus, FitzRalph found himself in the company of many who would normally be seen as close to the position of Ockham. As Tachau concludes, ‘in epistemology at any rate, there seems at Oxford to have been no school of Ockhamists’. However, with FitzRalph there seems to be a shift from a concern with the *species in medio* to the *species in memoria* which seems to have influenced the treatment of Holcot and especially that of Crathorn. In his reply to article 2, namely «Whether actual cognition is really distinct from the species in memory», FitzRalph argues as follows:

In regard to this topic nearly all of the *moderni* hold that the species which is first received in the intellectual memory or in the intellect (which is the same as memory according to them), afterwards when the intellect considers, actual knowledge occurs so that nothing new arises in the intellect because it does not consider something afterwards which it did not before. They say this because of the arguments put forward regarding this part of the article. However against them it can be argued….

There then follow 10 arguments against this position. As we shall see below, these arguments were later taken up and summarised by Crathorn a few years later. FitzRalph concludes as follows:

Thus it appears to me that the reply to this article is as Henry of Ghent says in Quodlibet VII, q. 13, that actual knowledge is really distinct from the species in memory that is in the intellectual memory, because otherwise it does not seem to me that actual knowledge would be the action of the intellect – and this is something which is conceded by everyone. For it seems to me that how the action takes place can only be understood if one takes it that the intellect is its efficient cause. Again if the intellect is the efficient cause of the action then it is not the [same as the] species which was there before it, because that was firstly in the cause, and thus it does not arise now from something anew when the intellect understands in act.

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16 As has been pointed out, the idea of a conservative FitzRalph fighting together with Chatton and Crathorn against the spread of Ockhamism, and Holcot and Wodeham defending it is no longer tenable. See, W. J. COURTENAY, *Adam Wodeham. An introduction to his Life and Writings*, Brill, Leiden 1978, p. 101.
18 Both Holcot and Crathorn lectured on the Sentences in the years 1330-32 around the time when FitzRalph was magister regens.
19 Two manuscripts, Oxford Oriel College 15 and Troyes Bibliothèque municipal 505 identify these as ‘Scotistae’.
20 In isto articulo omnes fere moderni seculares tenent quod species que primo recipitur in memoria intellectiva sive in intellectu qui idem est cum memoria secundum eos, postea quando intellectus considerat fit actualis cogitatio ita quod nichil novum fit in intellectu propter hoc quod considerat postquam non consideravit. Istdud dicent propter motiva posita ad hanc partem huius articuli. Sed contra istos potest sic argui. (P., f. 31ra)
21 Ideo videtur michi esse dicendum in isto articulo, sicut dicit Doctor Sollempnis, 7 Quodlibet, q. 13: quod actualis cogitacio sit distincta realiter a specie in memoria sive in intellectu: quia aliter non videtur michi quod cogitatio actualis esset accio intellectus, quod tamen conceditur ab omnibus. Non enim videtur michi posse intelligi quomodo esset eius accio, nisi intellectus esset eius causa efficientis; et si intellectus est causa efficientis eius, tunc non est species que prefuit, quia ista prius fuit in causa, et ideo nunc non fit ab aliquo nouiter, quando intellectus actu intelligit. (P., f. 31vb).
This particular argument of FitzRalph was the focus of attention of Crathorn in his *Questions on the First Book of the Sentences*, q. 7 «Whether every rational creature is the image of the Trinity». His eighth conclusio (thesis or topic) lists the arguments of FitzRalph which he rejects and then proposes his own.²² He writes as follows:

The eighth thesis is that actual produced knowledge (*notitia actualis genita*) is really distinct from the species preserved in memory … Firstly, I will put forward the arguments of others which they make on behalf of this thesis and I will take them apart because it seems to me that they do not succeed; then I will prove the conclusion in another way.

He begins:

For Master Richard FitzRalph argues for this thesis, firstly as follows: The intellect is knowing necessarily does something (*aliquid agit*) and consequently it does some action, because otherwise the intellect would do something and then no action would arise from it. Therefore actual or produced knowledge arises from the intellect, but the species in memory does not arise from the intellect but from an intention in the imaginative power … Secondly FitzRalph argues as follows: When the intellect knows, if the species which was in memory beforehand were its knowledge and its action, then the intellect would have an action and yet would not be the cause of this action … Thirdly as follows: If the species in memory were actual knowledge, then in moving from the first to the second act it would have nothing new if the species which was there before or the habitus became actual, and thus as such did not change in any way, because nothing has changed in it …

These arguments says Crathorn are not successful:

With regard to the first it should be stated that the major premise is not true because the intellect or the intellective power is not active or effective with respect to produced knowledge unless like something which removes by prohibiting, as I shall state in the question on the freedom of the will; but produced knowledge is effected by the species preserved in memory, not in a partial manner only but completely. Therefore, this argument assumes something which is false.

With regard to the second argument it should be replied to it as it was with regard to the first, because it presumes the same as the first, namely that produced knowledge arises effectively from the soul or the intellective power, which is false.

With regard to the third it should be said that this argument also presupposes something which is false, because if the species which is preserved in memory which is called a habitus or habitual memory, becomes the actual understanding of it, as it can do through the power of God, it does not follow that no change was made in the knower, because this can only happen by means of the transfer of the species and the linking of it with the intellect or by means of the transfer of the species from the rear ventricle of the brain to the middle or frontal ventricle …

Crathorn then continues:

Therefore I argue in a different way for this thesis as follows: it is impossible that something can produce or cause itself; but actual produced knowledge is produced and caused by a species preserved in memory; therefore produced knowledge is not the species preserved in memory.

²² G. CRATHORN, *Quaestiones* q. 7 concl. 4, pp. 339-342.
This is not the place to adjudicate on who has the better arguments, FitzRalph or Crathorn, but it is interesting to note that Crathorn agrees with FitzRalph’s conclusion but finds flaws in his arguments. It would appear that for many writers of the time that they devote themselves to the testing of arguments rather than to doctrinal differences.

Returning to FitzRalph’s text and to article 3: Whether knowledge and willing are the same? In his response to the article, FitzRalph states that they are not:

Because of the arguments, I take the side that willing something is not the same as knowing the same thing, even if perhaps the willing of something is the knowledge of the same because it is present to the intellect: and for this reason namely that when the will wills it necessarily carries out its action, just like any other agent, and thus the action of the will of the one willing, after he did not will is something new which arose in it and from it, not something carried out before it willed.23

One rather irreverent argument for the distinction is given as follows:

If willing were the same as knowing, as in the following example, it would follow that the greatest happiness would be same as the greatest misery, that merit would become demerit, and that the highest justice would become iniquity, so that God would be iniquity and mortal sin. ... Supposing that God made the devil know everything which God now knows through His substance ... without changing anything else in the devil. Having done this, the devil is still miserable to the greatest extent. However, the misery of the devil is a certain wanting or refusing in his will. However, all wanting or refusing ... is knowing, and the devil has the same knowledge as God. Therefore, the greatest misery of the devil is the same as the greatest happiness of God. Consequently, by the same argument, the greatest justice is the worst iniquity, because the worst iniquity is the perverse will of the devil, and all of this will is the same as God ... and so it follows that God is the iniquity of the devil and his mortal sin.24

Crathorn does make one more reference to FitzRalph with regard to Conclusio 12 «In what way is the soul an image of God through its powers» and here we find FitzRalph placed in the company of Ockham.

Crathorn begins by referring to a distinction drawn from the commentary of Averroes on Physics I, comm. 5 between a part according to belief and according to imagination. FitzRalph had referred to this in article 5: Whether the parts of the created image are equal? Crathorn writes:

A part according to belief is that which in itself is really a part just like a hand is part of a man. However, a part according to imagination is when something is considered as if it were a part. Thus Augustine called a created image that rational mind and the parts of the image the natural powers of the same, namely, memory understanding and will, each of

23 Ad Articulum. Propter illa argumenta teneo hanc partem: scilicet, quod volucio respectu alicuius rei non est cognicio eiusdem; quamvis fortassis volucio alicuius rei sit cognicio sui ipsius, propter hoc quod ipsa est presens intellectui: et propter hanc causam, quia voluntas in volendo necessario agit suam actionem, sicut quodlibet alius agens, et ideo accio voluntatis volentis postquam non voluit est aliquid de novo factum in seipsa et a seipsa, non aliquid prius factum antequam ipsa uelit. (P., f. 34ra)

24 Supposito quod Deus faciat dyabolum cognoscere omnia quae ipse nunc cognoscit per substantiam suam, supplendo per suam substantiam vicem omnium cognicionem quas habet dyabolus, nullam aliam mutacionem faciendo in dyabol. Hoc facto, adhuc dyabolus est summe miser. Set miseria eius est aliquid uoloicio in uoluntate eius. Set omnis uoloicio siue nolucio, cum idem sit iudicium de eis, est cognicio; et dyabolus per postium non habet aliquam cognicionem quam Deus: ergo miseria dyabolus summa est Deus, et Deus est summa beatitudo. Ergo summa beatitudo est summa miseria, et per consequens summa iusticia est summa iniquitas per candem rationem; quia summa iniquitas est peruersa uoluntas dyabol, et omnis talis uoluntas est Deus, ut probatum est. Ergo, et cetera; et ita sequitur quod Deus sit iniquitas dyabol et eius peccatum mortale. (P., f. 33rb)
which is the true substance of the soul; it, however, is indicated by each of these three terms when taken as a part. … This is the way that Ockham and FitzRalph explain (exponunt) Augustine and I hold that they so well because Augustine does not speak correctly and does not distinguish in the way he talks between the terms which signify and the thing which is signified.  

FitzRalph also talks about a way in which the parts of the image can be considered to be equal and this by reason of their acts where no one of them is impeded in its activity by the other. However, he notes that memory understanding and will in via are sometimes unequal because we see that in someone memory is greater than understanding, and vice versa in someone else and in two other people memory and understanding is surpassed by the greatness of love. In patria however they will be equal, when they will be cured of all weakness; there the mind will not be impeded by anything and will be in a complete natural disposition.

Finally in article 6, FitzRalph replies to the principal question «Whether the human mind is an image of the Trinity». He begins by stating that he is adopting the definition of image given by Augustine in 83 Questions, q. 74 namely an image is a likeness which is expressed by another, in one of two ways: either in the same nature as in the divine persons, or in a different nature as in the case of the mental word with regard to that which it represents, and in the case of the mind with regard to the uncreated Trinity. He states that the human mind is an image of the uncreated Trinity because it is a certain likeness of it which has been expressed by it. However, it is an imperfect image because it is not a complete likeness, nor is it equal to the Trinity in everything, i.e., not in the way that the Son is the image of the Father in the uncreated Trinity.

FitzRalph states (ad 2.) that he concedes that there are three acts in the mind which are really distinct, namely, that act of memory which is the first act, and then actual knowledge and willing. The second argument was that if the species in memory and actual knowledge were different things, then the other would be superfluous because they represent the same thing distinctly, and whatever the mind can do by means of one part it can do through the other. FitzRalph replies that neither the species in memory is superfluous nor actual knowledge, as has been pointed out in the second article of this question, because the mind cannot understand anything in a second act without both.

In the fourth argument it is asked whether the mind is more an image of the Trinity than a man and an argument is used, drawn from Aristotle (Ethics I, viii), that happiness together with a minimum of goods is better than happiness alone. If this is the case then a human mind together with some good or other is better than a mind alone; therefore a composite of mind and body, namely a man, is better than a mind alone. FitzRalph answers that he regards the mind as being a truer image than a man. He refers to a quotation from Anselm which states that that which among beings is most noble is most like God, but a man is a more noble being than a mind, as is proved by the Philosopher Ethics, I. FitzRalph answers this by saying that ‘most noble’ can be understood in two ways, intensively and extensively. Anselm, he states, is speaking intensively but Aristotle speaks extensively where he says that happiness with a minimum of goods is better or more to be chosen than happiness alone. However, in the first way, the mind is a more noble being than a man and so it is more truly an image and likeness of God than a man.

With regard to the sixth principal argument, FitzRalph states that when it is said that the mind is an image of the Trinity because it remembers, understands and loves, he accepts this but the main reason why the mind is an image of the Trinity is because it is a

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25 G. Crathorn, Quaestiones, q. 7 concl. 4, pp. 344-345.
capacity for the Trinity (*capax Trinitatis*) and the other reason is because it can remember itself, understand and love itself. And this is what Augustine means in *De Trinitate*, 14, 23.

In his response to the seventh argument, FitzRalph interprets Augustine in a way which is very close to that of Peter Lombard. He asks what is meant by 'image' is to be found in the essence of the mind or in its acts. He states that it is more to be found in the essence because the essence itself is the image and the acts are not the image. Yet it might be argued that the mind is an image when considered together with these acts since it can grasp God through its acts and so then it is more of an image when it has this act than when it does not. This, however, says FitzRalph, does not follow because the mind is an image to the greatest extent because of its substance. Therefore, it is not more of an image at one time than at another.

With regard to the final argument (ad 8), he states that he concedes that when the mind has these three acts, namely remembering, thinking and willing, that it is a truer (*verius*) image of the Trinity than when it does not have any act at all. He concludes the question as follows:

However, when it is argued that then the mind is less like the Trinity than when it does not have anything besides itself because in the uncreated Trinity nothing is thus really distinct in the way that one act of the mind is different from another, I state, as I did in the reply to the first argument that when it has these three acts it is more similar to the Trinity inasmuch as it is a trinity but it is less similar to the Trinity by reason of these acts, inasmuch as the Trinity is a being which is simple to the highest degree; and this proves the argument and nothing more, and this is true.26

**CONCLUSION**

This brings us to the end of this brief overview of some of the arguments put forward by Richard FitzRalph in his *Lectura* on the human mind as a trinity. We have seen that FitzRalph holds that memory, understanding and willing are expressions of the essence of the soul, and whereas each expresses something of the soul they cannot be said of each other and as such are distinct. Memory understanding and willing are to be found in the soul’s complete nature but the soul is not to be found completely in any one of them. As regards the relationship between willing and understanding, Wodeham will later specifically oppose FitzRalph for treating them as distinct. FitzRalph, on the other hand, opposed Aquinas for regarding memory and understanding as the same. For FitzRalph, memory, understanding and willing are not the same (which was the position of Scotus and that adopted by Chatton against Ockham), neither are they really distinct but are distinguished inasmuch as the soul expresses itself differently through these powers. Finally, for FitzRalph actual knowledge is really distinct from the species in memory, i.e., there is a real distinction between the powers.

The topic was a traditional one but FitzRalph’s treatment shows how such a tradition was capable of renewal in the light of contemporary developments such as the debate regarding the distinction between the mind and its powers and that between the powers itself, as well as the *species in memoria*. Here as in other parts of the *Lectura* one is

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26 Ad ultimum: concedo quod quando habet illos tres actus, tune est uerius ymago trinitatis quam quando non habet aliquem actum; et cum arguitur quod tune mens est minus similis trinitati quando non habet aliquid preter se: quia in trinitate increata nichil est sic duersum in re, sicut est unus actus mensis ab alio: dico sicut dixi in responsione ad primum argumentum, quod habitis ists actibus est similor trinitati quatenus trinitas est, set minus est similis racione illorum actuum ipsi trinitati, quatenus est ens summe simplex; et hoc probat argumentum et non plus, et hoc est uerum. (P., ff. 36va-vb)
struck by the amount of philosophical rather than theological material, much of what we have here is psychology or philosophy of mind.

FitzRalph is sometimes depicted as a traditionalist who is somewhat pedantic and unaware of the significance of developments in thought around him. This seems to be for two reasons. Firstly, that he does not pay much attention directly to Ockham or his followers and secondly that he follows the Augustinianism of Henry of Ghent. I think that it is rather interesting that he renews and explores the writings of Henry. Indeed, a study of FitzRalph’s debt to Henry of Ghent is long overdue. One can hardly dismiss FitzRalph as a second rate thinker because he relied upon Henry or because he did not consider Ockham to be a first rate thinker. Clearly, FitzRalph like many other thinkers chose to stick with the auctoritates rather than the moderni but he did so in an intelligent way and one which stimulated the debates of his contemporaries, Wodeham, Holcot and Crathorn. They might not have agreed with him but they still felt that they had to answer him.
WHAT POINT IS THERE IN STUDYING THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY TODAY?

Gregorio Piaia

ABSTRACT
Contrary to the opinion that considers the study of the history of philosophy to be useless, or sees it prevalently as subservient to today’s philosophical problems, the author maintains that a formative, not purely informative, insight is to be gained by such a study, because it helps us understand that past theories are something “other” than our contemporary view of man and the world. The history of philosophy thus reveals itself as a valuable tool for broadening and enriching our intellectual – and therefore human – experience, avoiding the risk of intellectual conformism.

Students of journalism are taught that they should never begin an article with a quotation, but it is well-known that historians of philosophy thrive on quotations, and some malicious people might even add that if quotations were to be removed, there would be little left of the philosophical historian’s work… I shall, therefore, start with two quotations, from two scholars of different periods and orientations, but who fully agree on one point. The first comes from the French philosopher Nicolas Malebranche, the theorist of ‘Occasionalism’, who departed this life on 13th. October, 1715:

“It seems to me that it is pretty useless, for those who live in the present, to know that there was once a man called Aristotle, whether this man [effectively] wrote the books that bear his name, and whether he means a certain thing or something else in a certain passage from his works; this cannot make a man either wiser or happier, but it is very important to know whether what he says is in itself true or false. Hence it is useless to know what Aristotle believed regarding the immortality of the soul, even though it is very useful to know that the soul is immortal […]”.

The other quotation is from the American philosopher Willard van Orman Quine, who died on 25th. December, 2000, and it refers to the period immediately following the Second World War (1946), when he was entrusted with a course on the history of philosophy, along with the one on logic, at Harvard:

“My senior colleagues had caught up with me again in the demand for a historical course, but I was spared Leibniz. I chose Hume. […] I tried to make a virtue of the necessity. The critical knowledge of Hume that I would need for my course would mesh with my own philosophical thinking, providing enrichment and perspective. The course, moreover, once given, could be readily given again. Rationalize as I might, however, preparation dragged. I dawdled. It was a struggle to keep ahead. By the end of the course my lecture notes were full and ready for a repeat performance in another year, but I could not bear to offer the course again. Determining what Hume thought and imparting it to students was less appealing than determining the truth and imparting that”.

A simple but blunt question arises out of these two quotations: What is the point of studying (and hence teaching) the history of philosophy? It is certainly not a new question, since it was already posed in the eighteenth century by historians of philosophy, one of whom was Jacob Brucker: in the Dissertatio praeliminaris of his Historia critica philosophiae

(1742-1744), he reserved a specific paragraph to the theme De utilitate historiae philosophicae. Moreover, it is a recurrent, and today particularly persistent, question. What possible answers can we give to it? Some scholars, the heirs to Malebranche and Quine, will reply that dedicating oneself to the history of philosophy is useless since the philosopher’s task is to tackle the truth-content of this or that proposition or theory. Yet I believe that most thinkers would reply more or less in the following fashion: the study of past philosophy may help to enrich our reflections with additional ideas, but it must, in any case, be carried out in the light of our present. It is to the latter point that I should like to draw attention. It is the theme, dear to followers of Hegel such as Benedetto Croce, but also to the Marxist Antonio Gramsci, of the ‘contemporaneity’ of history, that is to say the “hegemony of the present over the past”, since “occupying oneself with the history of philosophy makes sense […] only because the historical process is called upon to prepare that highest, most comprehensive form of self-awareness that mankind effects in the present”.

It is clearly not necessary to be a Hegelian to recognise that any look backwards must perforce start from the subject’s contemporaneity, and to admit that with the passing of the centuries and the accumulation of cultural experiences human beings (or at least the few of them that have the habit, or ‘vice’, of reflecting) have acquired a greater awareness of themselves, even if this awareness has not restrained them from committing considerable follies. Yet what today can be contested (even if until yesterday it may have appeared to be self-evident) is that it should be possible to indicate unequivocally the direction and meaning of such a ‘historical process’, of which philosophy is supposed to represent the most elevated manifestation – that is to say, the presumption of being able to explain where philosophy and the whole of mankind are heading, as a presupposition for a global explanation of past philosophy, reread in a progressive key and in its influence on our present. This entails making some painful, yet necessary, excisions, even if these are ‘anaesthetized’ and sublimated by a shrewd use of the dialectic device, whether Hegelian or Marxist, distinguishing between what is ‘alive’ and what is ‘dead’, that is to say between what promotes the progress of the Spirit (or Society) and what curbs it and is thus inexorably destined to end up in the wastebin of history.

That the study of the past is useful for a better understanding the present is, to say the least, self-evident after two and a half centuries of flourishing historicist culture. The history of ideas, George Boas remarked, shows us how we have come to think as we do today, which is certainly not irrelevant. This does not mean, however, that we must read the past systematically according to the present, thus compromising the fundamental, irreducible ambivalence that underlies our relationship with the past, which is both distant and near, similar and different, interesting and dull; and its reconstruction frequently escapes what for us is the ‘logic of ideas’. It is not merely by chance that Boas himself noted that, in order to dedicate ourselves to the history of ideas, we have to be very curious, perhaps even going so far as to take an interest in ideas that seem to us ‘silly’, or ‘superstitious’ or even ‘obsolete’, paying the same attention to them as we do to established truths. Boas was referring to the history of ideas, which is usually taken to mean a much wider, varied field than the history of philosophy. However, past philosophy also appears in our eyes to be strewn with ‘silly’, ‘obsolete’, if not exactly ‘superstitious’ theories. It is all completely useless stuff, and it is quite pointless to make the teaching of philosophy so
cumbersome: it would be much better to condense it and focus on themes and theories that are closer to the present age and to our pupils’ current interests…

But are we really sure that such a preconception of topicality at all costs is the most advantageous, in view of the ideal that education should broaden our mental horizons, dispelling intellectual conformity among our students and, even more importantly, among the teachers themselves? In my opinion, the educational value of the historical study of philosophy lies above all in what is different from, ‘other’ than, our current way of feeling and thinking, rather than in the ‘affinities’ between the past and the present, or in the remote ‘seeds’ that permit us to see ‘coherently’ modern, topical developments. There is no point in conveying facile illusions to our pupils; we are unquestionably the children of our past, we and our distant forefathers are all part of a thinking community that sees itself as such and converses across the centuries; but this does not preclude the fact that past doctrines often appear to us, particularly to the younger generations, to be tainted by a radical difference and must be approached and read as such, setting them in a context to which they belong, without recurring to deforming topicalizations in usum Delphini. On this issue, there is a sentence by Ernest Renan which offers us some food for thought, since it was written at a time when the metaphysics of history were all the rage and philosophies of the present strongly determined the interpretation of those of the past. “Il ne faut demander au passé que le passé lui-même” (“You should not ask the past to supply anything but the past itself”) is how the French scholar presented histhèse on Averroès et l’Averroïsme (1852), at once deluding, almost brutally, those who thought that they might find ‘positive results immediately applicable to the needs of our time’ in the history of philosophy.7

This, of course, seems to support the view of those who criticise the usefulness of the historical approach to philosophy. If the situation is so complex and intricate, they maintain, one might as well eliminate all historical approach to philosophy, or restrict it to an occasional reference, to be offered like a sort of side-dish according to one’s taste. I disagree with this view, for a number of reasons which I shall now try to explain. The first may seem obvious, but it is worthwhile recalling it since we are asking a very simple, yet equally challenging, question: with what kind of cultural apparatus are we to equip our students who will be living in the middle of the twenty-first century? Is there any sense in ‘wasting time’ on studying the life and works of philosophers who are more or less distant from us when our students are intrigued by perfectly different interests and problems that might well call for a wholly contemporary approach? In the words of a modern humanist, Ernst H. Gombrich, my reply is: “If we lose our memory, we lose that dimension which gives depth and substance to our culture”.8 Philosophy constitutes an essential aspect of this historical dimension, which cannot be compressed and flattened into a strictly theoretical didactic method, or one that presents us with contemporary ‘problems’ (of an epistemological or dialogical-existential nature), just as the initiation of a student into literary and artistic creativity in no way replaces the study of past masterworks but, if anything, is enriched by it. This is because philosophical knowledge, precisely like that of literature and art, is in its very nature a historical knowledge, not systematic and accumulative – that is, – unless one would wish to raise again the specter of ‘the scientist myth’ that would like to refound philosophy on the model of the exact and natural sciences.

Against such a ‘myth’, it would be only too easy for us, today, to object that the paradigms of scientific knowledge also end up by being historically outdated and old-fashioned, to be submerged in their turn in the great cauldron of historical-cultural

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knowledge. As for philosophy, on the other hand, it enriches our human heritage in the same way as literature and the arts do, albeit in a different manner; moreover, its products do not end up in the ‘cemetery of opinions’ — to use Hegel’s expression — but constitute an equal number of examples of the human striving for truth, a sort of large kaleidoscope whose single fragments, each of a different size and brightness, do not fit together to form an organic unit for the simple reason that they aim at truth, which in itself is inexhaustible, from different angles. There is nothing for it but acknowledge this human condition and enjoy these fragments, however partial, ‘useless’ or strange they may be, through contact with the texts that have transmitted their memory. It is Renan again who, in justifying himself for having dedicated so much time to a philosophy such as that of Averroes, ‘which has nothing more to do with us’, observes:

“Since it is admitted that the history of the human spirit is the greatest reality open to our investigations, any research aiming to illuminate a corner of the past acquires a significance and a value. In a certain sense [and these words could well be used in reply to the above-mentioned criticisms of Malebranche and Quine] it is more important to know what the human spirit has thought about a problem than to have an opinion (un avis) about this problem; because, even if the question is insoluble, the work of the human spirit to solve it constitutes a fact of experience (un fait expériméntal) that is always of interest in itself; and supposing that philosophy is condemned to never being anything but an eternal, vain effort to define the infinite, one cannot at least deny that this effort is a show worthy of the highest attention by curious spirits”.

This amounts to saying that, at least from a certain point of view, the knowledge of what in the course of history has been thought out about certain recurrent problems is more interesting than one’s own personal views... One might, however, object: does this not perhaps mean suppressing the student’s effort to reach a personal opinion which, however limited, from an educational point of view may be worth far more than a heap of knowledge, that is to say — why not admit it? — a heap of ‘notions’? There is here, indeed, the risk of tarnishing a sacred principle of modern pedagogy — which, however, like all sacred principles in this world, should be continually verified and not turned into a sacred dogma. Are we quite sure that our students’ so-called personal opinions are really exactly that — an effort to reach a personal opinion — or do most of them not reflect the young generation’s most ordinary, stereotype feelings as they are disseminated by the media? And, should a young person actually acquire his/her own personal viewpoint, one must then question whether this would not involve a contrary risk, which is far from being unlikely in an age of heightened egocentricity and narcissism, thinly veiled by a mask of formal tolerance — that is to say, the risk of a solipsistic narrow-mindedness restricted to personal or group convictions that excludes any open-mindedness towards what is other than ‘my’ ideas and thus, indeed, makes any verification of my judgments impossible, making me fall into what Kant called ‘logical egoism’, with the consequent loss of ‘common sense’. At the end of the passage cited above, Renan refers to ‘curious spirits’, and it may not be an accident that Boas also recalls ‘an uncommon type of curiosity’. It is my belief that this kind of curiosity should not characterise only the professional aspect of that strange animal, the historian of ideas. All things considered, it corresponds to the interest in the other, which Terence expressed in a sentence that used to be frequently quoted: Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto. It also corresponds — to restrict ourselves to just one man and one quotation — to the ever-topical lesson of a free spirit such as Montaigne:

“I am not possessed with the common error, to judge of others according to what I am myself. I am easy to believe things differing from my self. Though I be engaged to one

9 Renan, Averroës et l’Averroïsme, pp. ix-x.
form, I do not tie the world unto it, as every man doth? And I believe and conceive a thousand manners of life, contrary to the common sort: I more easily admit and receive difference, than resemblance in us (et, au rebours du commun, reçois plus facilement la différence que la ressemblance en nous).11

Since this mental attitude takes seriously everything that bears witness to thinking mankind, it has a considerable educative value, bringing about an interaction between the historical and the personal dimensions, thus extending the young generation’s heritage of human experience, where, ‘experience’ does not imply a mere accumulation of data, but rather the development of a cognitive field that permits a greater understanding, and hence better judgments, based on a broader outlook. In this regard, there is a passage that deserves to be cited in full and seriously reflected on. It is a passage written, by the way, not by a philosopher, not even by an educator, but by an old, professional historian, Geoffrey R. Elton. What is more, he is an Englishman, not a ‘continental’:

“Human beings learn primarily from experience; if they are to think and act profitably – with positive and useful results – they need as wide a vision of the possibilities contained in any given situation and any present assembly of other human beings as they can acquire. An individual experience, of course, is always limited and commonly distorted by prejudice and self-interest: what men and women need is an enlarged experience against which to measure the effect of those disadvantages. That experience is made available by the historian presenting the past in all its variety and potential, and all of it divorced from the immediate needs and concerns of the present. […] The so-called lessons of history do not teach you to do this or that now; they teach you to think more deeply, more completely, and on the basis of an enormously enlarged experience about what it may be possible or desirable to do now”.12

There is, therefore, a great gap between this and certain unhealthy, pathetic applications of the old adage historia magistra vitae, which intend to discover ready-made prescriptions in the past: it is not the task of history to provide miracle cures but, if anything, to give us an antidote to the ever-incumbent temptation to make our own views of the world all-absorbing and conclusive. “A knowledge of the past”, to quote Elton again, “should arm a man against surrendering to the panaceas peddled by too many myth-makers. […] By enormously enlarging personal experience, history can help us to grow up – to resist those who, with good will or ill, would force us all into the straitjackets of their supposed answers to the problems of existence”.13

This is the message of a general historian, which must be applied to that even more mobile and problematic field of the history of philosophy, with all its nuances, where ‘facts’ are represented by ‘ideas’ conveyed by texts, ideas linked by discourses and argumentations, whose internal logical validity students must undoubtedly learn to test, without, however, letting them forget that those ideas were born not through spontaneous generation, but were formulated by people. As Eugenio Garin says, “There is no Philosophy, before whose court philosophies and philosophers are to be called reddere rationem: there are people who have tried to become critically aware in a unitary way of their experiences and their time”.14

It is here that the historical method further shows its formative efficacy, since the recognition of that doctrinal otherness is accompanied by that of the personal otherness, forming the premises for a correct relationship of intersubjective communication, and hence of a

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13 Ibi, p. 73.
14 Eugenio Garin, La filosofia come sapere storico (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1990), p. 15.
reciprocal understanding. “The history of philosophy,” Nicola Abbagnano wrote in the first preface to his great historical-philosophical work (1946),

“reproduces in its technique of strictly disciplined enquiries the same attempt that is the root and cause of every human relationship: understanding one another and understanding. And it reproduces it in the very sequences of success and disillusion, of reawakening illusion and orientating clarity, and of ever-reviving hopes”.15

At a conference in 1952, Luigi Stefanini noted that,

“Dialogue with the past is a particular case of dialogue tout court, and follows its own laws. I do not understand the person who is talking to me if I do not re-express his words for myself. I understand them because I make them my own, but I would not understand the person talking to me and would rave to myself if what I re-express for myself were not re-expressed with the stamp of the other person, who precedes and conditions me in expression. The word of the other precedes me by just one second, but even if it preceded me by a thousand years, the relationship would be identical”.16

It is all very well, then, saying that a ‘true philosopher’ only deals with philosophical problems, not with philosophers or philosophies, and that this strictly theoretical approach must also be maintained when teaching philosophy. Unless one reduces such problems to those of a strictly formal-logical order, or to an abstract game of theoretical contrapositions, of the ‘extreme consequences’ of a certain doctrinal position, of ‘surpassing’ it, and so on, how is it possible to understand a philosophical problem without knowing and understanding the cultural and personal context in which it was formulated? This person-philosophy tie does not solely refer to a set of biographical and geographical data, the so-called historical contextualisation, which serve as a ‘folkloristic’ framework to the speculative positions, on which, like a theoretical distillation, our straining for a logical-conceptual, or hermeneutic-lucubrative, test must concentrate. The person of a professional philosopher, and hence his intellectual choices, also participate in those ‘two levels’ that, as Isaiah Berlin noted in lecture given as long ago as 1953, but published only in the 1990s, coexist in all of us:

“[...] an upper, public, illuminated, easily noticed, clearly describable surface from which similarities are capable of being profitably abstracted and condensed into laws; and below this is a path into less and less obvious yet more and more intimate and pervasive characteristics, too closely mixed with feelings and activities to be easily distinguishable from them”.17

We must, therefore, ask ourselves whether a philosopher’s theorizings may be sorted out merely in the consequential and aseptic linearity of a logical process, or whether they do not in some way also depend on “this level of half-articulate habits, unexamined assumptions and ways of thought, semi-instinctive reactions, models of life so deeply embedded as not to be felt consciously at all”.18 This does not mean resurrecting a facile psychologism, with the endless, obvious references to the subconscious. The real point, to go back to the beginning, is our capacity to understand the other; that is, to develop the sense of

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15 Nicola Abbagnano, *Storia della filosofia* (Turin: UTET, 1963), I, p. xviii. A fairly similar position had been expressed, in those very same years, by Gouhier: after having defined history as “the vital time of intelligence”, he notes that, “the history of the philosophers may be completely detached from the preoccupations of present philosophy and offer living philosophers what their thought demands: a society. In order to enter into society with Plato or Descartes I do not need to know what is dead and what is alive in Platonism or in Cartesianism: I need to know exactly who Plato was and what Descartes said” (Henri Gouhier, *La philosophie et son histoire*, Paris: Vrin, 1948, pp. 123-124; my italics).


18 Ibid.
reality that for Berlin is not attained through the social sciences, which aim to formulate general laws, but through Pascal’s *esprit de finesse*, masters of which – again according to Berlin – are great historians and great politicians. This favorable comparison with historians and politicians may appear to be provocative or unconsciously ironic, and in the eyes of some colleagues this evaluation of the trade of the historian, including that of the historian of philosophy, may seem exaggerated. I think, however, that apart from the traditional professional feuds between philosophers and historians of philosophy, these words of Berlin deserve serious attention. Perhaps the effort of understanding what Aristotle or Hume meant to say is neither idle nor useless, *pace* Malebranche and Quine.
Husserl’s Critique of Brentano’s Doctrine of Inner Perception and its Significance for Understanding Husserl’s Method in Phenomenology

Cyril McDonnell

ABSTRACT
This article first outlines the importance of Brentano’s doctrine of inner perception both to his understanding of the science of psychology in general in his Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint (1874) and to his new science of descriptive psychology in particular which he later advances in his lecture courses on ‘Descriptive Psychology’ at the University of Vienna in the 1880s and early 1890s. It then examines Husserl’s critique of that doctrine in an ‘Appendix: Inner and Outer Perception: Physical and Psychical Phenomena’, which Husserl added to the 1913 re-issue of his Logical Investigations (1900–01). This article argues that, though Husserl promotes a very different method in phenomenology to the method of ‘inner perception’ which Brentano designs for descriptive psychology, one cannot fully understand the significance of the method that Husserl advocates in phenomenology, both in the Logical Investigations and in Ideas I (1913), without (1) distinguishing four different meanings for ‘inner perception’ (as accompanying inner percept, inner reflection, incidental awareness, immanent perception) in Brentano’s thought and addressing (2) the problematic issue of the particular kind of scientific method for his new science of descriptive psychology which Brentano bequeaths to Husserl.

Franz Brentano (1838–1917) is probably most renowned for his appeal to ‘what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental) in-existence of an object’ in an effort to describe, in his 1874 publication Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint [PES], the characteristic feature of our human consciousness.1 Though Brentano re-introduced this concept for the purposes of removing all confusion and disagreement over what distinguishes the psychical from the physical, much disagreement and confusion, alas, ensued among his commentators and critics regarding what exactly he meant by ‘the intentional in-existence of an object’, as well as by his later characterization of the directedness of acts of consciousness towards their objects as an ‘intentional relation’.2


2 In full the famous 1874 passage reads: ‘Every psychical phenomenon is characterised by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object, and what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously, reference to a content, direction towards an object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a thing), or immanent objectivity. Every psychical phenomenon includes something as object within itself, although they do not all do so in the same way. In presentation something is presented, in judgement something is affirmed or denied, in love [something is] loved, in hate [something is] hated, in desire [something is] desired and so on.’ (PE3, p. 88:124–125.) In this passage, then, Brentano employs no less than ‘five typifying expressions’ to define psychical act-experiences: every psychical phenomenon is characterised by the (1) ‘intentional inexistence of an object’, (2) ‘mental inexistence of an object’, (3) ‘immanent objectivity’, (4) ‘reference to a content’, and (5) ‘direction towards an object’. Theodore de Boer, The Development of Husserl’s Thought, trans. by Theodore Plantinga (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978), p. 6.) As de Boer also notes, for Brentano, expressions (1), (2) and (3) are ‘fully synonymous’ and point to ‘the fact that they [psychical act-experiences] include a content’, and that ‘(T)his content is more precisely defined as intentional or immanent or mental’ (ibid.). Expressions (4) and (5) are different aspects of psychical act-experiences. They are concerned with the directedness or relation (Richtung, Beziehung) of a psychical act-experience towards a content or an object (ibid.). In the 1874 passage, Brentano understands these expressions to be describing the same thing, namely, the object-relatedness of psychical act-experiences. Thus John Passmore, the historian of philosophy, is correct to note that, in the 1874 passage, Brentano takes ‘these phrases [i.e., (4) and (5)] to be synonymous’. J. Passmore, A Hundred Years of Philosophy (London: Duckworth, 1957; Penguin Books, 1968; 1980), p. 178. Sometimes after PES, however, Brentano uses the term ‘intentional’ to describe this directedness of psychical-acts to their objects (within consciousness) as an ‘intentional relation’. Cf., Franz Brentano, The Origin of our Knowledge of Right and Wrong, trans. by Roderick M. Chisholm & E. Scherwind (London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), p.14, and his corresponding n. 19, my emphasis; Vom Ursprung sittlicher Erkenntnis (Leipzig: Duncker and Humblot, 1889).
Another factor complicating the understanding of Brentano's doctrine of the 'intentionality' of consciousness is that several of Brentano's students and followers, whilst advocating allegiance to his original concept, promote different versions of 'Brentano's thesis' (as it is often referred to today), and these versions themselves often come into direct conflict not only with Brentano's own doctrine on the intentionality of consciousness but also with each other.\(^3\) Notwithstanding the disputes regarding the correct interpretation and meaning of 'Brentano's thesis' and the faithfulness or otherwise of the various versions of 'Brentano's thesis' that were subsequently unfurled, Edmund Husserl was in no doubt about both the cogency and the originality of Brentano's discovery of the 'intentionality of consciousness' and the significance of this to his own idea of phenomenology, for, as Husserl reminds us, in his 1931 'Author's Preface to the English Edition' of the *First Book* of his *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* (1913), 'his [Brentano's] conversion (Unwertung) of the scholastic concept of intentionality into a descriptive root-concept of psychology constitutes a great discovery, apart from which phenomenology could not have come into being at all'.\(^4\)


Understandably, therefore, significant attention has fallen on Husserl’s development of Brentano’s doctrine of intentionality as a means of trying to approach Husserl’s idea of phenomenology as a science of consciousness and its objectivities.5

Considerably less attention, however, has fallen on Brentano’s doctrine of ‘inner perception’ (die innere Wahrnehmung), which is the ‘method’ that Brentano claims to have used in his discovery of the ‘intentionality’ of consciousness and upon which his new science of ‘descriptive psychology’ is based.6 Elsewhere, I have dealt with Brentano’s modification of the scholastic concept of intentionality into a root-concept of descriptive psychology and assessed some of the implications this has for understanding Husserl’s

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5 There are many interpretations of Husserl’s concept of intentionality but De Boer’s extensive and meticulous study *The Development of Husserl’s Thought*, which traces the unfolding of the theme of intentionality from its first occurrence in Husserl’s earliest writings, though his *Logical Investigations* (1900–01), up to and including Husserl’s turn to transcendental idealism in *Ideas I* (1913), is still one of the best accounts of this topic. For a shorter account, see, Klaus Hedwig, ‘La discussion sur l’origine de l’intentionalité husserlienne’, *Les Études Philosophiques* (1978), 259–72, and his ‘Intention: Outlines for a History of a Phenomenological Concept’, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 39 (1979), 326–40. Dermot Moran thinks that ‘Husserl’s own breakthrough insight concerning intentionality came in 1898 (as he later recalled in *Krisis*) when he realised there was a “universal a priori correlation between experienced object and manners of givenness”’. In other words, that intentionality really encapsulated the entire set of relations between subjectivity and every form of objectivity’. Edmund Husserl: *Founder of Phenomenology* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), pp. 18–19. Husserl, nonetheless, credits Brentano with the initial revaluation (Umwertung) of the Scholastic theory of the object-relatedness of acts of the will (‘intentio, sicut ipsum nomen sonat, significat in aliquid tendere […] intentio prorie est actus voluntatis’, S.Th. 1a 2ae q.12 a.1) into a root-concept of descriptive psychology denoting the object-relatedness of all psychical act-experiences, but credits himself, in the development of his own idea of phenomenology, with the working out of the implications of such ‘correlativity’, though Brentano did not see this. See, Edmund Husserl, *Phänomenologische Psychologie, Vorlesungen Sommersemester 1925, Gesammelte Werke*, Husserlana (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1968), Vol. IX, ed. by Walter Biemel, ‘§ 3 d Brentano als Wegbereiter für die Forschung in innerer Erfahrung — Enkdeckung der Intentionalität als Grundcharakter des Psychischen’, pp. 31–5; *Phenomenological Psychology. Lectures, Summer Semester 1925*, trans. by John Scanlon (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977), ‘Section (d) Brentano as pioneer [path finder] for research in internal experience — discovery of intentionality as the fundamental character of the psychic’, pp. 23–27. The first thesis that Brentano uses in the 1874 passage of *PES*, regarding the ‘intentional in-existence of an object’, is used to mark its opposition to real extra-mental existence. This concept of ‘intentio’ as the abstracted form or intelligible species residing intentionally (and not really) in the soul of the knower is an entirely different concept to ‘intentio’ when deployed in Scholastic theory of the will. Cf., H.D. Simonin, ‘La Notion d’intention dans l’œuvre de S. Thomas d’Aquin’, *Rivue des Sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 19 (1930), 445–63. St Thomas, as Simonin notes, never confuses the two different meanings of the one and same term (‘un seul et même terme’) of *intentio*, when the latter is employed in either the cognitive or conative order (p. 451). The Scholastic metaphysical doctrine and distinction between intentional as mind-dependent existence and *esse naturale* (real extra-mental existence) that Brentano appeals to his *PES* 1874 passage is still operative, nevertheless, in Husserl’s *Ideas I* (1913), when he describes the world, after his famous world-annihilation thought-experiment, as *only an intentional correlate* (mind-dependent object) of consciousness. See, *Ideas I*, §49 ‘Absolute Consciousness and the Residuum After the Annihilation of the World’.

6 See, Brentano, *PES*, Book I, *Psychology as a Science, Chapter 2 ‘Psychological Method with Special Reference to its Experiential Basis’, §2 ‘Über die Methode der Psychologie, insbesondere die Erfahrung, welche für sie die Grundlage bildet’), pp. 40–4. Shortly after the publication of *PES*, Brentano begins to separate the task of describing clearly the contents of consciousness and its objectivities (‘descriptive psychology’) from the task of explaining the causal origins of such phenomena in human consciousness (‘genetic psychology’), and advocates the natural scientific approach and methodology for the latter part of the science of empirical psychology. In the 1880s Brentano even coined the term ‘Psychognosie’ for the descriptive part of the science of empirical psychology and the term ‘psychognost’ for the descriptive psychologist. He borrowed the idea of dividing the science of empirical psychology into two component parts, a descriptive and a genetic part, from a model that occurred in other natural sciences. ‘In the same way as otopnognosy and geognosy preceded geology in the field of mineralogy, and anatomy generally precedes physiology in the more closely related field of the human organism, psychognosy [descriptive psychology] […] must be positioned prior to genetic psychology’. See, *DP*, Ch. 1 ‘Psychognosy and Genetic Psychology’, pp. 3–11 (p. 8). In relation to the natural science of psychology, descriptive psychology, then, as Brentano defines it, is essentially preparatory in nature in that its main aim is to describe clearly what the genetic, natural-scientific part would later endeavour to explain causally using the method, results and theories of natural science. Cf., also, Brentano’s letter to Oskar Kraus in 1894, published in the Appendix of *PES*, pp. 369–70. 76
philosophy. In this article, I wish to draw attention to Husserl’s critique of Brentano’s doctrine of inner perception and assess some of the main implications this has for understanding Husserl’s ‘method’ of ‘doing’ phenomenology. As is well known, Husserl believed that the method that he fought hard to wrest from ‘the things themselves’ (die Sachen selbst) was of pivotal importance to his elaboration of what constitutes a proper concept of phenomenology. As is equally well known, however, this method of philosophizing was either modified substantially by many of Husserl’s so-called ‘followers’ or rejected outright by other ‘followers’ who proposed alternative methods to Husserl’s method for philosophy and phenomenological research. It is, nonetheless, arguably the case that it was Brentano’s rejection of Husserl’s method of doing philosophy that disappointed Husserl most, but this did not quell Husserl’s insistence to his own students in his 1925 Summer Semester lecture-course that what he attempted to do was to advance Brentano’s ideas, even if ‘Brentano himself did not recognise it as the fruition of his own ideas’. This is not to say that Husserl develops a very different method to Brentano, for, as we shall see, he does, but over-identifying Husserl’s method with Brentano’s method, or ignoring the relation between Husserl’s method and Brentano’s are both to be avoided in coming to understand Husserl’s method in philosophy and phenomenological research.

In the first section of this article, I will outline the main features of Brentano’s doctrine of inner perception that are of most relevance to an evaluation of his views on psychology in general in PES and of his new science of descriptive psychology in particular which he subsequently developed in his lectures on Descriptive Psychology [DP] at the

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8 Heidegger is probably the most well-known figure to have claimed not only to have followed Husserl’s method in philosophy of ‘zu den Sachen Selbst’, but do to so even ‘more pointedly’ (sachgerechten Feithaltens) than Husserl himself did, cf., William Richardson, *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought* (Hague: Nijhoff, 1963), pp. ix–xxii (p. xv), but Husserl, who did believe in the 1920s that Heidegger was a faithful adherer of his method, after undertaking a serious study of Heidegger’s *Being and Time* (1927) (and other recent publications by Heidegger) in 1930–31, came to ‘the distressing conclusion’ that, ‘philosophically I have nothing to do with this Heideggerian profundity, with this brilliant unscientific genius; that Heidegger’s criticism [of my work], both open and veiled, is based upon a gross misunderstanding [of my work]; that he may be involved in the formation of a philosophical system of the kind which I have always considered my life’s work to make forever impossible. Everyone except me has realised this for a long time.’ Edmund Husserl, ‘Letter to Alexander Pfaender, January 6, 1931’, in Edmund Husserl, *Psychological and Transcendental Phenomenology and the Confrontation with Heidegger (1927–1931): The Encyclopaedia Britannica Article, The Amsterdam Lectures, “Phenomenology and Anthropology” and Husserl’s Marginal Notes in ‘Being and Time’ and ‘Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics’*, trans. and ed. by Thomas Sheehan & Richard E. Palmer (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press, 1997), p. 482. That Heidegger developed Husserl’s ideas very differently, of course, does not imply that he misunderstood Husserl’s work, but Heidegger does not subscribe to Husserl’s ‘method’ in phenomenology and phenomenological research. The subsequent dispute, then, between the so-called early realist ‘followers’ of Husserl’s ‘eidetic method’ (Göttingen School) and the later ‘followers’ of Husserl’s ‘transcendental method’ (Freiburg School) — both of whom accused each other of not understanding the ‘Master’s intentions’ properly — deflects attention from Husserl’s own insistence and consistent re-iteration that what he attempted to do was to advance the method that Brentano had deployed in his lectures on ‘descriptive psychology’ at Vienna University, which Husserl attended from 1884 to 1886. For the impact that these lectures had on Husserl’s decision to continue on with a career in mathematics (for he had already completed his PhD in Mathematics) or to devote his life to philosophy, see Husserl’s own account, written shortly after Brentano’s death in 1917, ‘Reminiscences of Franz Brentano’, in *The Philosophy of Brentano*, ed. by Linda L. McAlister (London: Duckworth, 1976), pp. 47–55.

University of Vienna in the 1880s–1890s. In the second section of this article, I will examine Husserl’s critique of Brentano’s doctrine of inner perception in an ‘Appendix’ that Husserl wrote and published for the 1913 re-issue of his *Logical Investigations* (1900–01) and that he entitled ‘Outer and Inner Perception: Physical and Psychological Phenomena’. In this ‘Appendix’, Husserl outlines Brentano’s account in *PES* and then distinguishes ‘what is indubitably significant in Brentano’s thought-motivation from what is erroneous in its elaboration’. Here is one place where we can witness major points of philosophical agreement and disagreement between Husserl and Brentano’s thought (and commentators, critics and historians of Husserl’s thought could do well to examine this ‘Appendix’). More importantly, however, here is a place where we can see, quite clearly, the way in which Husserl endeavours not only to correct ‘defective phenomenological analysis’ that Brentano supplies but also to *bold fast and more pointedly*, than Brentano himself did, *to the task of addressing the things of concern* (*die Sachen selbst*), namely, in this instance, in *PES*, the descriptive-psychological methodological task of clarifying what we mean when we talk about what is physical and what is psychological.

Assessing the philosophical relationship between Brentano’s method of ‘inner perception’ and Husserl’s ‘method’ of ‘doing’ phenomenology, however, is made difficult by the fact that Husserl, both in his *Logical Investigations* (1900–01) and in *Ideas I* (1913) advances some essential features of a method which Brentano, in his elaboration of his new science of descriptive psychology, either simply does not entertain or explicitly rejects. Thus it will be of importance to include, in section two, a discussion of some central concepts and distinctions that Husserl makes in his analysis of consciousness that are of

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10 The first time that Brentano delivered a lecture-course entitled ‘Descriptive Psychology’ was in 1887–88, and he repeated these, without major revision, in 1888–89 and 1890–91. The 1888–89 lecture-course was entitled: ‘Deskriptive Psychologie oder beschreibende Phänomenologie’, ‘Descriptive Psychology or Describing Phenomenology’. See, Spiegelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement* (1994), p. 27. Thus Husserl, who had attended Brentano’s lectures in Vienna University from 1884 to 1886, would not have attended these lectures. Müller, however, informs us that ‘(E)ven though Husserl left Vienna by the time the present lectures were read by Brentano, he was in possession of a transcript (by Dr Hans Schmidt-Kunze) of the 1887/8 lectures which is kept in the Husserl Archive in Leuven, (call number Q10).’ (Introduction, Part I, *Descriptive Psychology*, p. xiii, n. 14.) Moran also notes that after Husserl left Vienna in 1886 he still ‘diligently collected Brentano’s lecture transcripts, e.g. his *Descriptive Psychology* lectures of 1887–91, his investigations of the senses, as well as his studies of fantasy, memory and judgement’ (Edmund Husserl: *Founder of Phenomenology*, pp. 18–19).

Brentano, of course, was working on these issues when Husserl attended his lectures because Husserl remarks that one lecture course he took with Brentano was called ‘Selected Psychological and Aesthetic Questions […] [which] was devoted mainly to fundamental descriptive analyses of the nature of the imagination’ (*Reminiscences of Franz Brentano*, p. 47). Again, another course Husserl took with Brentano, ‘Elementary Logic and its Needed Reform’, ‘dealt with systematically connected basic elements of a descriptive psychology of the intellect, without neglecting, however, the parallel elements in the sphere of the emotions, to which a separate chapter was devoted’ (ibid.). ‘It was’, Husserl informs us, ‘from his [these] lectures that I first acquired the conviction that gave me the courage to choose philosophy as my life’s work’ (p. 47–48). It was, then, the way in which Brentano was attempting to clarify the meaning of concepts employed in the normative sciences of Logic, Ethics and Aesthetics, through the application of his descriptive-psychological method of inquiry, that caught Husserl’s attention most. In Brentano’s earlier *PES* (1874) the task of descriptive psychology was to clarify basic concepts for the science of empirical psychology, but sometime after this, Brentano believed that this ‘descriptive method’ could be used and applied to the problem of the founding of the norms in the disciplines of Logic, Ethics and Aesthetics. For a lucid account of the impact which this development by Brentano of his descriptive method in this direction had on Husserl’s initiation in philosophy, as well as on the tasks that Husserl later sought to address in his career in philosophy, see Theodore De Boer’s excellent, short article, ‘The Descriptive Method of Franz Brentano: Its Two Functions and Their Significance for Phenomenology’, in *The Philosophy of Brentano*, ed. MeÅëster, pp. 101–7.


13 Ibid., p. 859, and see, esp., §4, pp. 859–860.
pivotal importance both to his development of his ‘method’ in phenomenology and to his relinquishing of Brentano’s method of ‘inner perception’. The conclusion then provides some evaluations of the significance of this ‘Auseinandersetzung’ between Brentano and Husserl on the question of method in ‘descriptive psychology’ for understanding Husserl’s ‘scientific’ method in phenomenology and his idea of phenomenology in general.

I

BRENTANO’S DOCTRINE OF INNER PERCEPTION

In PES, Brentano draws attention to what he believes is the experiential origin of the science of psychology, remarking,

Psychology, like all natural sciences, has its basis in perception (Wahrnehmung) and experience (Erfahrung). Above all, however, its source is to be found in the inner perception of our own psychical phenomena (der eigenen psychischen Phänomene). We would never know what a thought is, or a judgement, pleasure or pain, desires or aversions, hopes or fears, courage or despair, decisions and voluntary intentions if we did not learn what they are through inner perception of our own phenomena. Note, however, that we said that inner perception (innere Wahrnehmung) and not introspection, i.e. inner observation (innere Beobachtung), constitutes this primary (erste) and indispensable source (unentbehrliche Quelle) of psychology.14

The origin that Brentano is clearly interested in above, then, is how we come to know or learn about our own experiences directly, rather than knowledge that comes from any hypothetical theorizing about their causes. In this regard, his approach to this topic is quite similar to David Hume’s, who, in his Treatise of Human Nature, is likewise more interested in the cognitional, not causal origins of our own experiences.15 What natural scientists study and arrive at through their observations, scientific hypotheses and experimental technique is simply not knowledge that we arrive at through ‘inner perception of our own psychical phenomena’.16 This is why the appeal to the ‘inner perception of our own psychical phenomena’ does not figure centrally in the method of the natural science of psychology; natural scientists, rather, appeal to, as mentioned above, a method that involves observation, scientific hypotheses and experiment, such as promoted, for instance, by Wilhelm Wundt, in his seminal study Principles of Physiological Psychology, also published in

15 For a lucid account of Hume’s way of addressing ‘the chief argument’ of his Treatise, his theory of causation, see, Matthew O’Donnell, ‘Hume’s Approach to Causation’, Philosophical Studies, 10 (1960), 64–99 (p. 66). Though trained earlier in Scholastic philosophy Brentano, by the time he wrote PES, had become thoroughly acquainted with Hume’s Treatise and refers to it on several key points in PES. One of the chief characteristics of Brentano’s thinking, as Husserl remarks, is that it ‘never stood still’ (Reminiscences of Franz Brentano’, p. 50). This explains the many reputations that followed Brentano, some of which were far from complementary. Husserl, for instance, recalls that when he arrived at Vienna University in 1884, he went to Brentano’s lectures ‘at first merely out of curiosity, to hear the man who was the subject of so much talk in Vienna at that time, but whom others (and not so very few) derided as a Jesuit in disguise, as a rhetorician [vulgus, a fraud, a Sophist, and a Scholastic]’ (ibid., p. 47). Husserl, however, tells us that he was ‘soon fascinated and then overcome by the unique clarity and dialectical acuity of his explanations, by the so to speak catalytic power of his development of problems and theories’ (ibid., p. 48). And ‘[M]ost impressive was his effectiveness in those unforgettable philosophy seminars. (I remember the following topics: Hume’s Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, and Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals; Helmholtz’s lecture Die Tatsachen der Wahrnehmung (The Facts of Perception); and Du Bois-Reymond’s Über die Grenzen des naturerkennens (On the Limits of the Knowledge of Nature)’ (ibid.).
16 This is ‘because’, as O’Donnell points out, ‘Hume’s “first maxim” is that in the end we must rest content with experience [T/60/b]” (p. 65, n. 11). Brentano follows suit in PES. ‘My psychological standpoint is empirical; experience alone is my teacher’, ‘Foreword to the 1874 Edition’ (PES, p. xxxii).
1874, the same year as Brentano’s *PES*. In emphasizing, then, that the origin of our knowledge of ‘psychical phenomena’ relies upon ‘inner perception’, and not on any form of inner or outer (sense) observation, Brentano is clearly not following the line and method advocated by the natural science of psychology. Indeed, sometime after the publication of *PES*, Brentano, in his lectures on *DP* at Vienna University, makes a clear distinction between what he calls ‘genetic psychology’, which relies on causal analysis and natural-scientific theories, and ‘descriptive psychology’ or ‘describing phenomenology’, which relies solely and exclusively on the evidence of inner perception. Why Brentano attributes such methodological significance to ‘inner perception’ for the science of psychology in general, as he understands it in *PES*, needs to be determined first, nonetheless, before assessing his views on ‘inner perception’ and what ‘empirical standpoint’ in psychology he is exactly referring to in his title of *PES*.

(i) *The Significance and Priority of Inner Perception in Brentano’s Understanding of the Science of Psychology in PES*

*PES* comprises two books: Book I ‘Psychology As a Science’ and Book II ‘Psychical Phenomena in General’. In Book I, Brentano begins by drawing attention to the etymology of the Greek term, ‘(T)he word “psychology” means *science of the soul*, and proceeds to credit Aristotle with the inauguration of psychology as a science, noting, ‘Aristotle, who was the first to make a classification of science and to expound its separate branches in separate essays, entitled one of his works *Peri Psyche*. By the soul, Aristotle, Brentano informs his reader, means ‘the form, the first activity, the first actuality of a living being. And he considers something a living being if it nourishes itself, grows and reproduces and is endowed with the faculties of sensation and thought, or if it possesses at least one of these faculties’. Thus ‘the oldest work on psychology’, Brentano continues, ‘goes on to discuss the most general characteristics of beings endowed with vegetative as well as sensory or intellectual faculties’. No sooner, however, does Brentano draw attention to this original demarcation of the field of enquiry for psychology by Aristotle as a science of living beings (plants, animals and human beings), than he remarks that, with the emergence of various natural sciences, many of the areas that were initially associated with this view of psychology are now no longer considered to be the preserve of the science of psychology. Botany, for example, has emerged and investigates vegetative life activity, and other natural sciences, such as, zoology, biology, anatomy and physiology examine various dimensions of animal-sense life activity, so much so, ‘that their investigation [into the sensitive soul of the human being] became the province of the physiologist rather than the psychologist’. Also, some of the salient features of human conscious, intellectual-life activity, such as our experience of colours, odours and sounds, as well as our brain

17 Brentano knew and quotes this study on several occasions in *PES* (see, p. 6), and the work of several other natural scientists or philosophers interested in natural scientific endeavours (e.g., Fechner, Maudsley, Bain, Condillac, Helmholtz, Horwicz, Darwin, Lavoisier, the Mills).

18 See, supra, n. 6 and n. 10.

19 Originally, Brentano had planned six books for *PES* (‘Foreword to the 1874 Edition’, ibid., p. xxxvii–xxix) but only completed and published the first two. The final book was to deal with the relation between the mind and the body, culminating in addressing the question of immorality (Book VI). Once the descriptive-psychological task in Book II of distinguishing ‘physical’ and ‘psychical phenomena’ seemed to be accomplished by Brentano (at least to his own satisfaction), he realized that his method of descriptive psychology could be employed in addressing problems regarding the foundations of the normative sciences of logic, ethics and aesthetics. Thus, in the Foreword to his next publication *The Origin of our Knowledge of Right and Wrong* (1889), he refers to his ‘new lines of thinking’ (in the direction of the founding of the normative disciplines) for his science of descriptive psychology. See, De Boer, ‘The Descriptive Method of Franz Brentano: Its Two Functions and Their Significance for Phenomenology’.

20 *PES*, p. 4.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.
functions and brain activity, now come under the scrutiny of natural-scientific theories of stimuli and effect, and so forth.\textsuperscript{24}

Given Brentano’s earlier background in philosophy — prior to the publication of \textit{PES} in 1874, he had already completed and published two highly acclaimed works on Aristotle, his doctoral study \textit{On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle} (1862) and his 1866 habilitation thesis \textit{The Psychology of Aristotle, in Particular His Doctrine of the Active Intellect} (1887) — one would expect that Brentano would disapprove of this excision of reflections on plant-life activity and animal-sense life activity from the ‘modern definition’ of psychology, but he does not; in fact, he approves of it, concluding, ‘(T)his narrowing down of the domain of psychology was not an arbitrary one. On the contrary, it appears to be an obvious correction necessitated by the nature of the subject matter itself.’\textsuperscript{25} Whether this is a correction necessitated by the subject-matter itself, however, depends on one’s view of the subject-matter of psychology as a science, and by 1874 Brentano clearly believes that psychology \textit{no longer} could be defined in the traditional manner as a science of the soul (of living beings) but exclusively as the science of ‘our own psychical phenomena in general’. This is a significant turning point in his understanding of psychology as a science. It is of importance to understand why Brentano makes such a move.\textsuperscript{26}

There are two distinct, but related reasons why Brentano approves of this narrowing down of the domain of psychology as a science. Firstly, the rise of the various natural sciences (botany, biology, zoology, physiology etc.) simply cannot be ignored; so, if psychology, as a science, is to continue as a particular science within the various natural sciences, then it too will have to define and secure for itself, in some manner of speaking, its own subject-matter. Secondly, Brentano thinks that the ability of a human being to reflect upon its own ‘phenomena’ or ‘activity’ (‘psychical phenomena’) can provide just such an ‘experiential basis’ and ‘domain’ of enquiry for the newly emergent science of empirical psychology. This is why he likes to insist on the point that though ‘(P)sychology, like all natural sciences, has its basis in perception and experience, [...] its primary and indispensable source [...] is to be found in the inner perception of our own psychical phenomena.’\textsuperscript{27} In this manner, Brentano is convinced that ‘inner perception of our own psychical phenomena’ can and does secure an ‘empirical’ area of investigation for the newly emergent natural science of psychology. What is at stake here, then, is the continued existence of psychology as a science and the precise place for the science of psychology within the evolution of the natural sciences. Brentano, nevertheless, does regard psychology as ‘the crowning pinnacle’ of the natural sciences and as one that promises itself to be ‘the science of the future’, influencing aesthetics, educational pedagogy, logic, moral, political and social science.\textsuperscript{28} Thus Brentano is hopeful that, just as physics has matured and established itself as the natural science of ‘pure physical phenomena’, so too,

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{26} Brentano, who likes to credit Aristotle with many of the doctrines that he espouses, says that Aristotle himself hints at this in Bk III of \textit{De Anima} when he says that reflections on organs are ‘not the proper province of one who studies the soul [and its operations], but of one who studies the body’ (\textit{PES}, p. 5); clearly, however, Brentano has jettisoned \textit{philosophically} his allegiance to any Aristotelian approach to psychology, and embraced the ‘modern definition’ of psychology, inaugurated by Descartes and continued by Locke and Hume, in affirming the ‘mind’ and the immediate access to ‘our own psychical phenomena’ as the primary and main object of enquiry for psychology.

\textsuperscript{27} \textit{PES}, pp. 40–4. That \textit{this basis} of ‘inner perception’ later becomes a \textit{dispensable source (eine entbehrliche Quelle)} in Husserl’s elaboration of the intuition of essences in the \textit{Logical Investigations} (1900–01) was, therefore, entirely incomprehensible to Brentano. See, however, Bartok, ‘Brentano’s Intentionality Thesis’, and Brentano’s (my emphasis) restriction of the term ‘phenomena (Phänomene)’ to ‘immediate experiential facts (Erfahrungstatsachen)’, p. 442.

\textsuperscript{28} \textit{PES}, p. 3, 25.
psychology, this fledgling natural science, can arise and succeed to establish itself as the natural science of pure ‘psychical phenomena in general’.29

In maintaining that psychology finds its origins in the ‘inner perception of our own phenomena’, nevertheless, Brentano has, in effect, switched his entire philosophical allegiance away from any Aristotelian understanding of psychology as a science of the soul, and adopted the more ‘modern conception’ of philosophical psychology accredited to Descartes, wherein the first and primary reality for investigation is the mind and not living beings given to outer perceptual-sense experience (however the latter are to be subsequently explored, either in the way Aristotle did, through observation and critical metaphysical speculation, or in the way contemporary natural science does through observation, scientific hypotheses and laboratory experimentation). At any rate, Brentano believes that the way in which consciousness can, in the light of its own evidence, know itself by reflecting directly on its own contents is a path that is available to psychology as a science to pursue.30 Nowhere in his PES, or in his lectures on DP in the 1880s and 1890s, does Brentano relinquish this Cartesian-Lockean-Humean conviction regarding the manner in which consciousness can gain knowledge of itself from reflection within itself.31 Indeed, in a ‘Supplement’ that he prepared for the 1911 re-issue of his PES Brentano re-iterates and emphasizes this precise approach, asserting: ‘(T)he fact that the mentally active subject has himself as object of a secondary reference regardless of what else he refers to as his primary object, is of great importance’.32 This fact is of great importance to Brentano in his conception of psychology as a science in PES precisely because it is on this basis that he believes that a correction and a refinement to the traditional Aristotelian subject-matter of psychology, away from being a science of the soul and towards being a science of psychical phenomena, must be made by the subject-matter itself. Without the ability of consciousness to reflect upon its own contents, and the desire of the scientist to do so, there would be, in Brentano’s estimation, no impetus or ‘province’ for a natural science of psychical phenomena in general to investigate.33 Furthermore, since ‘inner perception’ can also double-up, as it were, to serve as a particular ‘method’ of investigation for the science of psychology, or, at least, more accurately speaking, for the descriptive part of the science of

29 See, PES, pp. 98–100, and his comments, however, on the ‘tacit limitations’ that both of these definitions of physics as the science of physical phenomena and psychology as a science of psychical phenomena include.

30 John Locke famously held that all our knowledge came from the twin founts of sensation and reflection. Cf. J. Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, ed. R. Woolhouse (London: Penguin, 1997), Book II, ch 1. One of the meanings that Brentano has for ‘inner perception’ is just this ‘method’ of reflecting on consciousness. Hume follows suit, ‘Impressions may be divided into two kinds: those of sensation, and those of reflection’. Treatise, Bk 1 Pt 1, Sec. 2 Para 1. About his distinction between impressions that are based upon and derived from sensations and ideas that one derives from reflecting upon one’s own mental activities, Hume remarks: ‘The examination of our sensations belong more to the anatomists and natural philosophers than to moral [human science]. [...] For this reason, I have here [in the Treatise] chosen to begin with ideas [of reflection]’ (ibid.). Before Hume and Locke, however, Aquinas did remark on our knowledge of our self/mind: ‘Our mind knows itself not by its own substance but by its activities — and through a consideration of those activities man can come to a general understanding of the mind’s nature — but that requires diligent and subde investigation’ (S.Th. 1a. q. 87. a1). Brentano, nonetheless, follows Locke and Hume, and not Aquinas and Aristotle in PES.

31 By 1874 Brentano had clearly moved away from his originally held Aristotelian view of psychology as a science and concurs with the ‘modern definition’ of psychology, as instituted and developed by Descartes, Locke, and Hume, but his reputation as a Scholastic still surrounded him in his Vienna period (1874–1894). See, Husserl, ‘Reminiscences of Franz Brentano’, quoted supra, in n.15. Cf., also, Rolf George, ‘Brentano’s Relation to Aristotle’, in Die Philosophie Franz Brentanos, ed. by Roderick M. Chisholm & Rudolf Haller (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1978), pp. 249–266.


33 In doing this, Brentano is quite aware that he is aligning his conception of psychology to the ‘modern conception’ of psychology, and not to any Aristotelian conception of psychology. This marks a significant break from the general views he held in his 1866 habilitation thesis on The Psychology of Aristotle, In Particular his Doctrine of the Active Intellect, published in 1867.
psychology, both a definite method and a particular subject-matter for a new science of descriptive psychology is possible on the very basis of ‘inner perception’.

That there is, then, a connection between our natural consciousness and the natural science of consciousness, Brentano is in no doubt — he draws attention, approvingly, to ‘the noteworthy trend which is now bringing philosophy and the natural sciences closer together’ — but Brentano is keenly aware that what a natural scientist investigates and discovers (e.g. stimuli and effects, brain functions and its activity etc.) is not directly experienced at all by our natural consciousness in inner perception. In this regard, Brentano acknowledges, at least implicitly, that an important dimension of our natural consciousness simply evades natural-scientific treatment, rather than being contained within any over-arching, theoretical, natural-scientific examination of human consciousness itself, but Brentano (for reasons we will see below) does not view this relation between our experience of consciousness and the natural-scientific study of the human being as problematic in his thought. How descriptive psychology is related to genetic psychology is not addressed, but it is precisely with the experience of the contents of human consciousness, as provided though ‘inner perception’, that the descriptive part of the science of psychology, as opposed to the natural-scientific ‘genetic’ part of the science of psychology, is primarily founded and constituted.

There are, then, ‘tacit limitations’ to what a natural-scientific explanation of human consciousness can provide, “tacit limitations” [nonetheless] which Brentano himself, as Husserl notes, ‘expounded [in PES] with characteristic clarity and acuteness’. The first of the ‘limiting conditions’ that Brentano identifies is that ‘the definition of the natural sciences [as the sciences of physical phenomena ...] do not deal with all physical phenomena, but only with those that appear in sensation, and as such do not take into account the phenomena of imagination’. And even in regard to the former [= sensations], Brentano adds, ‘they [natural sciences] only determine their laws insofar as they depend upon physical stimulation of the sense-organs’. Thus Brentano concludes, We could express the scientific task of the natural sciences by saying something to the effect that they are those sciences which seek to explain the sequence of physical phenomena connected with normal and pure sensation (that is, sensations which are not influenced by special psychical conditions and processes) on the basis of the assumption of a world which resembles one which has three dimensional extension in space and flows in one direction in time, and which influences our sense organs. Without explaining the absolute nature (Beschaffenheit) of this world, these sciences would limit themselves to ascribing to its forces capable of producing sensations and of exerting a reciprocal influence upon on another, and determining for these forces the laws of co-existence and succession. Through these laws they would then establish indirectly the laws of sequence of the physical phenomena of sensations, if, through scientific abstraction from concomitant mental conditions, we admit that they manifest themselves in a pure state and as occurring in relation to a constant sensory capacity. We must interpret the expression ‘science of physical phenomena’ in this somewhat complicated way if it is to be equated with the meaning of natural science.

What Brentano identifies above is what Husserl later, in Ideas I, succinctly calls and sketches as the theoretical attitude adopted by the natural scientist from within ‘the general thesis’ or ‘natural thesis’ of ‘the natural attitude’. It is important to note this link that Husserl elaborates upon in Ideas I between the ‘general thesis of the natural attitude’ and the

34 PES, p. 11.
35 Husserl did take this problematic seriously and attempted to address the relationship between ‘descriptive psychology’ (philosophy) and natural sciences in the development of his own thought. See, infra, n. 75.
38 Ibid.
theoretical position adopted by the natural scientist from within that ‘natural attitude’, that is, ‘the natural scientific attitude’. In the ‘general thesis’ of the ‘natural attitude’ (natürliche Einstellung), in perception things are simply there (vorhanden), whether attention is directed towards them or not. In the theoretical position adopted by the natural scientist there is a further step that excludes the particularity of one’s own immediate experiences; that is to say, the natural scientist begins of course his study with the experiences of physical phenomena as given to us through sense organs and takes such things as simply there, lying-in-stock and available for analysis (from within the thesis of the natural attitude), but the particularity of one’s actual experiences of things given to our outer perceptual-sense experiences is not entertained directly in that science; the natural scientist, rather, assumes that (1) the world has an absolute character, that is to say, it has an essential meaning and an existence that is independent of one’s own actual experiencing of the world; that (2) the human being is a being in that world with an invariant sensibility; and (3) that the human being is comparable to any other thing or living being in the world amenable to natural-scientific analysis. From within these limitations and assumptions, discoveries in natural sciences (e.g., Pavlov’s salivating dogs, or B.F. Skinner’s rat-box experiments, etc.) are attributable univocally to human beings as well as to animals — no more, no less. This is why the natural scientist must abstract from ‘concomitant psychical conditions’ in their very approach to scientific explanation and interpretation of ‘physical phenomena’ in order to engage in natural science. It is, nonetheless, the very ‘fact’ that we can reflect directly upon the contents of our own consciousness (even more so than the rise of the various natural sciences, or the theoretical position adopted by the natural scientist from within the natural attitude) that leads Brentano to the central contention in Book I ‘Psychology As a Science’ of PES, that whereas physics, granting their tacit limitations ‘which point to explanatory metaphysical hypotheses’, can be defined as a science of pure physical phenomena in general (given to acts of outer perceptual-sense experience), [descriptive] psychology can be defined now as a science of psychical phenomena in general (given to acts of inner perception, and without any metaphysical explanatory hypotheses). At any rate, Brentano opens Book II ‘Psychical Phenomena in General’ of PES with the claim, ‘(T)he entire world of our appearances can be divided into two large classes, i.e., into the classes of physical and psychical phenomena; a division that he makes use of throughout Book I, but without any argumentation for that distinction. Providing the argumentation for that distinction, and clarifying the meaning of the physical and the psychical, as well as discussing the various ways in which acts present themselves immediately in consciousness

41 If there is a specific experience of human consciousness as such that simply is not the concern and cannot be the concern of natural science, then this means just that — no more, no less. Consciousness no longer becomes important to natural science. This is what lies behind Kathleen V. Wilkes title of her article ‘Is Consciousness Important?, British Journal for the Philosophy of Science, 35 (1984), 223–243, and before her article, behind William James’s famous 1904–05 article, ‘Does Consciousness Exist?’ (reprinted in his Essays in Radical Empiricism (1912)). The latter is not an argument against either the existence or the significance of the experience of human consciousness as such, but an argument that consciousness, as we know it, is not examined by natural scientific theories. And we could add, if it is, one of the major consequence of this, as Maurice Nathanson succinctly puts it at the end of his paper, is that, ‘(T)he naturalization of consciousness is the philosophical death of consciousness’ (‘The Empirical and Transcendental Ego’, in For Roman Ingarden: Nine Essays in Phenomenology, ed. by A.T. Tymieniecka (Hague: Nijhoff, 1959), pp. 42–53 (p. 53). There are, of course, several well-known and much discussed objections to any attempt to capture the essence of human consciousness, the main one being that there is no such thing as consciousness as such in the first place. If there is no such thing as human consciousness as such, then any thesis about it (or its nature) is, of course, spurious. Proving that there is no such thing as human consciousness as such, however, is a disputed issue in both philosophy and science.


43 ‘Die gesamte Welt unserer Erscheinungen zerfällt in zwei große Klassen, in die Klasse der physischen und in die der psychischen Phänomene.’ Zweites Buch. Von den psychischen Phänomenen im allgemeinen. p.108. Brentano’s original italics retained and McAlister’s ct. al. English trans. mod.: ‘All the data of consciousness are divided into two great classes – the class of physical and the class of mental phenomena.’ PES, p. 77.
(as acts of presentation, of judgement, and of love and hate or of the emotions, the three
‘natural classes’ identified and distinguished by Brentano according to the way in which the
act is related to its object) becomes the main preoccupations of Book II ‘Psychical
Phenomena in Genera’ of PES.

Asserting that there are two main classes of physical and psychical phenomena as
domains of enquiry for natural science does not, however, as Brentano well knows, resolve
the many difficulties and disputes that exist between natural scientists regarding what the
physical and psychical is. In point of fact, at the beginning of Book II of PES Brentano
draws attention to a very high level of ‘confusion’ among scientists over the meaning of
these terms, noting that ‘neither agreement nor complete clarity has been achieved
regarding the delimitation of the two classes’.44 He also informs us that he found ‘no
unanimity among psychologists’ about the meaning of these basic terms for their own
particular science.45 Furthermore, ‘even important psychologists [citing J.S. Mill] maybe
hard pressed to defend themselves against the charge of self-contradiction’.46 This ‘lack of
agreement’ in relation to the meaning of what is the physical and what is the psychical,
coupled with ‘misuse’, ‘confusion’, and ‘self-contradiction’ by some eminent scientists in
their use of the terms, is, in Brentano’s estimation, a major obstacle to the evolution of the
natural sciences in general and to the budding new science of psychology in particular. As
he writes, ‘(I)t is a sign of the immature state of psychology that we can scarcely utter a
single sentence about psychical phenomena which will not be disputed by many people’.47
Faced with this scenario, Brentano declares, for Book II, ‘(O)ur aim [therefore,] is to clarify
the meaning of the two terms “physical phenomenon” and “psychical phenomenon”,
removing all misunderstanding and confusion concerning them. And it does not matter to
us what means we use, as long as they really serve to clarify these terms’.48 Since Brentano,
however, cannot settle this dispute about the meaning of these terms among psychologists
and scientists by appealing to any well-founded theory elaborated in natural science itself,
nor resolve this difficulty by drawing upon any (debatable) meaning which these terms may
have enjoyed in any particular philosophical, historical or cultural understanding of the
physical and the psychical, his only alternative is to check the meaning of these terms
against the facts of experience itself.49 This is the only way in which Brentano believes that
we can clarify the meaning of such terms as ‘physical phenomena’ and ‘psychical
phenomena’ for all concerned, whether those concerned be natural scientists, the ordinary
‘man-in-the-street’, or the historian of philosophy.50 This, as Husserl correctly identifies, is
Brentano’s ‘thought-motivation’ in Book II of PES, and though Husserl has problems with
Brentano’s elaboration of the way in which Brentano actually determines the meanings of
‘physical phenomena’ and ‘psychical phenomena’ in relation to ‘inner’ and ‘outer

44 Ibid., p. 77.
45 Ibid., p. 86.
46 Ibid., p. 77.
47 Ibid., p. 80.
48 Ibid., p. 78.
49 This is what lies behind his remarks in his 1874 Foreword to PES, ‘(M)y psychological standpoint is
empirical; experience alone is my teacher’ (PES, p. xxvii). Brentano uses this to assess earlier efforts to
distinguish various dimensions to the human soul or mind, from Plato and Aristotle, through some major
thinkers of the Middle ages and modern philosophies, up to and including contemporary natural-scientific
50 Husserl agrees with this basic approach of Brentano and develops, as is well known, his particular view of
phenomenology as the tracing back to perceptually-founded acts (in human consciousness) in the experiences
of a valid normative logical consciousness as such in his Logical Investigations, and the experience of ‘Being as
thing’ given to outer perceptual-sense experience and Being as (conscious) experience given to inner
perception, in his (in)famous and celebrated reduction of the ‘natural attitude’ to the ‘transcendental-
phenomenological attitude’ in Ideas I.
perception’, Husserl, nonetheless, believes that Brentano is on the right track in this ‘interesting line of thought’.51

The explicit task, then, that Brentano set himself in Book II is not to rely on any natural scientific theories, or philosophical systems, or hypothetical-systematic analysis of physical and psychical phenomena, but to return to the facts of experience itself to clarify the meaning of these concepts against intuition. Notwithstanding these motivations, Brentano’s starting point in his understanding of ‘physical phenomena’ and ‘psychical phenomena’ in Book II is not, however, as philosophically neutral or as theoretically untainted as he thinks it is. He does begin with ‘examples’ of both physical and psychical phenomena, rather than theories, but these examples are theory-laden.

Firstly, by ‘physical phenomena’, Brentano clearly means what Locke termed ‘secondary qualities’ (or what commentators today call *qualia* of sensory experience), for, as he tells us,

Examples of physical phenomena [...] are a colour, a figure, [...], a chord which I hear, warmth, cold, odour which I sense; as well as similar images which appear in the imagination.52

In fact, towards the beginning of Book I Brentano had already drawn attention to ‘an experiment’ that ‘John Locke once conducted [...] in which, after having warmed one of his hands and cooled the other, he immersed both of them simultaneously in the same basin of water. He experienced warmth in one hand and cold in the other, and thus proved that neither warmth nor cold really existed in the water’.53 Brentano, indeed, argues even further than Locke, maintaining that the way in which things and their objective properties *really* and *truly* exist extra-mentally — that is to say, when we are not immediately and directly aware of them — are as ‘atoms’, ‘light rays’, ‘forces’ and so forth, that is to say, as whatever the natural sciences theoretically uncovers or discovers and studies. Brentano also, unfortunately, calls these theoretically constructed objects of natural science ‘physical phenomena’ too, but these are the very things that *do not appear directly to (or in) consciousness*.54 Thus we must recognise two different meanings with which Brentano operates for the one term of ‘physical phenomena’ in *PES*: in the first sense, physical phenomena are colours, sounds, odours, warmth etc., which enjoy phenomenal existence and exist as ‘immanent objects’ of actual acts of outer perceptual-sense experience; that is to say, they exist as the objects of those experiences, but exist only *as long as the experience occurs*. As Locke’s experiment demonstrates, warmth only exists in the experiencing and not as objective properties of things existing extra-mentally (water). Physical phenomena, in the second sense, are the theoretically constructed objects of natural science (e.g., light-rays, sine-waves, forces, H2O, and so forth). When considered from a natural-scientific-theoretical point of view, these ‘physical phenomena’ enjoy actual existence, whether we are made aware of their actual existence through natural-scientific means, or not. The latter theoretically constructed objects of physics, however, are not the immediate and direct.

52 *PES*, pp. 79–80: 112. The terminological switch from ‘physical things’ in his 1866 habilitation thesis on Aristotle’s psychology to ‘physical phenomena’ (qua ‘secondary qualities’) should alert commentators to the shift from old to new modern science that Brentano now approves of.
53 *PES*, p. 9.
54 ‘I believe that I will not be mistaken if I assume that the definition of natural science as the science of physical phenomena is frequently connected with the concept of forces belonging to a world which is similar to the one extended in space and flowing in time; forces which, through their influence on the sense organs, arouse sensation and mutually influence each other in their action, and of which natural science investigates the laws of co-existence and succession. If those objects are considered as the objects of natural sciences, there is also the advantage [over ‘physical phenomena’ considered as sensorial objects of actual acts of outer sense perception, as is evident from the context] that this science appears to have as its object something that really and truly exists’. *PES*, pp. 99–100.
actual objects of outer perceptual-sense experience for Brentano.  

55 So, what are the actual objects that he claims consciousness is a consciousness of, and that his new science of ‘descriptive psychology’ is primarily interested in? The actual objects that consciousness is a consciousness of turns out to be the immediate and actual experiences themselves that the ‘mentally active subject’ enjoys or endures.  

56 For Brentano, then, the relation between consciousness and its objectivities, from a descriptive-psychological point of view, is entirely *intra-*psychical and self-contained. In this regard Brentano is clearly subscribing to some version of Hume’s doctrine of ideas in which it is held that the mind, in all of its operations and transactions, never has directly available to itself anything but its own perceptions.  

57 If we turn to what Brentano means by ‘psychical phenomena’, these too turn out to be very similar to what Locke and Hume claim is what we perceive when consciousness reflects upon its own activities. By a ‘psychical phenomenon’, Brentano tells us, he means, 

Hearing a sound, seeing a coloured object, feeling warmth or cold, [...] similar states of imagination, [...] the thinking of a general concept, [...] every judgement, every recollection, every expectation, every inference, every conviction or opinion, every doubt, [...] and every emotion.  

58 ‘Psychical phenomena’, then, are identifiable, individual psychical act-experiences that a ‘mentally active subject’ has, as long as they are actually occurring for that mentally active subject. They include a very wide range of experiences, from involuntary sensations (of colours and sounds), to taking an interest in something, from judging something to be true or false, to imaging something, from misunderstanding something, to loving or hating something, from fearing something (ghosts or spiders), to hoping for something, from daydreaming, to taking a disinterested point of view, from making a moral judgement, to making a valid logical inference, from being certain about something, to being doubtful about something, from being sad, to being happy, and so forth.

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55 ‘We have no right, therefore, that the objects of so-called outer perception really exist as they appear to us. Indeed, they demonstrably do not exist outside of us. In contrast to that which really and truly exists, they are mere phenomena’. *PES*, p. 10. 

56 Brentano, therefore, can play on the literal meaning of the German word ‘Bewusstsein’, to show that what consciousness is a-consciousness-of is, *to be (sein) aware* (Bewusst). Thus the German word itself, ‘(T)he term “consciousness”, since it refers to an object which consciousness is a conscious of *[von welchem das Bewusstsein Bewusstsein ist]*, corroborates, Brentano believes, even his own famous definition of ‘psychical act’ / ‘psychical phenomenon’ that he had given earlier in the famous passage of *PES* (p. 88), ‘in terms of its distinguishing characteristic, i.e., the property of the intentional [=mental] in-existence of an object, for which we lack a word in common usage’ (*PES*, p. 102). Later, Heidegger will unpack the meaning of this etymology (like others before him, e.g., Marx) to stress it implies some ‘meaning of Being’, and that this is what determines ‘consciousness’, and not the other way around. This, of course, misconstrues the point that Brentano wishes to make, namely, that consciousness exists — the latter is ‘the wonder of all wonders’ as Husserl would later stress, following Brentano’s descriptive-psychological stance. Such word-support does not work for the English term ‘consciousness’, of course; the latter, rather, stems from the Latin, *con* (together) and *sci* (to know), as in having shared knowledge with others, and thus is linked to ‘moral consciousness’ (*conscientia*). In a court of law, for instance, when one is charged with being ‘an accessory after the fact’ (*factum*), or of ‘being conscious of the fact’, one is being charged with being an accomplice or an witness to the deed done (*factum*) by somebody else. Thus the Latin phrase, ‘*conscientia sibi*’ is translated into English as ‘conscious to oneself’, and it is with such ‘internal testimonies’ that Descartes uses the term ‘*conscientia*’ in his starting-point of his philosophical analysis of the mind. Brentano follows Descartes.

57 ‘Nothing is ever present to the mind but its perceptions; and [...] all the actions of seeing, hearing [...] fall under its denomination. The mind may never exert in any action which may not be comprehended under the term perception.’ *Treatise*, p. 456/b. The influence of Hume on *PES* is extensive whereas in his previous published work *The Psychology of Aristotle, In Particular His Doctrine of the Active Intellect* (1867) it is non-existent. Between 1886 and 1974 Brentano undertakes extensive readings of Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and some Kant, and many more works. It is this ‘modern definition’ and ‘modern conception’ of psychology (*PES*, pp. 18–19) that dominates his understanding of psychology/philosophy as a science throughout the 1870s, 1880s and into the early 1890s. Brentano returns to his interest in Aristotle in the early 1900s.

58 *PES*, p. 79:111–112.
Whether or not there exists a soul-substance as bearer of such ‘psychical phenomena’, we can, Brentano says, set this question aside because this is not an issue for the science of psychical phenomena. The only metaphysical commitment that Brentano believes he needs to subscribe to, in order to defend the ‘modern definition’ of psychology as a science of psychical phenomena, is ‘that there are psychical phenomena’. Thus he concludes,

(F)or whether or not there are souls, the fact is that there are psychical phenomena [as evidently presented through ‘inner perception’]. Nothing, therefore, stands in our way if we adopt the modern definition [of psychology as the science of psychical phenomena] instead of defining psychology as the science of the soul. Perhaps both are correct. The differences, which still exist between them, are that the old definition contains metaphysical presuppositions from which the modern one is free [...] Consequently, the adoption of the modern conception simplifies our work. Furthermore, it offers an additional advantage: any exclusion of an unrelated question not only simplifies, but also reinforces the work. It shows that the results of our investigations are dependent on fewer presuppositions, and thus lends greater certainty to our convictions.  

Brentano, therefore, believes that the ‘modern conception’ of psychology as a science of psychical phenomena does not contain any metaphysical presuppositions similar to the old definition of psychology as a science of the soul. It also seeks to have fewer epistemological presuppositions, thus enhancing its modern ‘scientific’ character. This, however, does not mean that the modern definition of psychology does not contain any metaphysical or epistemological presuppositions, for it clearly does; the most important one being that psychical phenomena exist and that their existence, as is evident from the context, is known (and guaranteed as such) via ‘inner perception’. Questions pertaining to the existence of such phenomena, nevertheless, are simply not part of psychology as a science. It suffices for the study of psychical phenomena to begin with the fact that psychical phenomena exist. Yet Brentano takes the ‘fact’ that psychical phenomena exist to be a factually self-evident truth — that is to say, ‘the inner perception of our own phenomena’ needs no epistemic justification other than the fact that it is the case and it is true. It is this that furnishes the natural science of psychology with its special empirical and epistemological (irrefragable) basis. And if we take this basis exclusively as the foundation stone upon which the new science of psychology is to be built, we can, Brentano argues, define ‘psychology’, contra Aristotle and the Aristotelians, as a science ‘without a soul’.  

The ‘empirical standpoint’ that Brentano endorses in _PES_, then, is simply a continuation of Hume’s starting point, namely, the fact that there are psychical phenomena perceived in the mind: no more, no less. The origin of all our knowledge-claims about the human mind comes from these, just as Hume had argued. We could conclude, therefore, that in _PES_ Brentano is adopting a Humean psycho-analytic approach to psychology in that the exclusive focus and concern is with the analysis of the contents of consciousness as they are immediately, discretely and directly given to consciousness (passively ‘impressed’ as Hume would put it), eschewing any metaphysical [= hypothetical] commitment to such things as ‘substantial bearers’ of ‘personal identity’, or external ‘causes’ from its considerations.  

That natural scientists examine such ‘causes’ of whatever arises in our consciousness that lie outside our experiences, Hume is in no doubt, and acknowledges this, but to Hume these are not important to his philosophical investigations into the human mind simply because, as one commentator succinctly puts it, ‘Hume’s “first maxim” is that “in the end we must rest content with experience”’. This is why Brentano

99 Ibid., p. 18–19.
60 Ibid., p.11
61 See, _PES_, pp. 16–17, where Brentano directly quotes Hume’s *Treatise*, Book I, IV, Sect.6., and his comments on this famous passage on the self as ‘a bundle or collection of different perceptions’.
62 See, supra, n. 16.
himself maintains, following Hume, that he must, in his descriptive-psychological investigations, ‘eschew metaphysical hypotheses’, that is to say, block off any hypothetical-theoretical entertainment of knowledge of that-which-is that resides outside of the experiencing subject. This, however, does not imply that Brentano does not subscribe (implicitly or explicitly) to any metaphysical suppositions regarding the nature of the ‘existence’ of ‘psychical phenomena’ (and ‘physical phenomena’) and the relation between an individual’s ‘consciousness’ and ‘body’. He clearly does (and I will return to these shortly). And he is also clearly aware of the fact that all empirical natural scientists, as we have already noted, subscribe to tacit metaphysical explanatory hypotheses in their science that are metaphysical presuppositions of their science about (1) the absolute nature of the existence of the external world outside of the experiencing subject, (2) the human being’s sensory ability to perceive that world, and (3) the relationship between the human being and the external world. Since Brentano, however, is only concerned with establishing the existence of a subject-matter for the science of psychology he avers the minimalist metaphysical acceptance of the existence of ‘psychical phenomena’ in ‘inner perception’, without explaining or entertaining the relationship between consciousness and one’s own body, or between my actual consciousness and the world that exists independently of one’s own actual experiences. As far as Brentano is concerned, nonetheless, without ‘inner perception of our own psychical phenomena’ there would be literally no subject-matter for the natural science of psychology, or for any scientific endeavour, including the normative sciences of logic, ethics and aesthetics, to study and research — it is that significant for Brentano (as it was for Hume). ‘Inner perception’, after all, ‘tells me that I am now having such-and-such sound or colour sensations, or that I am now thinking or willing this or that.’

Outside of the experiences of consciousness that are characteristic of human experience, then, Brentano recognises and acknowledges the existence of, what Husserl calls, ‘a fact-world’, but this is not the concern of Brentano’s new science of descriptive psychology. Thus despite Brentano’s reverence for Aristotle and the Scholastics, underpinning PES and DP is Brentano’s subscription to some version of Kant’s two-domain theory, where one domain of enquiry posits and includes the experiences of a normatively valid logical, ethical and aesthetical consciousness as such and the other points to that which resides outside of the experiencing subject and that is examined deterministically by the natural sciences.

(ii) Some Important Epistemological, Phenomenological and Metaphysical Implications of Brentano’s Doctrine of Inner Perception

Like Hume, Brentano believes that access to consciousness is ‘peculiarly direct and certain as compared with our knowledge of anything else’. Coupled with this, Brentano subscribes to Locke’s assumption that conscious acts cannot exist as conscious acts without being perceived all the time as conscious acts. Since psychical act-experiences are

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63 Husserl draws attention to these critical passages, quoting them in length, in his ‘Appendix’ to the Logical Investigations and praises Brentano for his acute observations of the tacit metaphysical presuppositions which natural science must adhere to in their scientific pursuits.

64 In this approach, Brentano is following Hume. In the ‘Introduction’ to the Treatise, Hume writes, ‘(T)here is no question of importance whose decision is not comprised in the science of man; and there is none, which can be decided with any certainty, before we become acquainted with that science. In pretending therefore to explain the principles of human nature, we in effect propose a complete system of the sciences, built on a foundation almost entirely new, and the only one upon which they can stand with any security.’ Everyman edition, p. 5; Selby-Bigge’s edition, p. xx. As one commentator rhetorically remarks, ‘What is this but a Scottish version of Kant’s Copernican Revolution?’ H. H. Price, Hume’s Theory of the External World (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1st edn, 1940; 1967), p. 9.


66 Passmore, A Hundred Years of Philosophy, p. 178. Cf., also, PES, p. 91

67 This, of course, echoes Locke’s views — ‘Consciousness is the perception of what passes in a man’s own mind’, (An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Bk II, Ch. 1, 19) — and, following Locke, this is why Brentano argues that we can do without the ‘hypothesis of the unconscious’ in the science of ‘psychical
being perceived all the time in their existence, ‘conscious acts’ cannot but show themselves as ‘phenomena’ to ‘a mentally active subject’. Thus, for Brentano, the terms ‘conscious act’, ‘consciousness’, ‘psychical act’ and ‘psychical phenomenon’ are all ‘synonymous expressions’. Here, then, we arrive at one of the main meanings of ‘inner perception’ for Brentano: ‘an inner act of perceiving’ that accompanies each and any actual experience or conscious act that the ‘mentally active subject’ enjoys. Husserl is critical of this part of Brentano’s doctrine on inner perception, but before assessing his critique of Brentano’s views we need to outline some important conclusions that Brentano draws from this part of his doctrine on ‘inner perception’.

From this understanding of ‘inner perception’ as an ‘inner act of perceiving’, Brentano draws the following significant conclusions. Firstly, from both an ontological and phenomenological point of view, the very ‘acts’ or ‘phenomena’ of ‘psychical phenomena’ have, inextricably, both actual (wirklich) and phenomenal dimensions to their existence since in and through the inner act of perceiving experiences are perceived as what they are. Experiences, then, manifest their actual existence in their appearing to consciousness, and in their appearing to an actual human consciousness they are what they actually are (but only intra-psyically). Secondly, from an epistemological point of view, since the actual acts or phenomena that are known immediately are as they are, the knowledge obtained in such an inner act of perceiving is direct, non-hypothetical, self-evident and infallible. Thirdly, from an experiential point of view, all of this exists for the mentally active subject only as long as such psychical activity actually occurs (or is passively endured as Brentano holds). From a descriptive-psychological point of view, then, the causal origins of such ‘conscious acts’ or ‘psychical phenomena’ can be set aside, and any questions about their causal origins must be left to whatever advances that are made (and that can be made) in natural scientific developments of empirical psychology. Such questions and issues regarding their causal origins are to be left to that part of the science of empirical psychology which Brentano calls, in his Vienna lectures, ‘genetic psychology’. Genetic psychology uses the method of the natural sciences (observation, hypotheses, experimentation). Descriptive psychology, by comparison, must set aside all theoretical (natural scientific and naturalistic) conceptions of psychical phenomena and, instead, try to describe non-hypothetically what ‘psychical phenomena’ are themselves. ‘Another important difference’, Brentano notes between the kind of knowledge-claims that are sought in descriptive psychology in comparison to the kind generated in genetic psychology, is that descriptive psychology ‘is an exact science, and that in contrast, genetic psychology, in all its determinations, in an inexact one’. By an exact science, Brentano means those ‘sciences which can formulate their doctrines sharply and precisely’, such as, for instance, ‘a mathematician doesn’t say: the sum of the angles of a triangle is often, or usually, equal to two right angles. But he says that this is always and without exception the case’. Since descriptive psychology seeks to remove confusion from its descriptions of

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**Footnotes:**

68 PES, p. 102:142–3. See also, supra, n. 56, and Brentano’s comments on the link between the German word ‘Bewusstsein’ and the definition of a psychical act-experience as an act that contains an intentional [=mental], immanent object.’

69 Others meanings are (2) inner perception as inner reflection; (3) inner perception as immanent perception; (4) inner perception as ‘incidental consciousness’. Each one of these meanings is discussed below.

70 See, supra, n. 6.

71 DP, p. 4–5.

72 Ibid., p. 5.
‘psychical phenomena’, descriptive psychology seeks this latter kind of precision and accuracy in its knowledge-claims. All natural scientific investigations, including genetic psychology, seek knowledge-claims that are true for the most part, but such truths are never necessarily true, and so, the ‘stimulation of a retinal part [of the eye] by a light-ray of a certain frequency [which] induces the phenomenon of blue’ does ‘not always’ induce the phenomenon of blue ‘as it is not true in case of (a) colour-blindness, (b) interruption of the conductor, severance of the nerve, (c) losing in competition (Besiegtwerden im Wettstreit), (d) replacement by a hallucination’.73

This division by Brentano of the sciences into exact and inexact sciences corresponds, by and large, to the epistemological distinction that Hume famously draws between knowledge-claims pertaining to ‘matters of fact’ and to ‘relation of ideas’, and before Hume, to Leibniz’s distinction between ‘truths of fact’ and ‘truths of reason’.74 Descriptive psychology seeks ‘vérités de raison’, that is to say, items of knowledge that are eternally true. Descriptive psychology does not seek inductive, empirical generalisations the truth of which could always turn out to be otherwise than it is. In this respect, it is worth stressing the point that Brentano never employed the method of the natural sciences in his actual descriptive-psychological philosophizing and never proposed the method of the natural sciences for his new science of descriptive psychology.75 Nor did Brentano engage in any historical-hermeneutic analysis of the meaning of our experiences, in the radical and comprehensive manner that Dilthey, for instance, had advocated, and that Dilthey also had termed around this time, in the 1890s, ‘descriptive psychology’.76 In contrast to any such Diltheyean-hermeneutic approach, Brentano employed a more mathematical model of reasoning in his descriptive method because the task for the descriptive psychologist is to pick out those essential features that are intuitively demonstrable in all psychical acts and their immanent objects that cannot, in an a priori manner of speaking, be known to be otherwise than they are. According to Brentano, the object-relatedness of all conscious acts, the ‘intentionality of consciousness’, is just one such discernible structure

73 Ibid., pp. 6–7.
75 It is often noted and pointed out by commentators that one of the twenty-four theses that Brentano publicly defended in his disputations at Würzburg University in 1866 was the well-known thesis: ‘The true method of philosophy is none other than the method of the natural sciences.’ Brentano never advocated the method of the natural sciences for the descriptive part of his new science of ‘descriptive psychology’ (for which, we can read ‘philosophy’), which first emerged, albeit in embryonic form, in his unfinished study of PES, published in 1874, and which he subsequently developed in his lecture-courses on ‘Descriptive Psychology’ at Vienna University in the late 1880s and early 1890s. For his idea of a ‘descriptive psychology’ he advocated, instead, the ‘evidence’ of ‘inner perception’, or, more accurately stated, the ability of consciousness to reflect directly upon its own operations and discover, intuitively, non-hypothetical a priori ‘truths of reason’ about those contents. How descriptive-psychological truths that are by nature non-hypothetical, intuitively demonstrable and a priori knowledge-claims about consciousness and its objectivities are exactly related to, or complemented by natural-scientific knowledge-claims that are hypothetically ascertained, empirically verifiable and, by nature, both corrigible and probably true of the physical world about us, including ourselves as hypothesized ‘things’ in and of that world, does not feature as problematic in Brentano’s thought. This problematic relation between philosophy as descriptive psychology and the natural sciences, however, does occupy Husserl’s attention greatly in the development of his thought. See, Husserl, Ideas I, Ch 2., § 40 “Primary” and “Secondary” Qualities. The Physical Thing Given “In Person” a “Mere Appearance” of the “True Physical Thing” Determined in Physics’, and cf., Th. de Boer, ‘The Meaning of Husserl’s Idealism in the Light of His Development’, trans. by H. Pietersma, Analecta Husserliana, 2 (1972), 322–332.
that is evidently true of the nature of psychical act-experiences themselves. Like all descriptive-psychological items of knowledge, this item of knowledge, the object-relatedness of all psychical act-experiences, expresses, for Brentano, a ‘truth of reason’. It is grasped ‘at one stroke and without induction’. Under these methodological constraints, Brentano believes that any descriptive-psychological knowledge of ‘psychical phenomena’ or ‘conscious acts’, gained by way of ‘inner perception’, will turn out to be immediate, direct, non-hypothetical, a priori, self-evident and infallible. All of this presupposes, of course, that Brentano subscribes, at least in some regard, to what is generally referred to today as the ‘transparency thesis’ (again following Descartes, Locke and Hume) regarding the kind of access that the mentally active subject has to that being’s own particular conscious states, or beliefs, or whatever ‘arises’ in consciousness. Again, we can set this issue aside in our exposition of Brentano’s doctrine of ‘inner perception’, but will return to it later, in the final section of this article, in our evaluation of Husserl’s critique of ‘Brentano’s standpoint’.

(iii) The Results of Brentano’s Comparison Between Inner and Outer Perception, Psychical and Physical Phenomena

Brentano tells us that his aim in Book II Psychical Phenomena in General of PES is to clarify the meaning of two terms, ‘physical and psychical phenomena’, removing ‘all misunderstanding’ and ‘confusion’ between them. Since Brentano wishes to clarify the meaning of what is the physical and what is the psychical, without appeal to any hypothetical theories and only to our experiences of those ‘things themselves’ (as Husserl would put it), he turns his attention to seeing what it is that distinguishes intuitively the experiences that are characteristic of inner perception and outer (sense) perception. When Brentano compares the ‘outer [sense] perception’ of ‘physical phenomena’ to the ‘inner perception’ of ‘psychical phenomena’, dramatic differences, on ontological, epistemological and phenomenological grounds, reveal themselves; or, at least, so Brentano thinks. He arrives at the following conclusions, not all of which Husserl accepts as legitimate conclusions that can be or should have been drawn from a descriptive-psychological methodological point of view. We need to outline and understand Brentano’s conclusions first, however.

Knowledge of ‘physical phenomena’ given to outer (sense) perception is direct, like the knowledge of inner perception, but, unlike inner perception, such outer (sense) perception, Brentano claims, is inherently deceptive or misleading. Why? To understand Brentano’s views here, we need to return to the two meanings he has for ‘physical phenomena’. Firstly, by physical phenomena, Brentano says he means a sound I hear, a colour I see, an odour I smell and so forth, that is to say, so-called secondary qualities. Since colours and sounds, when we are not directly aware of them, do not exist as colours or sounds in their respective objects, but as determined by the theories of natural science (e.g. as light rays or light particles, sine waves, or atoms, or forces etc.), then in outer perception we take (nehmen) such colours to really exist in the extra-mental reality whereas this is not the way they actually (wirklich) exist. Thus outer (sense) perception is naturally but inherently mis-leading. The phenomenal colours, rather, are ‘signs’ of an extra-mental reality

77 O. Kraus, ‘Introduction to the 1924 Edition [of PES]’, in ‘Appendix’ to PES, pp. 396–408, (p. 370). ‘This point’, Kraus continues, ‘was made by Brentano in his work The Origin of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong in 1889’. Ibid.

78 In PES Brentano believed that just as physics had established itself as ‘the science of pure physical phenomena’, so too psychology could become the natural science of ‘psychical phenomena in general’ (pp. 98–100). It is only after PES that Brentano realised the autonomous methodological nature of the ‘descriptive part’ of psychology, independently of all natural-scientific manner of inquiry [= ‘metaphysical hypotheses’, PES, p. 64]. Spiegelberg concludes that because Brentano’s very idea of descriptive psychology, right from its inception, entails ‘a peculiar intuitive examination of the phenomena [of consciousness]’, it ‘establishes itself as an autonomous enterprise, if not as a separate one’ from all other established natural sciences, such as, for instance, ‘psychophysics and physiological psychology’. The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction (1994), p. 35.
that really exists as determined by theoretical insights and discoveries of natural science. Thus this is why Brentano concludes that ‘(We) have no right, therefore, to believe that the objects of so-called outer perception really exist as they appear to us. Indeed, they demonstrably [as shown through natural science, as is evident from the context] do not exist [as properties of the objects, qua colours, etc.] outside of us. In contrast to that which really and truly exists [atoms, light-rays, light particles], they [colours] are mere phenomena.’ If, therefore, we admit the evidence of natural science into the descriptive psychological analysis of the outer (sense) perception of physical phenomena — and Brentano does, and Husserl is sharply critical of Brentano for doing this as part of his descriptive-psychological investigations which is supposed to exclude methodologically all such natural-scientific theoretical reasoning — then it follows that outer (sense) perception is inherently false-grasping (Falsch-nehmung). Furthermore, since Brentano admits of only two forms of perception, Brentano is forced to admit and stress the point, relying on the literal etymology of ‘Wahrnehmung’ as ‘truth-grasping’: ‘In the strict sense of the term, they [psychical phenomena] alone are perceived [=truly grasped as they actually are]. On this basis we proceeded to define them as the only phenomena [in comparison to physical phenomena qua qualia] which possess actual existence in addition to intentional [mental] existence.

Brentano’s doctrine on ‘inner perception’, then, clearly has metaphysical implications. Whereas the psychical act-experiences exist as they are in their appearing to inner perception, physical phenomena, in their appearing to outer (sense) perception, have only phenomenal existence and do not exist as they actually are (that is to say, they do not exist extra-mentally as real properties of ‘substances’, for example, as Aristotle and the Aristotelians hold). By comparison to the actual existence of both psychical act-experiences (given in inner perception) and the objects of physics (‘physical phenomena’ in the second sense of light rays/ sine waves etc.), ‘physical phenomena’ (in the first sense, i.e., colours, sounds) have be said to have only ‘intentional’ (as opposed to ‘real’) or ‘mental’ existence. Thus Brentano believes that he has established a clear division between psychical phenomena and physical phenomena on intuitively demonstrable grounds, as well as on a self-evident metaphysical basis pertaining to the very kind of existence that marks both the physical and the psychical. Psychical phenomena (psychical act-experiences) exist as they actually are, and are perceived as they are, and are known infallibly to be as they are, whereas physical phenomena (qua qualia) do not have actual existence (outside of the mind), are perceived not as they are (outside of the mind), and are known directly but falsely to be as they are (outside of the mind). Physical phenomena qua ‘objects of physics’ have actual existence, but not phenomenal existence. Thus the inner perception of psychical phenomena and the outer perception of physical phenomena distinguish themselves on epistemological, phenomenological, and metaphysical grounds.

There are several problems here, however, that Brentano either simply does not see, or believes not to be related to his views of psychology. Firstly, we do not know whether Brentano subscribes to an univocal or an equivocal view of ‘actual existence’ in his understanding of the ‘actual existence’ of ‘psychical phenomena’ and the ‘actual existence’ of the ‘objects of physics’; nor does Brentano see any problem here with their co-existence. We do know, however, that he does not equate the existence of the brain with the

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79 If we assume that natural science will provide the ‘basis’ for all such knowledge claims, then this is a version of what Timm Triplett calls ‘Theoretical Basics Foundationalism’; in his paper, ‘Recent Work on Foundationalism’, American Philosophical Quarterly, 27 (1990), 93–116 (p. 98). This particular version of foundationalism (that Cornman identifies), Triplett remarks, ‘would hold that the theoretical statements of science are basic, being epistemologically prior to propositions about subjective psychological states and to ordinary singular propositions about the external world. However, I do not find any clear advocacy of such a view in the literature’ (ibid.). This is the position that Brentano, nonetheless, appears to hold in PES.
80 PES, p. 10, my emphasis.
81 Ibid., p. 97–8, Brentano’s emphasis.
existence of conscious states, but since such ‘metaphysical questions’ are not part of ‘descriptive psychology’, he believes that he can set them aside and concentrate on ‘the fact that psychical phenomena exist’, and this is warranted on the basis of direct, non-hypothetical, infallible inner perceptions. Thus Brentano thinks he can distinguish both physical phenomena from psychical phenomena and outer perception from inner perception, on clearly defined and mutually exclusive kinds of phenomena presented in consciousness e.g., a tone (physical phenomenon) that is given to outer (sense) perception is not the hearing of a tone (psychical phenomena) given to inner perception, and on associated epistemological evidence grounded in perceptually founded act-experiences, e.g., inner perception is infallible and outer perception is inherently misleading (as the tone really and truly exists as sound waves etc.).

II
HUSSELR’S CRITIQUE OF BRENTANO’S DOCTRINE OF INNER PERCEPTION

Husserl finds several faults with Brentano’s account of inner and outer perception and the epistemological and phenomenological parallelism that he draws between psychical and physical phenomena on the basis of (alleged) self-evident characteristic features of inner and outer perception. Husserl’s objections to Brentano’s views can be found in many of Husserl’s work, but he clearly felt the need to draw attention to these in relation to the elaboration of his own philosophy, for, on the occasion of the re-issue of his Logical Investigations (1900–01) in 1913, he specifically wrote and attached an ‘Appendix. Outer and Inner Perception: Physical and Psychical Phenomena’, wherein he singles out the standpoint of Brentano and, after giving an account of ‘the interesting line of thought’ expounded by Brentano in PES, separates what appears to him to be ‘what is indubitably significant in Brentano’s thought-motivation from what is erroneous in its elaboration’. We will concentrate mainly on Husserl’s objections to ‘inner perception’ and the significance of those to Husserl’s development of a different method of analysis for phenomenology.

Firstly, Husserl rejects, on experiential grounds, Brentano’s claim (following Locke’s) that all conscious acts are perceived by another inner, conscious act of perception. There is, Husserl correctly notes, no evidence for this occurring in our actual experiences. In point of fact, many experiences, e.g., anger, cannot admit of such conscious perception, for, if one were to become conscious of one’s anger such would render it out of existence, or, at least, modify it significantly. Experiences (Erlebnisse), Husserl remarks, are not always and inherently being perceived all the time, as Brentano, following this Lockean hypothesis, believes them to be; they are, rather, simply things that are lived through (er-lebt). Experiences can be perceived, or are ready to be perceived, if, and only if, Husserl argues, we turn our attention away from objects given to outer perceptual-sense experience and reflect upon the nature of psychical act-experiences themselves. In other words, when inner perception means the ability of consciousness to reflect upon its own activity, this is an entirely correct and legitimate ‘method’ to be employed in any descriptive science of

82 Brentano also maintains that ‘the relation of one human being to another, as far as their inner life is concerned, is in no way comparable to that which exists between two inorganic individuals of the same species, e.g., between two drops of water’ (PES, p. 36). Whatever about comparing the incomparable — the relation between two inorganic individuals and the inner life of two human beings — Brentano believes that the way I can know the mental life of another human being is by way of analogy (!), based upon the inner perception of one’s own mental phenomena: ‘(F)or, someone else can no more apprehend my psychical phenomena through inner perception that I can those that belong to him’ (ibid., p. 37). By comparison to ‘the direct perception of our own psychical phenomena we have’, Brentano stresses, ‘an indirect knowledge of the mental phenomena of other’ (ibid.). His methodological doctrine of ‘inner perception’, therefore, prevents him for acknowledging the recognition of another directly as other, as an experiential fact of one’s own mental life.

psychical act-experiences and their objectivities (if they exist), as Brentano proposes. When Brentano, therefore, advocates ‘inner perception’ as a method of inner reflection, rather than as an accompanying inner percept, Husserl agrees with this part of his doctrine on ‘inner perception’, and makes the first small, but significant correction to Brentano’s definition of ‘descriptive psychology’ on this basis: since psychical act-experiences are not concomitantly perceived all the time, ‘descriptive psychology’ is not a science of psychological phenomena, as Brentano suggests, it is, rather, simply a science of experiences (or, more accurately stated, of intentional psychical act-experiences (Erlebnisse) and their objectivities). Secondly, experiences are the kinds of things that cannot but be lived, this both Brentano and Husserl assume to be the case, at least implicitly and without any argumentation, but why experiences are given (at all) is not an issue for either Brentano or Husserl from a descriptive-psychological methodological point of view. In other words, a descriptive-psychological methodological point of view evades (rather than addresses or solves) the entire question relating to whether anything corresponds, in existence, to whatever consciousness is a consciousness of extra-mentally, or what kind of existence characterizes psychical acts-experiences themselves. Why such experiences are needed by a human being, or by the human organism to survive on this planet is not part of descriptive psychology either. Such issues may well be entertained by other natural scientists in their hypothetical enquiries, but any such metaphysical explanatory hypotheses are simply not part of ‘descriptive psychology’. This much Husserl agrees with Brentano. Descriptive psychology is a science of experiences. Experiencing something, nevertheless, is not knowing what that experience is, or even knowing that that experience is. This much Husserl does not agree with Brentano. Experience is just experience that one lives through. And if one learns what ‘psychical act-experiences’ (‘psychical phenomena’) are through ‘inner perception’, as Brentano believes, one cannot do this without reflection, that is to say, without reflecting on such experience and making judgements that are true of such experiences. Whatever knowledge is, or may be, knowledge, as both Brentano and Husserl (and anybody else) know, cannot but be a product of reflection (of some sort). It is, then, only through reflection on consciousness about the nature of consciousness itself that we can have and do have any knowledge of consciousness. This is the way to know things about consciousness. Thus, when ‘inner perception’ means ‘inner reflection’, this is the method that is to be deployed, at least initially, in any ‘descriptive science’ of consciousness and its objectivities themselves. As Husserl succinctly puts it in Ideas I,

Reflection is a name for acts (ein Titel für Akte) in which the stream of mental processes (Erlebnisstrom), with all its manifold occurrences (mental process-moments, intentionalia) become evidentially apprehensible and analysable (evident fassbar und analyserbar). It is, as we can also say, the name of the method of consciousness leading to the cognition of any consciousness whatever (Sie ist, so können wir es auch ausdrücken, der Titel der Bewusstseinsmethode für die Erkenntnis von Bewusstsein überhaupt).85

When we use this method of ‘inner reflection’ (which Brentano calls ‘inner perception’), however, such reflection (inner perception), from an epistemological point of view, is, Husserl argues against Brentano, as naturally subject to error as is outer (sense) perception. ‘In the percept of a toothache, e.g., a real experience is perceived, and yet our perception often deceives: the pain appears to bore a sound tooth.’ Thus Husserl concludes from this,


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‘(T)he possibility of our error is plain. The perceived object is not the pain as experienced, but the pain in a transcendent reference as connected with tooth’.\(^{86}\) Even in cases where the origin of the experience is not directly related to the nature of our incarnate consciousness or embodied experiences — and Husserl does not return to these in *Ideas I*, or in his other works — error is possible. For example, I can reflect upon my experiences, say, reflect on a memory, and believe something that is not the case. I could recall being taught Latin by Master McLoughlin in Sixth Form at School, but, in fact, it had been Master Harkin. Perception based upon reflection on ‘pure’ experiences is not, therefore, inherently infallible, as Brentano claims. They can be correct or incorrect (or ‘adequate’ or ‘inadequate’, as Husserl prefers to characterize them). They are fallible, just like our experiences of outer (sense) perception. If we confine ourselves to the acts of natural, outer perceptual-sense experience, as any descriptive clarification of ‘physical phenomenon’ methodologically requires us to do, we can perceive a green apple on the table, judge it to be a green apple, and it is a green apple, and so, know it is a green apple; on another occasion, we could perceive a green apple on the table, judge it to be a green apple, but on closer inspection, perceive it to be a green pear and it is a green pear. From a descriptive-psychological point of view, outer sense perception is not, as Brentano holds, inherently misleading on account of the discovery of natural sciences (of light rays/ light particles and inverted images in the retina etc.) precisely because such theoretical discoveries of the natural sciences should not be entertained in any descriptive-psychological clarification of the meaning of ‘physical phenomena’ as given to actual outer perceptual-sense experiences. This does not mean, however, that Husserl returns to some form of Aristotelian substance-accident distinction; rather, he argues that when colours and sounds (etc.) are given to our actual outer perceptual-sense experiences, we do not see colours and sounds as the intended objects of those acts but we interpret such sensations through objectivating acts of perception, or, at least, this is what Husserl maintains in the *Logical Investigations*: ‘I perceive [...] that this box is square and brown in colour’. I do not hear sounds, rather, ‘I hear a barrel organ — the tones sensed are interpreted as those of a barrel organ. In the same way I apperceivingly perceive my own psychical phenomena, the blessedness quivering through “me”, the grief in my heart etc.’\(^{87}\) We interpret such sensations through objectivating acts of perception, or, at least, this is what Husserl maintains in the *Logical Investigations*. This, however, does not imply that such outer (sense) perception is inherently infallible (in the way Brentano thinks inner perception is infallible). For example, in seeing an apple on the table, one could mistakenly take (interpret) the green of an apple for the green of a pear. On closer inspection, *via* outer (sense) perceptions, we could realise the green of an apple is the green of a pear, but such natural perceptual fallibility is to be expected of outer (sense) perception; to expect otherwise, e.g., apodictic indubitability, of sense experience, Husserl notes against Descartes and others, is unrealistic and contrary to the *evidence* of our actual experience of sense perceptions. Thus it does not follow from this that Husserl, in the *Logical Investigations*, defends a realist view of sense perception in maintaining ‘sense data’ are interpreted as those of the object (the brown of a leaf, the red of the box, the tones of a barrel organ) because this is an activity of consciousness, as Husserl explicitly argues. I could, for example, hear a knock at the door and interpret those audible sensations as somebody knocking at the door, but, in fact, it could be a broom falling against the door. This *active* relation between consciousness and its intended objects, nonetheless, leads Husserl to the view that even in outer perceptual-sense experience consciousness is not passive but active in the generation of meaning and this, in turn, leads Husserl to develop a theory of ‘sense bestowing’ (*Sinngebung*) power of consciousness that Brentano’s descriptive-

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psychological ‘empirical standpoint’ simply cannot and does not possess. Yet this is not ‘a turn towards the object’, in any philosophical realist sense, as many who followed Husserl of the *Logical Investigations*, against Husserl’s own correct insistence, alas, believed it to be.

For Husserl, therefore, natural reflections on one’s own mental states, as much as on the directly intended objects given to outer (sense) perception, are, from a descriptive-psychological methodological point of view, of equal epistemological value — both are subject to error, but outer perception is not inherently misleading and inner perception (reflection) is not inherently infallible. Thus Brentano cannot, on descriptive-psychological-epistemological grounds, distinguish outer and inner perception on the basis that one is inherently misleading and the other inherently infallible.

In *Ideas I*, however, Husserl makes a very important distinction between what he calls acts within consciousness that are transcendentally directed and acts within consciousness that are immanently directed that Brentano does not make but which deserves our attention.

Unlike an act of transcendent perception that occurs within consciousness, such as, for instance, an act of recollection, which posits the existence of its object, a remembered item, sometimes correctly and sometimes not so correctly, an act of immanent perception posits knowledge of the existence of its object, the current (conscious) experience, without any shadow of doubt. It is not necessary, for instance, that a remembered experience exists, but it is necessary that an experience, immanently perceived, exists.88 Though limited strictly to the present, reflective immanent perception, nonetheless, is infallible in guaranteeing its knowledge of the existence (die Existenz) of its object.89 The non-existence of an experience immanently perceived is unthinkable, and it is unthinkable ‘not’, as Husserl had already remarked in the *Logical Investigations*, ‘in the subjective [psychological-factual] sense of an incapacity to represent-things-otherwise, but in the objectively-ideal necessity of an inability-to-be-otherwise.90 In the immanent, reflective perception of an experience, therefore, what we encounter is not a merely factual-assertoric certainty (as Brentano held), but an apodictic certainty regarding knowledge of the existence of an experience.91 Husserl draws important implications from this in his famous argument for the ‘absolute’ existence of being as experience (*Sein als Erlebnis*) in comparison to the ‘relative’ existence of ‘being as thing’ (*Sein als Ding*) given to outer sense perception in his famous ‘reduction’ of the

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88 Thus de Boer remarks, ‘we can see why Husserl distinguishes within the sphere of immanently directed acts between immanent perception and other immanently directed acts such as remembering of an “experience”. It is possible for the remembered experience not to exist. In memory no absolute positing is possible. Only in immanent perception is absolute positing possible.’ *The Development of Husserl’s Thought*, p. 345.

89 That the very mode of being of that which that is given to our experiences is guaranteed on the basis of some identifiable, perceptually-founded act(s) is of crucial importance to Husserl’s idea of a phenomenological philosophy because, otherwise, there would be no justification for any phenomenological approach to experience, as Husserl defines that approach. Not all of Husserl’s so-called followers, however, agreed with Husserl on this point. The act of reflective, immanent perception, nonetheless, is of particular importance to Husserl in that it guarantees, apodictically, the very existence of its object, namely, psychical act-experiences and their objects (if they exist).

90 ‘What cannot be thought, cannot be, what cannot be, cannot be thought — this equivalence fixes the differences between the pregnant notion of thinking and the ordinary subjective sense of presentation and thought. […] Wherever therefore the word “can” occurs in conjunction with the pregnant use of “think”, there is a reference, not to a subjective necessity, i.e. to the subjective incapacity-to-represent-things-otherwise, but to the objectively-ideal necessity of an inability-to-be-otherwise.’ Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, pp. 445–446.

91 ‘Every perception of something immanently perceived guarantees the existence (die Existenz) of its object. If reflective experience is directed towards my experience, I have seized something absolute in itself, the factual being (Da sein [not in Heidegger’s sense of this term]) of which is essentially incapable of being negated, i.e., the insight that it is essentially impossible for it not to exist; it would be a countersense (ein Widersinn, a non-sense) to believe it possible that an experience given in that manner (so gegeben) does not in truth exist.’ Husserl, *Ideas I*, pp. 96–97:85.
‘natural attitude’ to the ‘transcendental-phenomenological attitude’, but we can set this aside for the moment.

Brentano, however, makes no such distinction between ‘inner perception’ as an act of natural reflection and as an act of ‘reflective immanent perception’, nor between ‘transcendent perception’ and ‘immanent perception’ that can occur and be evidentially verifiable in consciousness itself. In the establishment of the existence of a subject-matter for an ‘empirical’ psychology, nonetheless, Brentano does subscribe to inner perception as an act of reflective immanent perception, at least in some embryonic form, for, as he argues, defending the absolute value of this form of perception, ‘In the case of cognition through inner perception, what we perceive is that a psychical act exists’. Indeed, in PES Brentano is very much aware of the philosophical debate that had arisen, since Kant, regarding whether ‘existence’ can be regarded as a real predicate, or not. He thinks, however, that this is a misguided way of approaching the question because a judgement can be made about existence that involves neither affirming nor denying a predicate of a subject term (e.g., Es donner, it thunders). He agrees with Kant’s point, nevertheless, that existence is not a real predicate, but on the basis of ‘inner perception’, that is to say, arguing ‘how improbable (wie unwahrscheinlich), indeed impossible (unmöglich)’ it is to hold the view that we can attach ‘existence’ to psychical act-experiences in an act of inner perception (i.e., reflective, immanent perception) for, as he points out, and this is worth quoting in length,

Philosophers are not in agreement as to what the term ‘existence’ really means, even though not only they, but any ordinary person, knows how to apply the term with confidence. But it does not seem difficult to see that it [die Existenz] is a very general and hence a very abstract concept, even if it really was derived from experience and did not exist in us as an a priori concept prior to all experience (always an awkward assumption). Would it be conceivable [...] that the very first sensation a child has is accompanied not only by a presentation (Vorstellung) of the act of sensation, but also at the same time by a perception of this act? By a cognition that it exists? By a judgement which connects the concept of existence as predicate with the psychical phenomenon as subject? I believe that everyone recognizes how improbable, indeed how impossible such a supposition is.

[...] [this] received theory of judgement [...] that every judgement which is expressed in the existential proposition adds the concept of existence to some subject-concept or other [...] is mistaken, because a compounding of subject and predicate is not at all essential to the nature of judgement. The distinction between these two elements has to do, rather, with a commonly used form of linguistic expression. In cognition through inner perception [= ‘reflective immanent perception’] we have before us in particular a judgement which quite obviously contradicts the usual view of psychologists and logicians. No one who pays attention to what goes on within himself [= in an act of immanent reflective perception] when he hears or sees and perceives his act of hearing or seeing could be mistaken about the fact that this judgement of inner perception [read reflective immanent perception] does not consist in the connection of a mental act as subject with existence as predicate, but consists rather in the simple [= direct] affirmation of the psychical phenomenon [the current experience] which is present in inner consciousness.

Thus Husserl is quite right to draw out the implication from Brentano’s doctrine of ‘inner perception’ that, when it refers to an act of ‘reflective immanent perception’, knowledge of an experience in reflective immanent perception, limited strictly though it is to the present, is apodictic, and not just factually assertoric as Brentano holds. It is only in immanent perception, not in the ability to reflect upon experiences, nonetheless, that the non-existence of a current experience is unthinkable. Because Brentano does make any distinction here he goes no further with this, but we do know that Husserl does go further with this insight in his establishment of the absolute mode of being that is characteristic of

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92 PES, p. 141, my emphasis
93 See, PES, pp. 210–221. See, also, Brentano’s article ‘Miklosich on Subjectless Propositions’, reprinted in the Appendix to his 1889 publication The Origin of our Knowledge of Right and Wrong.
94 PES, pp. 141–142.
‘being as (conscious) experience’ *(Sein als Erlebnis)* in comparison to the presumptive (relative) mode of being that is characteristic of being as thing *(Sein als Ding)* given to acts of outer perceptual-sense experience in his *(in)famous* methodological reduction of the natural attitude to the transcendental-phenomenological attitude in *Ideas I*. At least part of the origins of Husserl’s latter ‘transcendental method’ of enquiry, therefore, is both a continuation and a radicalization of Brentano’s ideas on ‘inner perception’, even if Brentano himself does not see this.

There are further distinctions that Husserl notes in *Ideas I*, and that Brentano does not entertain, but which are of pivotal importance to Husserl’s development of a particular ‘method’ for the study of consciousness and its objectivities.

Reflective immanent perception, Husserl remarks, implies that there is present in an act of reflective immanent perception a discernible difference between the experience *as lived* and the experience *as reflected upon*, even though these two parts form one concrete *cogitatio* and one indissoluble, inherent unity of that perception.95 Talking about the experiencing of ‘a rejoicing at a course of theoretical thought which goes on freely and fruitfully’ — here (as is evident from the context) Husserl is thinking of the delight that one takes in the discovery of an objective truth, such as, for instance, the truth of a mathematical proposition or of a mathematical theorem, the *gaudium de veritate* of Augustine — Husserl remarks, ‘we have the possibility of effecting a reflection on the reflection which objectivates the latter [= the reflective immanent perception] and of thus making even more effectively clear the difference between a rejoicing which is *lived (erlebt)*, but not regarded, and a *regarded (erblickt)* rejoicing.96 ‘The first reflection on the rejoicing’, Husserl notes, ‘finds it as actually present now, but not [Husserl emphasizes] as only now beginning. [Rather,] It is there as *continuing* [as Husserl also emphasizes] to endure, as already lived before, just not looked at.’97

Three things are of note here. Firstly, for Husserl, the ability of consciousness to engage in reflection on its own experiences does not bring such experiences into existence — their *esse* is not their *perici*, as Berkeley would put it; for Husserl, rather, experiences are there, and exist, whether reflected upon, or not, and whether seen, or not.98 Secondly, Husserl is well aware of the fact that experiences are the kinds of things that cannot but be lived and cannot but be lived now, continuing in time, whether they are reflected upon, or

95 The perception of the experience in immanent perception and the experience itself are, therefore, non-independent parts of that particular experience. In this instance, as de Boer comments, ‘(T)he perception cannot be isolated from its object; it is a non-independent aspect of this unity’ (*The Development of Husserl’s Thought*, p. 333).

96 Husserl, *Ideas I*, p. 176:146. This position, however, is premised on a dualistic metaphysics of human subjectivity regarding the existence of a lucid mind and an opaque body, and is one place where later existential phenomenologists sought to correct Husserl’s account of both the purity and the priority of ‘pure intentional consciousness’ argued for and defended in his famous reduction of the natural attitude to the transcendental-phenomenological attitude in *Ideas I*.


98 See, *Ideas I*, §78. The Phenomenological Study of Reflections on Experiences,’ pp. 177–181:147–151. For Husserl, then, reflective immanent perception does bring *knowledge of* those experiences into existence. That these experiences exist, however, drops out of Husserl’s fundamental consideration of phenomenology. Heidegger follows suit in excluding such a metaphysical issue in *Being and Time*, for, as he both asserts and stresses, ‘(E)ntities [*Seiende*] are [*sind*], quite independently [*unabhängig*] of the experiences by which they are disclosed, the acquaintance in which they are discovered, and the grasping in which their nature is ascertained. But the meaning of [*W*]eibung “is” [*ist*] only in the understanding of those entities to whose Weibung something like an understanding of Weibung [*Seinverständis*] belongs. (p. 228:183). This issue concerning the very existence of experiences and the very existence of things that are (however the latter are to be understood, or grasped, or constituted in our human understanding) becomes a fundamental consideration in Emmanuel Levinas’s work in phenomenology. See, E. Levinas, *Discovering Existence with Husserl*, trans. and ed. by Richard A. Cohen & Michael B. Smith (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1998); truncated version of his, *En découvrant l’existence avec Husserl et Heidegger* (Paris: Vrin, 1949, 2nd expanded ed., 1967, 1974).
not.99 Thirdly, and this is of most significance to Husserl, in any actual enactment of a reflective, immanent perception of an experience, a direct experiential understanding of ‘the living now of the experience (das lebendige Jetzt des Erlebnisses)’ is ‘recoverable (wiederholbar)’ and entertained by and in human consciousness itself.100

It thus follows for Husserl that experiences are not inherently ‘phenomena’ at all precisely because they are not being seen automatically or concomitantly all the time in consciousness, as Brentano, following Locke’s hypothesis of an ‘accompanying inner percept’, would have us believe.101 On the contrary, more often than not experiences are not seen (for what they are), nor reflected upon; they are, rather, simply lived through (er-lebt). Experiences, nonetheless, are always, in principle, ‘ready to be perceived’ either in a glance of ‘straightforward reflection’ or in ‘reflective immanent perception’, which is what Husserl is really thinking of in particular in his famous argument of the reduction of the natural attitude to the transcendental-phenomenological attitude.102

There are also many different types or kinds of unities that can and do exist in consciousness, and within consciousness, and that need to be further distinguished, if we are to follow Husserl on his advancement of Brentano’s reflections on the unity of consciousness in P.E.S. We shall only consider two that are most relevant to Husserl’s development of a particular method of inquiry for the study of consciousness and its objectivities, as proposed by Brentano but not recognised by Brentano as a development of his ideas.

Firstly, Husserl remarks, the knowledge we can have of the unity pertaining to an act of reflective immanent perception and its object is distinctly different to the kind of knowledge that we can also have of the unity that characterizes ‘the stream of experiences’ for reflection.103 This is of crucial importance both to Husserl’s line of argument and to his

99 Husserl was well aware of the fact that ‘time’ was central to the determination of mode of ‘being of (conscious) experience’ (Sein als Erlebnis) and that the ability of consciousness to reflect on anything whatsoever, including its own contents, presupposed an immanent time-structure to the being of our experiences but because he had to prove that the particular kind of existence that is characteristic of psychical act-experiences cannot be reduced to thing-perception, he believes that he can postpone the issue of the relation between time and being in consciousness in Ideas I, See, de Boer, The Development of Husserl’s Thought, p. 332, n.1. Prior to the publication of Ideas I in 1913, Husserl had of course conducted serious philosophical reflections on this matter in his 1905 lecture-course on immanent time-consciousness at the University of Göttingen, which he had published much later, edited by Heidegger, with Edith Stein’s help, in 1928. See, ibid., pp. 462–463.

100 Husserl, Idea I, 179:149. We can, of course, recover in memory, through an act of recall (retention), the existence of an experience but in this instance Husserl is unambiguous in noting that in an act of immanent reflective perception the existence is apodictically known of that current experience and that there is a direct perception of the temporality of the actual lived-through experience. This issue of the perception of temporal presence in our experiences can be set aside by Husserl in Ideas I, as establishing the absolute existence of psychical act-experiences (and their objects, if they exist) and co-relative mode of existence of things given to outer perceptual-sense experience is the main focus of the ‘reduction’. See, previous, n. 99. This perception of time in psychical act-experiences is not, however, part of Kant’s theory — space and time are a priori forms of intuition, not ‘phenomena’ — but it does become part of Heidegger’s reading of Kant’s philosophy in his book on Kant, published in 1929.

101 ‘We must leave theories of this sort on one side, so long, that is, as the need to assume the unbroken activity of inner perception cannot be phenomenologically demonstrated.’ Husserl, Logical Investigations, Investigation V, Ch. 1, § 5 ‘Second Sense. “Inner” Consciousness as Inner Perception’.

102 ‘Every single experience, e.g., an experience of joy, can begin as well as end and hence delimit its duration. But the stream of experiences [for reflection] cannot begin and end. [...] Belonging of necessity to this [ability of consciousness to reflect upon experiences without end] is the possibility (which, as we know, is no empty logical possibility) that the Ego directs its regard to this experience and seizes upon the experience [in reflective immanent perception] as actually existing or as enduring in phenomenological time [of the actual experience].’ Ideas I, § 81. ‘Phenomenological Time and Consciousness of Time,’ p. 194:164.

103 See, Ideas I, § 83. ‘Seizing Upon the Unitary Stream of Experiences as “Idea”,’ pp. 197–199:166–167. The transcendental deduction of the ‘idea in Kant’s sense’ of infinite reflection on such experiences is, therefore, quite a different concept to ‘immanent perception’ in Husserl’s philosophy.
establishment of his conception of phenomenology. It is, therefore, of importance not to confuse, or to mix up these two different kinds of unities in consciousness.

Though experiences are ‘ready to be perceived’, in any act of reflective immanent perception the whole ‘stream of experiences’ of course cannot be known, for it is never perceived as a whole. The past and future parts of the stream are always unknown — and, ‘in this sense’, as Husserl remarks, ‘transcendent’. Yet, it is precisely because we can never in principle embrace the whole stream of experience as a direct object of knowledge and thereby intuit its unity in an act of reflection that we have therein a direct insight into this never-ending possibility as such. We can then see that reflection on ‘the stream of experiences’ would continue endlessly, for ‘the stream of experience [for reflection] cannot begin and end’. By comparison to the beginning and the end of an experience as lived, ‘[reflection on] the stream of experiences [as knowable items] cannot [in principle] begin and end’. It thus follows that recognition of the finiteness of the knowledge of an experience in an act of reflective immanent perception presupposes insight into the ideal-regulative possibility of infinite reflection on the content of that finite experience itself. In other words, we can justifiably deduce from the very finiteness of the knowledge of an experience, immanently perceived, an idea of the unity, totality and infinity of reflection on the existence of such experiences (if, and when they exist) for possible knowledge-claims. This transcendental deduction of the idea of the unity, totality and infinity of reflection on one’s actual experiences by the intellectual (and not sense) imagination, Husserl assumes his Kantian readers will readily understand. Concerning the unity of the stream of experiences for reflection, Husserl writes, ‘[W]e do not seize upon it as we do [the unity of] a single experience [in reflective immanent perception] but in the manner of an idea in the Kantian sense.’

Secondly, in Ideas I, Husserl also famously compares the ‘outer perception’ of a thing (e.g. a table, or an inkpot) to the ‘immanent perception’ of an experience. Because a thing is spatial in essence, given in adumbration and through perspectival variations, the perception of a thing is always, in principle, incomplete (inadequate) and open to further legitimating experiences of the same kind, that is to say, to further outer perceptual-sense experiences of the thing itself. By comparison, the ‘[reflective] immanent perception’ of a currently lived experience, because it is not given through perspectival variations, or in adumbration, is always, in principle, complete (adequate). Husserl, therefore, does not

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104 Ideas I, § 45. Unperceived Mental Processes, Unperceived Reality,’ pp. 98–100 (p. 99);83–85 (84).
105 See de Boer for the different senses of ‘transcendent’ that Husserl clearly identifies (The Development of Husserl’s Thought, pp. 335–39).
107 Ideas I, 163:194.
108 Ibid., p. 197:166.
109 See, Ideas I, § 41. ‘The Really Inherent Composition of Perception and its Transcendent Object’ and § 44. ‘Merely Phenomenal Being of Something Transcendent, Absolute Being of Something Immanent’. Unlike experiences, that are in principle ready to be perceived, reflection on things given to outer perceptual-sense experience ‘is possible only in the “background field” of my perception, which actually makes up only a small part of the “world around me” (Unwelt)’. De Boer, The Development of Husserl’s Thought, p. 337. Thus, as de Boer notes, for Husserl, ‘the rest of the world around me is only perceivable via a long chain of perceptions.’ (Ibid.). The transcendence of the stream of experiences for reflection, therefore, is entirely different to the kind of transcendence that characterizes the mode of being of a thing given to acts of outer perceptual-sense experience. ‘Husserl’, as de Boer also remarks, ‘already had made this point a number of times’ (Ibid.).
110 By further comparison, then, the ‘thing’, because it is given one-sidedly and through perspectival variation, is in principle inadequate and requires the actual harmony of one’s actual experiences for that thing, in its very existence and mode of being, to show itself to actual human consciousness. One’s own actual consciousness is both a necessary and a sufficient condition for the very existence of the thing given to outer perceptual-sense experience. And since, for Husserl, the world is simply the totality of things given to outer perceptual-sense experience, the argument extends to the existence of the world: one’s own actual consciousness is a necessary pre-condition for its existence. This is one of the most important arguments that Husserl wants to establish in the ‘reduction’ precisely because if the thing, in its existence, is dependent on the harmony of one’s actual experiences, the thing cannot be the ontological basis for the existence of consciousness itself.
compare (or confuse) the incompleteness characteristic of thing-perception with the incompleteness characteristic of the idea of the infinity of reflection on acts as one commentator suggests, when she comments, ‘[I]n immanent experience we are faced with an incompleteness that does not occlude the co-appearance of that which appears in its failure to appear, which in turn is fully present [i.e. the idea of infinity of such acts for reflection transcendentally deduced]. In [reflective] immanent experience the infinite fulfilled stream of intentions is fully present despite the incompleteness of the adumbrating nature of lived experiences [i.e., that are characteristic of outer perceptual-sense experiences of things].’

Given the lack of distinctions by Lilian Alweiss in her commentary on distinctions that are eminently present in Husserl’s thought, this author has no alternative but to conclude: ‘Reading Ideen I […] we fail to understand how these claims have come about. How can we simultaneously see incompleteness and completeness?’

We can, however, see how these claims do come about, and understand them, if we distinguish, as Husserl does, between: (1) the incompleteness that is characteristic of thing-perception; (2) the complete unity between perception and its object (which is here an Erlebnis) in an act of reflective immanent perception; and (3) the deduction, on the basis of the recognition of the finiteness of the knowledge-claim of immanent perception as finite, of the idea of infinity for reflection on experiences by the transcendental (intellectual, and not sense) imagination. The transcendental deduction of infinity of reflection on experiences is, then, of crucial significance to Husserl’s definition of and belief in ‘the infinite task’ of phenomenology. His commentators or critics do not always recognize this. But it is this ‘infinite task’ of exploring ‘psychical phenomena in general’ in ‘inner perception’ that Brentano had intimated in his novel science of ‘descriptive psychology’ that Husserl sets out to advance and institute in his programmatical unfolding of phenomenology as a systematic science of intentional consciousness and its objectivities.

No matter how infinite in principle reflection on individual actual experiences ideally is, items of knowledge gained by means of reflection on the particularity of the facticity of individual experiences themselves does not and cannot lead to any science of such experiences, so Husserl argues. Reflection, rather, can only be scientific if general truths about the facticity of such experiences are obtainable and communicable for that science. If philosophy is a science — and for Husserl, following Brentano, philosophy is a science, or it is nothing at all — it must arrive at general truths about the facticity of such experiences that are unified and unifiable for that science. Such general truths, however, cannot be empirical generalisations about matters of fact because all knowledge-claims pertaining to matters of fact, so Husserl argues, again following Brentano, are the purview and provenance of the natural sciences — and philosophy is not a natural science — but eidetic-general truths about that which cannot be otherwise, i.e., eidetic-ontological laws pertaining to (lived) experiences are obtainable. Only a descriptive-eidetic manner of reflection can realize the possibility of philosophy as a universal science that is rigorously and

Thus any reification or naturalistic conceptions and misunderstandings of consciousness are refuted, philosophically. See, de Boer, The Development of Husserl’s Thought, paragraph nine: consciousness as the necessary condition and sufficient reason of the world', pp. 354–357.


112 Ibid.

113 The transcendental deduction of the infinity of reflection on experiences is of critical significance to Husserl’s definition of ‘the infinite task’ of phenomenology, but it should not be confused with other parts of his philosophy. It should not, however, be overlooked either, as it is by one author, in a chapter of a recent book on Husserl, entitled ‘Chapter 6 Transcendental Phenomenology: An Infinite Project’, where no account at all of Husserl’s deduction of the idea, in the Kantian sense, of the infinite task of reflection on experiences is given. Cf., Moran, Edmund Husserl: Founder of Phenomenology (2005), pp. 174–201.

phenomenologically legitimated. It thus follows for Husserl that it will be a strict methodological requirement for ‘descriptive psychology’ to seek out and discover only those universally determinable, essential features of experiences themselves, ignoring whatever contingencies there are pertaining to the facticity, temporality, historicity and idiosyncrasies of such experiences, in the elaboration of Brentano’s new science of ‘descriptive psychology’, that is to say, as ‘descriptive-eidetic-psychology’ or ‘phenomenology’.

It thus turns out to be the case that the ability of consciousness to reflect upon itself, and therein attempt to grasp its essence, is a Lockean assumption that both Brentano and Husserl hold, but unlike Locke and Brentano this ability, as Husserl correctly argues, is not a legitimate methodological basis for a new science that purports to be a science of the essential features of consciousness and its objectivities. Knowledge of the essential features of psychical act-experiences and their objects (if they exist) is a product of eidetic insight into, or eidetic abstraction from factual experiences, of ‘eidetic ideation’ as he calls it in the Logical Investigations, or ‘eidetic variation’ as he calls it in Ideas I. Thus Husserl can accept Brentano’s claim that all our knowledge of consciousness comes from whatever particular experiences of consciousness we have, from acts of inner perceptions of our own psychical act-experiences, but reject his view that the scientific basis to Brentano’s own novel a priori science of descriptive psychology is confined to and derived from those particular experiences (inner perceptions) themselves. The basis, rather, lies in the intuitive grasp of the intelligible structure of such factual experiences, and this is a product of intuitive insight into the universal features of such experiences. ‘Back to the things themselves’, for Husserl of the Logical Investigations, is back to these essential structures of consciousness and its objectivities themselves. This is why Husserl can argue, again correctly, that the experiential origins of all a priori judgements, such as, for instance, the a priori judgement ‘Colour implies extension’, cannot be founded in the inner perceptions (factual reflections on) of colours (or coloured things) — no amount of factual perceptions of colours as extended can justify that colours not perceived are extended — but positive grasp of colour itself, as a general object: some positive, identifiable experience of colour itself as a universal object, is the basis of this a priori judgement. Whether we mistake a green apple for a green pear, we know ‘this green’ is not ‘that green’, that ‘there are no coloured things/colours that exist that are not extended’, and that ‘colour in essence is extended’. In this regard, colour, as a general object, is no more mysteriously presented to consciousness than colours, but it is presented to consciousness via a particular new mode and kind of act of consciousness, of eidetic insight or eidetic ideation, and not through sensuous intuitions of particular

115 ‘The study of the stream of experiences is, for its part, carried on in variety of peculiarly structured reflective acts which themselves also belong to the stream of experiences and which, in corresponding reflections at a higher level, can be made the Objects of phenomenological analyses. This is because their analyses is fundamental to a universal phenomenology and to the methodological insight quite indispensable to it (unentbehrliche methodologische Einsicht).’ Ideas I, p. 177:147. This marks Husserl’s major methodological advancement of Brentano’s idea of descriptive psychology (which, following Hume, finds its basis solely on individual inner perceptions) to a descriptive-eidetic science, though Husserl is quite right to note that Brentano (who denied the existence of any such fictional entities as ‘essences’) could not see this as the fruition of his own ideas. See, Husserl, ‘Reminiscences of Franz Brentano’, p. 50, and Ideas I, pp. xx:3–4. Husserl had already arrived at this conclusion, which he also calls his ‘breakthrough’ (to descriptive-eidetic psychology) in his Logical Investigations, of course: ‘Assertions of phenomenological fact can never be epistemologically grounded in psychological experience (Erfahrung), nor in internal perception in the ordinary sense of the word, but only in ideational, phenomenological inspection of essence. The latter has its illustrative start in inner intuition, but such inner intuition need not be actual internal perception or other inner experience (Erfahrung), e.g. recollection: its purposes are as well or even better served by any free fictions of inner imagination provided they have enough intuitive clarity.’ Logical Investigations, Investigation V, §27 The Testimony of Direct Intuition. Perceptual Presentation and Perception.

116 See, Ideas I, §75. ‘Phenomenology As a Descriptive Eidetic Doctrine of Pure Experiences’, and previous n. 115.
Husserl, then, rejects the epistemological claims that Brentano makes for his method of inner perceptions/inner reflections as the method to be employed in the new science of descriptive psychology but on the experiential basis that essential features that cannot be otherwise are the direct objects of such a science. Thus the division between *eidos* and fact must be maintained in order to justify the validity of descriptive *a priori* knowledge.

117 ‘Intuiting essences’, Husserl remarks in his 1910–11 *Lagus* essay ‘Philosophy as Rigorous Science’, ‘conceals no more difficulties or “mystical” secrets than does perception. When we bring “colour” to full intuitive clarity, to givenness for ourselves, then the datum is an “essence”; and when we likewise in pure intuition — looking, say, at one perception after another — bring to givenness for ourselves what “perception” is, perception in itself (this identical character of any number of flowing singular perceptions), then we have intuitively grasped the essence of perception. As far as intuition — i.e., having an intuitive consciousness — extends, so far extends the possibility of a corresponding “ideation” (as I called it in *Logische Untersuchungen*), or “seeing essence”: Husserl, ‘Philosophy as Rigorous Science’, in Edmund Husserl, *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, trans. by Quentin Lauer (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), pp. 71–147 (pp. 110–I); ‘Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft’, *Lagus*, 1 (1910–1911), 289–341. See, also, Husserl, *Ideas I*, § 3.


119 Thus ‘the meaning of language’, as de Boer succinctly points out, ‘is determined exclusively by what is seen. It is a “faithful expression of clear givens”. Thus there really is a “point of contact”: *The Development of Husserl’s Thought*, p. 378.

120 The primary analogy for Husserl here is the givenness for perception and not the bodily presence of one’s fellow human being. Levinas departs completely from any such founded mode of perception as the legitimate phenomenal basis to approach the otherness of the other that we do encounter ‘face to face’ via dialogue, for, even when we are talking to another person about that person herself, the otherness of the other discussed is more than that and stands behind that. That Husserl can regard ‘*color*’ as an universal object that is given in its ‘living bodily reality’ (in seiner leibhaften Wirklichkeit), ‘present in the flesh’, ‘in propria persona’ to (eidetic) perception should be enough to alert commentators to the dominance of perception — and not to the full presence of the living body of a fellow human being — in the analogy used here by Husserl and in Husserl’s thought. C.f., however, Moran, *Edmund Husserl: The Founder of Phenomenology*, p. 266, n.37. Thus the inclusion of universal objects (e.g. colour) about which we can and do make eternally true *a priori* judgements (e.g. colour implies extension), that are given to eidetic ideation or intuition ‘in their bodily reality *so to speak*’, which Husserl famously expounds in his advancement of a descriptive-eidetic-psychological method in the ‘principle of all principles’ (*Ideas* §24), can fare, in principle, no better in addressing the way perception of the body of another or of our selves plays a crucial role in any knowledge of others and of one’s self.


claims, and to avoid all forms of psychologism. Whether Husserl’s doctrine of the ‘intuition of essences’ is a return to Platonism can be set aside, but it is, as Heidegger correctly comments, a defence of some form of a priori empiricism (that is not an “a priorisität” construction”). And it is through this doctrine that Husserl can provide the kind of presuppositionless starting-point that Brentano himself seeks in PES but cannot find, or, at least, can only find in the assertoric-factual judgements of individual psychical act-experiences given in acts of inner perceptions (reflections).

(i) Perception as Incidental Consciousness

Besides the above three meanings that Brentano appears to subscribe to for ‘inner perception’, namely, as (1) the Lockean hypothesis of an accompanying, supervening act of inner perceiving all conscious acts, or (2) as an act of reflection (upon psychical act-experiences), or (3) as a reflective immanent perception, in PES Brentano operates with a fourth meaning of ‘inner perception’ as (4) ‘incidental consciousness’ (Bewusstsein nebenbei) (which he also calls ‘inner consciousness’ and ‘secondary consciousness’). This consciousness, Brentano argues, accompanies ‘incidentally’ each and every conscious act I have. Every conscious act exists only if there is also the awareness of being aware as an integral part of each and any conscious act that actually exists. This is why Brentano remarks that such incidental awareness ‘is an accessory feature included in the act itself’.

According to Brentano, each and every conscious act, which a mentally active subject experiences, is accompanied by an ‘incidental awareness’ (nebenbei Bewusstsein) of itself as a conscious act. This awareness of being aware, although ‘incidental’ is, nonetheless, Brentano argues, an ‘essential ingredient’ in any presentation (Vorstellung) because it is ‘connected […] in such a peculiarly intimate way that its very existence constitutes an intrinsic prerequisite of the existence of this presentation.” Hence, ‘we divide it [= a conscious act of hearing, as is evident from the context] conceptually into two presentations’, but in reality, this presentation contains (1) the act of hearing (psychical act-experience), (2) the object heard (the ‘sound’ qua physical phenomenon) and (3) the awareness of being aware (incidental consciousness) as part of that very conscious act.

For Brentano, then, incidental consciousness is a feature of the acts of consciousness, not of the objects of consciousness. This incidental or additional consciousness, however, Brentano stresses, is not an attentive act of perceiving or some

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123 Brentano was particularly offended when charged of ‘psychologism’ by Husserl, since Brentano appeals solely to the ‘evidence’ of an act of (true) judgement, but they are different forms of psychologism, not all of which Brentano escapes. See, de Boer, The Development of Husserl’s Thought, Part I, Ch. VI ‘Preliminary Conclusions’, paragraph one: philosophy as descriptive psychology — forms of psychologism’, pp. 115–117 and Part Two, Ch. VI Conclusions, § 2. ‘Forms of Psychologism’, pp. 300–301.

124 Cf., Being and Time, §10. ‘How the Analytic of Dasein is to be Distinguished from Anthropology, Psychology, and Biology’, esp., n. 10. In the Logical Investigations, the existence of ideal meanings, what Husserl calls ‘essences’, is defended on the basis of descriptive-ideitic-psychological analysis of the experiences of a normatively valid logical consciousness as such. Corresponding to general meanings that are uttered or expressed in logical statements, there are general essences upon which the gaze of a valid logical consciousness rests. If one wishes to call this the ‘realism’ or ‘Platonism’ of the Logical Investigations, as it was at the time, then so be it. See Husserl’s response to this interpretation in Ideas § 22. ‘The Reproach of Platonic Realism. Essence and Concepts’. (pp. 40–42:40–42) ‘I did not invent the universal concept of object; I only restored the concept [in the Logische Untersuchungen] required by all propositions of pure logic and pointed out that it is an essentially indispensable one (daß es ein prinzipiell unentbehrlicher) and therefore that it also determines universal scientific language (and daher auch die allgemeine wissenschaftliche Rede bestimmender ist).’ (p. 41:40) Cf., also, Levinas, The Theory of Intuition in Husserl’s Phenomenology, p. 97 and De Boer, The Development of Husserl’s Thought, pp. 263–269.


126 PES p. 141.

127 Ibid. p. 127.

128 Ibid., p. 127, my emphasis.
kindred act of introspection or inner observation.\textsuperscript{129} Such incidental awareness, rather, is an ‘accessory feature included in the act itself.’\textsuperscript{130} Incidental awareness ‘is not a self-sufficient act’, but, as de Boer remarks, ‘is of an accompanying [parasitic] character.’\textsuperscript{131} Nevertheless, this incidental awareness, Brentano argues, is connected ‘in such a peculiar intimate way’ to each and any conscious act, that its very existence constitutes an intrinsic prerequisite for the existence of a conscious psychical act-experience.\textsuperscript{132} That a conscious act is a conscious act, that is to say, that it contains an incidental awareness of itself as a conscious act, is part of the very act. It would be self-referentially inconsistent for anyone to deny such incidental awareness, because a conscious act of denial, as a fact of experience, presupposes its validity. Hence, Brentano concludes, ‘the truth of inner perception [as incidental consciousness] cannot be proved in any way,’\textsuperscript{133} but this is because ‘it has something more than proof; it is immediately evident.’\textsuperscript{134} Though immediately evident, such ‘[incidental] awareness’, as Spiegelberg correctly points out, ‘[is] restricted, to be sure, to the immediate present’ and hence, ‘would seem to be infinitesimally small’\textsuperscript{135} It is, nonetheless, an essential ingredient of a conscious act without itself being a conscious act or a definable object of any (intentional) conscious act. Thus ‘(T)he unity of consciousness’, as Brentano correctly argues, ‘does not require either the simplicity or the indivisibility of consciousness.’\textsuperscript{136} For instance, in a conscious act of hearing, the awareness of being aware, the immanent object of that conscious act (a sound \textit{qua} physical phenomenon) and the act of hearing (the psychical act-experience) are all ‘real’ components of an actual conscious act of hearing.

Brentano’s doctrine of ‘incidental consciousness’, however, has caused much anguish among commentators and critics of his thought. B. Terrell, for example, remarks,

All mental phenomena include an awareness of themselves according to Brentano’s doctrine of inner perception or secondary consciousness. Inner perception as a component feature of a mental phenomenon must therefore be distinguished from any mental act, including so-called introspection, that has another such phenomenon as its primary object reference [...]. There has been relatively little examination of this aspect of Brentano’s philosophy of mind that goes beyond either the mere restatement of this doctrine or an expression of despair of understanding it.\textsuperscript{137}

One of the main reasons for so much obscurity, confusion and even ‘despair’ at understanding Brentano’s doctrine on ‘inner perception’ is, no doubt, his indiscriminate and equivocal use of the term ‘inner perception’. And when commentators and critics duplicate Brentano’s equivocations, his philosophy appears full of inconsistencies and ambiguities.\textsuperscript{138} When inner perception refers to the awareness of being aware, Brentano,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{129} Ibid., p. 30.
\item \textsuperscript{130} Ibid., p. 141, my emphasis.
\item \textsuperscript{131} De Boer, \textit{The Development of Husserl’s Thought}, p. 36.
\item \textsuperscript{132} \textit{PES}, p. 140.
\item \textsuperscript{133} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{134} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{135} Spiegelberg, \textit{The Phenomenological Movement}, (1994), p. 36.
\item \textsuperscript{136} \textit{PES}, p. 171.
\item \textsuperscript{138} Moran thinks that ‘Brentano’s reliance on the additional consciousness account [...] concerning the unity of the act and the nature of its object’, which commits Brentano to the view that ‘[B]eing an object of an act is not exhausted by being physical or even sensory, since we can have a mental act as an object’, renders ‘Brentano’s very notion of physical and psychical phenomena [...] largely incoherent’, and so, ‘(T)he whole account [...of the distinction between physical and psychical phenomena] seems shot through with confusion’ (The Inaugural Address: Brentano’s Thesis’, pp. 21–2); David Bell expresses similar views in \textit{Husserl} (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 9. Moran does not modify this account of Brentano’s doctrine of ‘additional consciousness’ given in ‘The Inaugural Address: Brentano’s Thesis’, in his widely used and re-issued study \textit{Introduction to Phenomenology} (London: Routledge, 1999; eBook, 2007, pp. 43–45). If, however, we distinguish different concepts of inner perception that Brentano appears to subscribe to, namely, as (1) the Lockean hypothesis of an unbroken and automatic inner percept of conscious acts, (2) inner reflection, (3)
nonetheless, is crystal clear as to where he obtained this doctrine: not from Locke, nor from Descartes, but from Aristotle, and quotes in PES exactly where Aristotle in the Metaphysics remarks,

Knowledge, sensation, opinion and reflection seem always to relate to something else, but only incidentally to themselves.139

This quote is a very important quotation. Some commentators of Brentano’s thought see in this quote not only Brentano’s faithful adherence to Aristotelian philosophy, but also the Scholastic roots of Brentano’s celebrated ‘realist’ thesis of the intentionality of consciousness, that is to say, the view that consciousness is always related to something other than itself. 140 This, however, is not Brentano’s position in PES, for what consciousness is a consciousness of, from a descriptive-psychological methodological point of view, is, as we have noted, psychical act-experiences themselves. Sensation is not directed towards physical things extra-mentally but colours, sounds etc., qua immanent, intentional (mental) objects that only exist as long as the act of outer perceptual-sense experience exists. This part of Brentano’s doctrine of intentionality is completely ‘un-Scholastic’, and Brentano adapts and changes significantly the meaning of the Scholastic-Aristotelian concepts of intention in-existence, intentional act and intentional object in the elaboration of his new science of descriptive psychology.141 Brentano, however, does not deviate from the Aristotelian view that every conscious act is aware of itself incidentally. Indeed, in his commentary on this part of Brentano’s doctrine on ‘inner perception’ Husserl, in his ‘Appendix’, stresses the point that such incidental awareness is ‘no second, independent act supervening upon a relevant psychic phenomenon’.142 Rather, insofar as ‘the act directly intends its primary object, it is also subsidiarily directed upon itself.’ ‘In this way,’ Husserl continues, in entire agreement with Brentano, ‘one avoids the endless complication of all psychic phenomena.’143 Brentano, then, is correct to insist that such incidental awareness is not an act of inner observation (or outer observation). And Husserl can acknowledge the validity of this Aristotelian tenet in Brentano’s descriptive account of conscious, psychical act-experiences, while rejecting Brentano’s Lockean theory that all psychical act-experiences are accompanied by an inner act of perceiving. Incidental awareness, nonetheless, is not an act of (inner or outer) perception. It is very unfortunate, therefore, that Brentano calls it an ‘inner perception’, but his reason for doing so is because such a feature is an intrinsic feature of a conscious act and something that is evidently and directly known to be the case though neither as an object nor as an act of consciousness itself. Incidental awareness, nonetheless, is not an act of inner reflection either. As Heidegger remarks to his students in his 1951–1952 lecture course on What is Called Thinking?,

immanent perception, and (4) incidental awareness, Brentano’s doctrine is not as confused as it is portrayed by these commentators. Even if we do not distinguish these in Brentano’s thought, Bartok makes the point that Brentano’s account of ‘inner perception’ is not as incongruent as both Bell and Moran suggest since ‘given the metaphysical and epistemological framework in which descriptive psychology is constrained to operate, it cannot be the descriptive psychologist’s mandate to develop anything like a “theory” of intentionality or inner perception in the traditional sense’ (‘Brentano’s Intentionality Thesis’, p. 450).
139 PES, p. 132, quoting Aristotle, Metaphysics Bk XII 9. See, also, DP, p. 25 (‘geht nebenher auf sich selbst’, p. 22). Brentano does not supply textual reference here, as he did in PES, but the one supplied by the editors from Aristotle’s De Anima, III, Ch. 2, 425b, (DP, p. 180, n. 10) is incorrect.
143 Ibid.
When we attempt to learn what is called thinking and what calls for thinking, are we not getting lost in the reflection that thinks on reflection? Yet all along our way a steady light is cast on thinking. This light is not, however, introduced by the lamp of reflection. It issues from thinking itself, and only from there. Thinking has this enigmatic property, that it itself is brought to its own light—though only and as long as it is thinking, and keeps clear of persisting in a ratiocination about ratio.\(^{144}\)

Like Brentano and Husserl, then, Heidegger too appears not to reject Aristotle’s ‘incidental awareness’ thesis.

Though incidental awareness is an irrefutable, irrefragable, irreducible accompanying feature of each and any actual conscious act that exists for the mentally active subject, such incidental awareness, as Husserl is quick to point out, can be of no value to any science in obtaining any knowledge about anything. The awareness of being aware—necessary as it is for the very existence of conscious acts as conscious acts—is an inattentive act. Such awareness of being aware cannot be employed by any scientist to gain knowledge of any thing, never mind by a descriptive psychologist to gain knowledge of psychical act-experiences. As Spiegelberg comments, ‘His [the descriptive-psychologist’s] only comfort would be that he shares his plight with all other scientists.’\(^{145}\) There is, then, in sum, nothing of scientific benefit in this fact. Central as this doctrine of ‘incidental awareness’ is to Brentano’s account of the unity of consciousness, it can play no methodological role in the development of descriptive psychology as a science, and so, drops out of Husserl’s development of Brentano’s conception of philosophy as the descriptive science of psychical act-experiences and their objectivities.

**CONCLUSION**

We can and must distinguish four different concepts of ‘inner perception’ in Brentano’s thought in order to remove some of the obscurity that surrounds his doctrine.

Firstly, inner perception is regarded by Brentano as an inner act of perceiving that accompanies each and every psychical act-experience that befalls the mentally active subject. This theory Brentano borrows from Locke but it is rejected by Husserl on the basis that there is no evidence in our experience to support such a hypothesis.

Secondly, by inner perception, Brentano also means the ability of the mentally active subject to turn attention away from ‘physical phenomena’ (or ‘things’) given to outer perceptual-sense experience and towards psychical act-experiences themselves correlated to their objectivities, in order to describe what such experiences are themselves, without appealing to any natural scientific, or any other kind of hypothetical or causal line of reasoning. This form of reflection is the method that Brentano allots to descriptive psychology and it is an essential part of the elaboration of concepts in Brentano’s new science of descriptive psychology. From a methodological point of view, it is only when inner perception refers to such inner, intuitive reflection that it denotes the descriptive method to be employed in the science of descriptive psychology. How such inner reflection that is directed towards one’s own particular individual psychical act-experiences can produce a priori knowledge-claims about psychical act-experiences in general, is an issue that Brentano does not explain. It is a problem that occupied Husserl’s thought, and leads to Husserl’s development of his theory of the intuition of essences.

Thirdly, by inner perception Brentano means the ‘reflective immanent perception’ of a currently lived, psychical act-experience. This plays a critical role in Husserl’s famous transcendental reduction in Ideas I, but is left ‘unthought’, to borrow Heidegger’s expression, in Brentano’s descriptive psychology.

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Fourthly, by inner perception Brentano also means the awareness of being aware which accompanies \textit{incidentally} all conscious acts. This is an intrinsic feature of any conscious act, but it is not a self-sufficient conscious act. It is not a ‘psychical phenomenon’ or a ‘psychical act-experience’, as both Brentano and Husserl define those terms. It should not, therefore, be labelled as an act of perception, or of judgement, or of reflection, or of attention, or of any other identifiable psychical act-experience simply because it is not an identifiable act-experience at all. Neither is it a ‘physical phenomenon’ (in whatever way this term is understood, either as a sensorial quality of acts of outer or inner sense perception, or as a theoretically constructed object of physics, or an identifiable object of outer sense perception, e.g., a drop of water). It is, rather, an accessory feature of all conscious acts and correctly understood by Brentano to be a necessary pre-requisite for the \textit{existence} of a conscious act. A conscious act simply could not \textit{be} a conscious act without the awareness of being aware as a feature of that act. This feature, then, is an intriguing dimension to conscious acts, and one that Husserl does not reject, but since such awareness is an inattentive act, no use of it, as Husserl again correctly argues, can be made \textit{methodologically} in the science of descriptive psychology.\footnote{Regarding Brentano’s doctrine of ‘additional consciousness’ (Bewusstseinsnebenbei), Moran, in a section entitled ‘Inner perception as additional awareness’ in ‘Chapter I Franz Brentano: Descriptive Psychology and Intentionality’ of his \textit{An Introduction to Phenomenology}, remarks, ‘(T)hough he rejected introspection, Brentano believed that he could achieve direct knowledge of his inner mental states, by catching these states \textit{reflectively} while engaged in acts of outer perception. All consciousness of an object is accompanied by a consciousness of itself as well, though this need not be explicit. There is no perceiving without the possibility of apperception (DP, p. 171; PES, p. 153) and hence, for Brentano, there can be no unconscious mental acts. Brentano drew on Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas for a description of the nature of this accompanying, coomitant, or “additional consciousness” (Bewusstseinsnebenbei), whereby the essential features of the primary act are grasped “by the way”, “incidentally” \textit{(per accidens, en parergo}, PES p. 276). [...] In Brentano’s language, we \textit{apperceive} ourselves having perceptions, we cannot \textit{observe} these perceptions directly’ (p. 43). Thus Moran concludes, ‘(I)n a sense, Brentano weds the Aristotelian account to the Cartesian–Leibnizian view that inner perception is apodictic, given with certain “self-evidence” (\textit{Evidenz})’ (ibid.). And the author immediately adds, ‘(I)t is important to realise how restrictive descriptive psychology is. Our immediate infallible knowledge is restricted to the present moment, to the \textit{now}’ (ibid.). The awareness of being aware that accompanies a conscious act, however, \textit{is not} an attentive act, nor is it \textit{an} act of reflection, nor can it \textit{grasp} (know) \textit{essential} features of the primary act, nor even know that the act exists, i.e., the singular existence of that primary act. It is, rather, an intrinsic feature of a conscious act with no cognitive import. Moran, however, is quite correct, as is Spiegelberg in \textit{The Phenomenological Movement} (p. 36), in noting that incidental awareness is limited strictly to the present. This must not be confused, however, with \textit{[reflective] immanent perception}, which is also limited to the present and is apodictic, as Husserl correctly points out. ‘Additional consciousness’ or ‘incidental awareness’, nonetheless, is of no use in the science of descriptive psychology, as Husserl correctly argues.}

\footnote{Brentano, of course, could not see this. Cf., his remarks directed against this ‘Supplementary Remarks’, IX ‘On Genuine and Fictitious Objects’, pp. 291–301 (p. 297). According to Brentano’s theory of judgment, necessarily true, universal affirmative judgments do not posit the existence of their objects, but are convertible to negative existential judgments, e.g., the \textit{a priori} judgement colour implies extension is convertible (and identical in meaning and truth-value) to the negative existential judgement: there are no}
through intuitive reflective insight, opens up the possibility of collaboration in a new science of consciousness and its objectivities; or, at least, so Husserl was convinced, following Brentano’s descriptive-psychological science, but departing from the inessential basis of factual inner perceptions (much to Brentano’s incomprehension and disappointment), in his advancement of his ‘method’ of phenomenology as a radical, self-legitimating, descriptive-ide tic science of pure intentional consciousness and its objectivities. This is why Husserl is correct, in his self evaluation, to tell his students in his 1925 Summer-Semester lecture course on Phenomenological Psychology that his efforts in philosophy and phenomenology to pursue descriptive-ide tic science of pure consciousness and its objectivities was a radicalization of ideas he found in Brentano, but that ‘Brentano himself did [could] not [methodologically] recognise it as the fruition of his own ideas’.

What Husserl himself, however, seems to overlook is that his understanding of the very ability of consciousness to reflect upon itself and to have itself as a ‘content of reflection’, to borrow Husserl’s phrase from the Logical Investigations, presupposes a dualistic metaphysics of human subjectivity, in terms of a lucid mind and opaque body, and until this metaphysical remnant was to be displaced with an existential-phenomenological methodological starting-point, the desired goal of understanding the significances of the meaning of experiences characteristic of actual human consciousness as such could not be fully realised. Perhaps the Husserl of Ideas I, nonetheless, has a point when he argues that it takes a special way of looking at human consciousness to unlock human consciousness, to overcome the absolutization of nature and the reification of consciousness, and to enable human consciousness to come into view at all for analysis. And when it does come into view for analysis, if universal truth is sought, then the only way to pursue such a descriptive science will be to engage in reflective intuitive insight into the essential features of the experiences of a human being, as Husserl argues. Whether the significances of the particularity (facticity) of those very experiences of a human being are overlooked in this very search for universal, essential a priori features, is, however, a critical point that Dilthey (before Heidegger) made against Husserl’s method of ide tic analysis (and against both the natural science method of analysis and the Lockean-Humean-Brentanian method of ‘inner perception’). Addressing this critique, however, takes us out of the methodological concerns for ‘science’ and ‘research’, of ‘inner perception’ and ‘inner reflection’, and of ‘ide tic insight’ that are characteristic and definitive of the thought of Brentano and Husserl, and into an alternative method of analysis for philosophy that can never in principle be a science (nor a system) but a permanent act of hermeneutic retrieval of the significances of the meaning of the uniqueness of life experiences that is found in those experiences themselves and that are expressed in those experiences themselves in language, in a play, a poem, a prayer, a work of art, a hymn, and in all ‘objects’ of culture, as advocated by Schleiermacher and developed by Dilthey. Husserl, however, follows Brentano (the descriptive psychologist),

unextended colours (or coloured things), or a hypothetical positive judgement, if a colour (or coloured thing) exists it is unextended. Herein, Brentano thinks he retains his ‘descriptive psychological’ viewpoint that the sole basis in experience for the truth of this judgment is actual outer perceptual-sense experience of colours (or coloured things). This is why Brentano thinks he needs no such fictitious general object as ‘colour’ to exist in order to justify, in experience, the truth of the a priori judgment ‘colour implies extension’. Knowing the truth of the fact that colours are extended in any particular act of judgement non, however, cannot guarantee necessarily that possible colours (or colours things) might exist as unextended, yet this is exactly what is excluded by the a priori judgment. Husserl notes that the a priori judgment implies some direct experience of colour itself as a general object and insight into its essence is the basis in experience upon which the truth of the a priori judgment rests and that is valid not only for actual but all possible experiences of colours/coloured things. Hence his remark, ‘(N)o interpretative skill in the world,’ alluding to Brentano’s conversion of universally valid a priori judgements into particular negative existential judgements, ‘can in fact eliminate these ideal objects from our speech and our thought.’ Logical Investigations, vol. 1, p. 353, my emphasis. This is also what lies behind Husserl’s later insistence in ‘Part One: Essence and IDEtic Cognition’ of Ideas I that, ‘we are the genuine positivists’ (p. 39:38).
and not Dilthey (the descriptive psychologist), in affirming priority to the way in which consciousness can, in light of reflection upon its own self, know itself and deduce its freedom and responsibilities from reflecting upon itself. In this regard, Husserl, is quite right to note in his self-evaluation (regardless of the so-called followers of his thought) that his particular definition and way of doing phenomenology follows, methodologically, in the wake of Brentano’s new science of descriptive psychology, even if Brentano himself could not and did not see this as a continuation of his own ideas.\footnote{I would like to thank very much indeed the reviewer of this article for the close reading, comments and corrections made to some of my errors and that were most helpful to me — any existing errors, of course, are entirely my own.}
The Contributors to This Volume:

MICHAEL DUNNE is currently Head of the Department of Philosophy at NUI Maynooth. His main area of interest is Ireland’s mediaeval university philosophical heritage. His current research project involves the edition of the scholastic works of Richard FitzRalph (1300-1360). Among his recent publications is (with J. McEvoy), The Irish Contribution to European Scholastic Thought (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2009).

JOHN GLUCKER is Emeritus Professor of Classical Philology and Philosophy, Tel-Aviv University, formerly Lecturer in Classics, the University of Exeter. He was, a few times between 2003 and 2008, Visiting Professor of Ancient Philosophy at the University of Crete. On April 28th, 2011, he gave a lecture at the Philosophy Seminar, NUI Maynooth, on The Ancient Legislators of Language.

YOSEF L. LIEBERSOHN is Lecturer in the Departments of History and Philosophy, Bar-Ilan University. His specialty is Classical and Hellenistic philosophy and Classical philology. He is the author of The Dispute Concerning Rhetoric in Hellenistic Thought (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2010). In February 2012, he gave a lecture at the Philosophy Seminar, NUI Maynooth, on Epicurus’ system of pleasures.

IVOR LUDLAM advocates the reading of Platonic dialogues as philosophical dramas, exemplified in his 1991 book Hippias Major: An Interpretation. Turning from early to middle dialogues, he is now completing a dramatic analysis of Politeia (aka Republic). He currently teaches Latin and Ancient Greek in the Department of Foreign Languages in the University of Haifa.

CYRIL MCDONNELL is Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy at NUI Maynooth since 2005. His areas of interest in philosophy are: the development of twentieth century phenomenology (Brentano, Dilthey, Husserl, Heidegger and Levinas); post-Kantian philosophy of religion (Hegel, Kierkegaard and Schleiermacher); topics in special ethics (law and morality, rights, and punishment); and philosophy of education (in particular the teaching and learning relationship).

GREGORIO PIAIA is a Professor of History of Philosophy at the Department of Philosophy, University of Padua. His publications focus on the history of political and ethical-religious doctrines from the later Middle Ages to the Renaissance, the history and theory of philosophical historiography and the history of philosophical culture in the Veneto region, at Padua University in particular, from the 17th to 19th centuries.