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## Stumpf and Husserl on Phenomenology and Descriptive Psychology

One of the most stringent criticisms aimed at Husserl's version of phenomenology comes from Stumpf himself in his posthumous book *Erkenntnislehre* (1939 Section 13), in which he tackles the transcendental phenomenology developed by Husserl in the first volume of *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy (Ideas I)*. This criticism is all the more credible when one considers that the two philosophers maintained a close relationship for over fifty years and that Stumpf followed with interest the evolution of the thought of a friend who was once his student in Halle. This criticism addresses, in fact, the very principles of Husserl's "pure" phenomenology, and we will see that it is motivated largely by the principles of what he also called phenomenology understood in its narrower sense as the field of sensory phenomena. It is clear from his discussion of *Ideas I* that his own motives in this criticism are as philosophical as those that led Husserl to a form of transcendental philosophy. However, since the latter broke with the philosophical program that Husserl still defended in his *Logical Investigations* and to which Stumpf always remained faithful (see Fiset 2009), the question raised in *Erkenntnislehre* concerns precisely the reasons for his emancipation from the initial program and to what extent it innovates compared to the phenomenology of the *Logical Investigations* understood as descriptive psychology. Stumpf basically wanted to show that this new version of phenomenology not only presupposes the essential elements of the original program (including intentionality), but where it claims to innovate in relating itself to the Kantian tradition, it espouses a philosophical cause which is one of the main targets of Brentano's criticism.

For the purposes of this study, we will distinguish two periods in the work of Husserl that are relevant with regards to his relation to Stumpf: the so-called Halle period (1886-1901), which includes the *Logical Investigations* (1900-1901), and the Göttingen period (1901-1916), which begins with his arrival in Göttingen in 1901 and which is marked by the transcendental turn of his phenomenology outlined in *Ideas I* (1913). Stumpf's attitude towards these two versions of phenomenology is radically different. Contrary to the very critical position he adopts towards the phenomenology of *Ideas I*, he saw in the works of the young Husserl during the

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Halle period a major contribution to a program in philosophy to which Stumpf adhered until his very last work. In this regard, Stumpf's attitude toward the work of Husserl and his other students contrasts with that of Brentano (Fisette 2009). In fact, at the very end of his autobiography, he recalled that he never sought to build a school and that he favored above all freedom of thought among his students insofar as it is exercised in a scientific spirit of which is impregnated his own work (Stumpf 1924, 440). But unlike his other students such as W. Köhler and K. Lewin, or E. von Hornbostel, Stumpf always saw Husserl as a member of the Brentano school as much as A. Marty, A. Meinong, and himself. This is confirmed in Stumpf's three biographical texts written in memory of Brentano between 1919 and 1922, in which he sees in the phenomenology of Husserl the continuation and extension of Brentano's philosophical program (1919, 43; 1920, 60; 1922, 74), in particular his descriptive psychology through which the phenomenology of his *Logical Investigations* is defined. This is confirmed by a passage from his autobiography in which he corrects the treatment reserved for his own phenomenology in the classic work of his student T. K. Oesterreich on the history of German philosophy in the nineteenth century. Here, Oesterreich combines Stumpf's and Husserl's phenomenology and suggests that Stumpf belongs to Husserl's "circle" (Oesterreich 1951, 503 ff). Stumpf replies to the contrary and adds that this confusion can be explained as follows:

"The pupils of Brentano naturally have many things in common because they share the same starting-point; but the necessity for changes, additions, and continuations is often felt by those who proceed in the same direction" (Stumpf 1924, 414)

### **1. Stumpf as *Mentor, Berater und väterlicher Freund***

After studying in Vienna with Brentano, Husserl arrived at Halle in the autumn of 1886 to complete his habilitation. We know that at the time, Brentano was not authorized to supervise theses, so he entrusted Husserl's supervision to Stumpf. Thus, Brentano recommends Husserl to study with Stumpf (1989, 83 f) in the hope that he would also benefit from the assistance of G. Cantor, who was also in Halle at that time for the mathematical aspect of his research. This is not to say that Stumpf acted in the circumstances as a mere intermediary. On the contrary, as reported by Malvine Husserl in her memoir, during the Halle period, "Stumpf was the mentor, the adviser, the fatherly friend" (Schuhmann 1988, 114). Stumpf therefore welcomed him with enthusiasm and confirms later that Husserl "was my first student, later an instructor, and became intimately associated with me scientifically and as a friend" (Stumpf 1924, 399). This date marks the beginning of a long and fruitful friendship that lasted until the death of Stumpf in 1936. The first year of study in Halle was very intensive for the young Husserl who, in addition to writing his thesis, attended Stumpf's lectures and was required

to take several exams for his entitlement to teach at the university. Husserl attended Stumpf's lectures in psychology in the winter semester of 1886-1887, and during the summer semester of 1887, he attended his lecture on logic and the encyclopedia of philosophy. Part of these lectures are now in print, and we can judge by their content how they contributed to Husserl's understanding of descriptive psychology (see Schuhmann 2000, 2001). Because Husserl had a doctoral degree from Austria, the University of Halle required him to take a nostrification (equivalence) exam in June 1887. Sitting on the jury was namely the mathematician Cantor and, *ex officio*, Stumpf, who examined among other topics Lotze's theory of local signs, the history of the theories of space, the relation between logic and mathematics (Stumpf in Gerlach 1994, 184). In early July of 1887, Husserl disputed his habilitation thesis and presented seven theses that he defended successfully to obtain his degree at the university. His *Habilitationsschrift* was published a few months later under the title "On the Concept of Number: Psychological Analysis," and the main topic was the psychological origin of the fundamental concepts of arithmetic. In his report, Stumpf noted the remarkable analytical qualities of the candidate and emphasized the important methodological contribution of descriptive psychology in this work (Stumpf in Gerlach 1994, 173). A few days after the *disputatio*, Husserl presented a *Probevorlesung* on the debate surrounding the psychology of introspection to the members of a jury composed once again of Cantor and Stumpf among others, and we know that Husserl adopted a critical attitude toward Brentano's position on this question (see Schuhmann 1977, 20). Finally, on 24 October 1887, Husserl held his inaugural address entitled "Über Ziele und Aufgaben der Metaphysik" and became Privatdozent at the University of Halle, a status he held until he left for Göttingen in 1901.

Two years after Stumpf received a professorship in Munich in 1889, Husserl published the first volume of *Philosophy of Arithmetic*, which is dedicated to Brentano. This book is based largely on his *Habilitationsschrift* and as indicated in the subtitle, "logical and psychological investigations," the theme here is again a psychological analysis of the concept of number in the perspective of descriptive psychology. Suffice it to mention here Husserl's debt in this work not only to Brentano but also to Stumpf, particularly with regard to the central notion of primary relation that we will talk about later (see Rollinger, 1996, 100 ff; Fisette 2007, 95 ff). In the preface to this book, Husserl announces the forthcoming publication of the second volume of *Philosophy of Arithmetic*, but we know that this project never came about. However, the research he conducted for the abandoned project was particularly fruitful not only in psychology but also in logic and mathematics. In the field of descriptive psychology, there are three aspects of this research that are of interest to our study. The first concerns the development during this period of a first version of his own theory of intentionality,

namely in a remarkable working paper entitled “Intentionale Gegenstände” (Husserl 1894b). This manuscript is based on a criticism of the immanent theory of intentionality developed by Twardowski (1894) and it indirectly addressed Brentano’s initial theory. A second aspect of this research project is a *Raumbuch*, which he announced in the preface to *Philosophy of Arithmetic* (1891, 8). In the fragments of this project that are accessible in print, the importance granted to the works of Stumpf (1873) and Lotze on the issue of space perception is striking, and elsewhere Husserl said of Stumpf’s and Lotze’s contributions to that field that they are “magisterial” (Husserl 1894a). The same year, Husserl published an article entitled “Psychological studies to elementary logic” in which he develops the first version of his theory of wholes and parts, which is entirely based on Stumpf’s theory of psychological parts, which he laid out in Section 5 of his *Raumbuch* (Stumpf 1873, 106 ff).

The last part of the Husserl’s Halle period marks the abandonment of his project for writing a second volume to *Philosophy of Arithmetic* and the beginning, in the mid-1890s, of research that we know led to the publication of his monumental *Logical Investigations* (1900-1901). This turning point in the orientation of his research generated considerable interest among Husserl’s scholars and many sought an explanation in Frege’s critical review of *Philosophy of Arithmetic*, in which the author attacks Husserl’s alleged psychologism (Frege 1894). We do not intend to add to this debate, but we must remember that, in 1891, Stumpf also published an important treatise on psychologism, and that Husserl’s reference in his criticism of logical psychologism in *Prolegomena* is precisely Stumpf’s paper and not Frege’s (Husserl 1900, 52, 57). One of the advantages of Stumpf’s diagnose over Frege’s radical anti-psychologism (or anti-psychology) is that his criticism does not altogether banish descriptive psychology from the philosophical landscape. First, in this perspective, descriptive psychology in *Philosophy of Arithmetic* is not targeted in his criticism, and secondly, it explains the apparent tension in the *Logical Investigations* between the criticism of psychologism in the first book and the central role of descriptive psychology in the six investigations that make up the second volume of this book.

## 2. Stumpf and the Phenomenology of Logical Investigations

At the turn of the twentieth century, Husserl published his main work, in which he designates his research by using the term phenomenology. It is reported that he “was reluctant to have the *Logical Investigations* published and that the manuscript reached the printer only because Stumpf gave it to him” (1977 Schuhmann, 57 f). The book is also dedicated to Stumpf in recognition of his “veneration and friendship,” and as we know, Husserl’s debt to Stumpf in this book is not to be overlooked. It concerns several central themes such as the critique of psychologism in the *Prolegomena*; the notions of abstraction and concept formation in the second

investigation; the theory of wholes and parts in the third; the notion of states of affairs as content of judgment in the fifth, namely regarding sense perception and primary content; and moments of unity and the concept of fusion that appear in the last two investigations and throughout the book (see Rollinger 1996). In his two Academy treatises of 1906, Stumpf refers to the book repeatedly and in a positive manner. Rather than give a detailed account of these rich and interesting discussions, we will examine more precisely the elements that are presupposed in his criticism of phenomenology in *Ideas I*. We particularly have in mind Stumpf's notions of phenomenology and descriptive psychology in his two treatises of the Academy of 1906 (Stumpf 1906a, 1906b), which are essential for understanding the meaning of his remarks on phenomenology in the *Logical Investigations* and of his criticism of phenomenology in *Ideas I*.

In short, "Phenomena and mental functions" is an exercise in descriptive psychology in which Stumpf attempts to analyze and classify mental phenomena or what he calls mental functions. Stumpf offers an analysis of the structure of mental states that is closer to Husserl's than to Brentano's in that it clearly distinguishes between acts, their content (or what he calls formations [*Gebilde*]), and the (real) objects they aim at. In particular, Stumpf insists in this paper on another important distinction between functions or mental phenomena and sense phenomena that he conceives of as wholes and not as aggregates or bundles of sensations, and he claims that they are perceived as concrete unitary wholes. As such, phenomena are the content of sensation, which is characterized by certain properties that Stumpf, in his *Raumbuch*, calls "psychological parts," or attributes of sensation. Quality is defined as the fundamental property of a sensation by which we designate it, including color and sound, as well as the kinesthetic sensations such as pleasure and pain. Extension, intensity, and brightness are not only seen as qualities, but also as essential attributes of phenomena. Stumpf argues that all phenomena are structured by different types of relations, such as fusion relations, logical and real relations of dependency, wholes and parts relations. These relations are not imposed on the sensory material from the outside by mental functions; they are inherent to the phenomena themselves and are perceived directly as absolute contents, such as color and sound.

In the second paper entitled "The classification of sciences" Stumpf proposes a classification of sciences based in part on the distinction between mental phenomena and functions. The study of functions is the realm of descriptive psychology, understood here in the narrow sense as the science of elementary functions, which in turn is considered as founding social sciences as a whole, understood as the sciences of complex functions. The study of sense phenomena and their properties belongs to a separate science that Stumpf calls precisely phenomenology. It has, in this classification, a central function in social and natural sciences and in philosophy in general. Stumpf granted it the special

status of “neutral science” both because it is distinct from all existing sciences and because it designates a field of research that is common to all sciences; phenomenology has in addition the status of a propaedeutic science because the study of this field is a prerequisite to both natural and humanistic sciences. Stumpf’s well-known statement according to which “there is a phenomenology, but no phenomenologist” (1906b, 32) is meant precisely to state that this area of research cannot be monopolized by a single discipline; it requires the contribution of both natural sciences and descriptive psychology, understood here as a philosophical discipline.

This distinction between descriptive psychology and phenomenology is essential to understanding the meaning of most of Stumpf’s remarks regarding the first edition of Husserl’s *Logical Investigations*. Stumpf refers to the first definition of phenomenology as descriptive psychology in the introduction (Husserl 1901, 18), and to another passage in which Husserl describes precisely the tasks of his phenomenology in a way that is very similar to Stumpf’s:

“Pure phenomenology represents a field of neutral researches, in which several sciences have their roots. It is, on the one hand, an ancillary to *psychology* conceived as an *empirical science*. Proceeding in purely intuitive fashion, it analyses and describes in their essential generality in the specific guise of a phenomenology of thought and knowledge—the experiences of presentation, judgment and knowledge, experiences, *which treated as classes of real events in the natural context of zoological reality, receive a scientific probing at the hands of empirical psychology*. Phenomenology, on the other hand, lays bare the “sources” from which the basic concepts and ideal laws of pure logic “flow”, and back to which they must once more be traced, so as to give them all the “clearness and distinctness” needed for an understanding, and for an epistemological critique of pure logic.” (Husserl 1970, 166; see also 174 ff)

As a neutral field of research, phenomenology is on one hand propaedeutic to scientific psychology, in that it describes and analyzes what the latter explains causally; on the other hand, as a theory or phenomenology of knowledge, it seeks the origin of the concepts and general laws of pure logic. Stumpf rightly stresses the importance of the distinction, which Husserl alludes to in this passage, between descriptive and genetic psychology, which roughly corresponds to the physiological and experimental psychology at the time. In fact, as Husserl suggests in a passage of Section 7 of the fifth Investigation, these are in fact two sides of a single psychology:

“Psychology’s task – descriptively – is to study ego-experiences (or conscious contents) in their essential species and forms of combination, in order to explore – genetically – their origin and perishing, and the causal patterns and laws of their formation and transformation.” (Husserl 1970, 545 f)

Stumpf suggests that it is precisely to avoid any confusion with the genetic

aspect of psychology that Husserl opted for the term phenomenology. However, given the close relationship that Husserl draws between descriptive psychology and pure logic, this distinction has an important philosophical significance for the psychologism issue. For, as we saw earlier, logical psychologism concerns mainly the genetic aspect of psychology and is understood, to put it simply, as the reduction of the laws and principles of pure logic to the laws of genetic psychology, be it, for instance, the good old associationist psychology, or the physiological psychology of Wundt, which is actually one of Husserl's targets. In this regard, Stumpf (1906b, 35) refers to a footnote in the first edition of the *Prolegomena* in which Husserl discusses the work of O. Külpe and T. Elsenhans in relation to the very sense of his critique of psychologism and its bearing on psychology as a whole. He makes it clear that his criticism has nothing to do with the development of scientific psychology as such, although he does not believe that philosophy has anything to expect from a genetic explanation of pure logic. It states clearly that he "excludes descriptive phenomenology of the inner experience, which underlies both the empirical psychology and, in a completely different way, the critique of knowledge" (Husserl 1900, 212n.). Hence, there is no contradiction between the criticism of psychologism in the first volume and the central role of descriptive psychology in the second, provided that the distinction within psychology between its genetic and analytic aspects is preserved. For, the sort of psychologism that is targeted by this criticism concerns primarily the foundation of logic (understood as an *ars* or *technic*) on genetic psychology. Finally, descriptive psychology is granted a methodological and epistemological priority over genetic or physiological psychology.

In a footnote to "The classification of sciences," Stumpf criticizes, however, the choice of the term phenomenology in Husserl's *Logical Investigations* arguing that, from the point of view of researchers in psychology, it may confuse the two separate areas that are phenomena and functions and obscure the close relationship that Stumpf wants to maintain between descriptive and genetic psychology. For phenomenology and psychology must fulfill very different tasks that Stumpf clearly sets apart in this footnote:

"I use the term phenomenology in a different sense, and I wish to keep the term 'descriptive psychology' for the mere description of experienced acts, which is more appropriate for this purpose because, in fact, its subject matter, namely elementary mental functions, is common to descriptive psychology and genetic psychology, and because this common object may be obscured by the choice of a completely different term" (Stumpf 1906b, p. 35)

### 3. Terminological Remarks in Section 86 of *Ideas I*

In a notice in Section 86 of *Ideas I*, Husserl refers explicitly to Stumpf's two treatises and implicitly to Stumpf's terminological footnote, while comparing

his own terminology to that of Stumpf. The sense that he now confers to phenomenology in this book is not only quite different from that of Stumpf but also to the phenomenology of the *Logical Investigations* as descriptive psychology. Indeed, immediately after the publication of the latter, Husserl introduced major changes to his phenomenology and begins to work out his own philosophical program that is developed in *Ideas I*. The most significant change for our study occurred in 1903 in his review of T. Elsenhans, in which he clearly dissociates phenomenology from descriptive psychology (Husserl 1994b) and, by the same token, announces that major changes are required with regard to its status and tasks. Nevertheless, Husserl continues to show interest in descriptive psychology as evidenced by several lectures he taught during the 1900s, particularly in a manuscript published as *Beilage* to his lectures of 1904-1905, where he studied carefully Stumpf's concept of attention in *Tonpsychologie* (Husserl 2004, 159 ff).

Husserl's note on Stumpf in Section 86 is first and foremost terminological. He first establishes the correspondence of Stumpf's distinction between phenomenon and mental function, a distinction Husserl describes as psychological, with the opposition he maintains in his *Logical Investigations* between acts and what he calls in *Philosophy of Arithmetic* (1891, 66 ff) and *Logical Investigations* (1901, 652) "primary content." The latter is included in *Ideas I* (Section 85, entitled "Sensuous hyle, intentional morphe"), in which he distinguishes, this time, between intentional and non-intentional experiences (primary content), the latter being the contents of sensation data, i.e. the data of color, touch, and sound or the sensation of pleasure, pain, etc. (1913, 192). The concept of primary content is also abandoned in this book in favor of the terms "hyletic data or stuff-data" (1913, 193). As regards the notion of mental phenomenon, Husserl acknowledges his debt to Brentano and grants him the merit of having seen the sense and immense scope of the concept of intentionality, which is also the main subject matter of *Ideas I* (1913, 194 f). But even here, he rejects the notion of psychic phenomenon and uses preferably the concept of "noesis," which he defines as follows: "These noeses make up what is specific to *nous* in the broadest sense of the word; it refers us back, according to all its actual life-forms, to *cogitationes* and then to any intentional experiences whatever" (1913, 194).

Equipped with this new terminology, we can establish the correlation between, on one hand, Stumpf's functional psychology and Husserl's noetic, and on the other hand, Stumpf's phenomenology, which Husserl calls "hyletic." In Section 85 of *Ideas I*, Husserl cites the opposition between form and matter, that is, the opposition between intentional morphe and sensory hyle, and develops a relation between these two terms in a way reminiscent of Kant's well-known formula, "formless stuffs" and "stuffless forms." At first glance, these "stuffless forms" seem to be very close to the mosaic concept of sense phenomena, which Stumpf had criticized since his *Raumbuch*. This is because the formula suggests that the



domain of sensory phenomena is in itself amorphous and unstructured and owes its organization entirely to the intentional form that animates it by imposing upon it its own structure and laws from the outside. Be it as it may regarding this important question, the close relationship that Husserl establishes between noesis and hyle enables him to equate phenomenology in Stumpf's sense to what he calls eidetic psychology:

“On the other hand, the idea of the hyletic eo ipso is transferred from phenomenology to the basis of an eidetic psychology which, according to our conception, would include Stumpf's ‘phenomenology’ ” (Husserl 1913, 199)

Stumpf's warning against the confusion that could arise from using a single term to designate two separate research areas, namely functions and phenomena, is not of great concern to Husserl here because, on the one hand, his book does not seem to attach as much importance as Stumpf does to the domain of sense phenomena, and on the other hand, Husserl's phenomenology in this work has a “completely different meaning” (1913, 199) from Stumpf's. For even if the hyletic field falls under that of psychology, Husserl's “pure phenomenology” differs significantly from any form of psychology, be it genetic or descriptive. In his introduction to *Ideas I*, Husserl explains his reasons for abandoning the definition of phenomenology as descriptive psychology and for criticizing the philosophical naturalism (see Husserl 1911) explicitly or implicitly defended by several psychologists at the time, a criticism that led to a lengthy controversy with members of the Würzburg school, the Leipzig laboratory, and with his own students. Husserl reiterated his position on the issue and claimed that “*pure phenomenology* [...] *is not psychology* and that neither accidental delimitations of its field nor its terminologies, but most radical essential grounds, prevent its inclusion in psychology” (1913, 4). This passage confirms in a way that the issue of the discussion with Stumpf is not only terminological but also concerns the very principles of this pure phenomenology. However, he drives a wedge and creates a somewhat artificial gap between his phenomenology and psychology because, as Stumpf pointed out in *Erkenntnislehre*, it depends largely on the narrow definition that he gave of psychology in his introduction. First, it is defined as a “science of facts” or *matters of facts* in Hume's sense, and the phenomena that it studies are “real” events (spatio-temporal); on the other hand, the new phenomenology differs from the latter in its tasks and the ontological status of its objects: it is “*Wesenswissenschaft*” and its task is to investigate the laws of essences on which are based the empirical sciences and philosophy in general, while its phenomena and objects are by definition “irreal” (1913, 6). Stumpf wonders if these two criteria justify so sharp a demarcation between phenomenology and psychology, even disregarding for the moment the project that Husserl pursues with his transcendental philosophy. For psychology since Aristotle, Stumpf argues, cannot be reduced to a science of facts dealing with the

biography of the “inner experience of Johann Nepomuk Oberniedermaier, born in Straubing in 1741.” It has always been defined as a science of the structural laws of the mental life, whose laws, writes Stumpf, “are the specific subject of descriptive psychology in the sense of Brentano, but also of Lotze and of all their predecessors. This descriptive psychology is nothing other than a regional phenomenology or ontology in Husserl’s sense, and he himself in the *Logical Investigations* has meritoriously contributed to it” (1939, 194). Of course, as we shall see later, Husserl implicitly recognizes this important contribution of descriptive psychology to regional phenomenology, but the latter remains only a part of a larger and more radical philosophical project that he pursues with his transcendental phenomenology. Still, Stumpf does not see in these criteria sufficient conditions to justify this gap.

#### **4. Stumpf and the Phenomenology of *Ideas I***

Stumpf takes a position on this new version of phenomenology in Section 13 of *Erkenntnislehre*, in which he carefully examines Husserl’s philosophical project in the first book of *Ideas*. His comment is made in the context of a study of what he called regional or material axioms in which he evaluates in the fourth part of this section Husserl’s contribution to phenomenological or regional ontologies and offers in the fifth part a scathing critique of this new version of phenomenology. Husserl’s contribution here is still considered within the perspective of Brentano’s philosophy, and Stumpf’s criticism concerns largely the aspects of this new version of phenomenology by which it breaks with the fundamental principles of his *Logical Investigations*. What is at stake in this discussion, therefore, is the opposition between two different philosophical positions: the phenomenology of Stumpf is at the service of a philosophy based on a form of critical realism, whereas Husserl’s philosophical program in *Ideas I*, as Stumpf remarks (1939, 189), is akin to Kant’s philosophy, and we know that the publication of this book gave rise to an idealistic interpretation of Husserl’s project that is difficult to discard.

The first obstacle that stands in way of understanding the philosophy of *Ideas I* is its style, which is reminiscent of the German philosophy of the early nineteenth century. Stumpf blames Husserl for employing a new technical vocabulary without justification and notes the absence of examples to clarify many aspects of the doctrine that remain abstract and sometimes obscure (1939, 188 f). In any case, this style departs significantly from the dialogic approach that characterized Husserl’s earlier works. Once this first obstacle is overcome, we can appreciate the philosophical project, which Stumpf sets apart from the foundational function assigned to pure phenomenology. Stumpf understands it as a universal doctrine or theory of science and furthermore as a *mathesis universalis* whose model is the theory of multiplicity that Husserl worked out in his research on geometry and arithmetic during his Halle period (1913, 187 f). In this perspective,

phenomenology's main task consists in the search of species, that is, to quote Husserl, "axioms, [which are] immediately evident judgments to which indeed all the other judgments lead back in a mediate grounding" (1913, 18). This task is divided into two parts: the first concerns the search for material axioms and belongs to regional ontologies, which are the foundation of empirical disciplines like psychology; the second, pure phenomenology, searches rather for the most general species that can serve as the foundation of transcendental philosophy. Stumpf first examines Husserl's contribution to regional ontologies and then assesses the legitimacy and viability of a pure phenomenology.

The topic of axioms is central in *Erkenntnislehre*, and Stumpf's interest in this issue dates back to his habilitation thesis that focused on mathematical axioms (Stumpf 1870). In section 13 of *Erkenntnislehre*, Stumpf starts with the distinction between formal or logical axioms, which apply to any object, and material (*gegenständlich*) or phenomenological axioms, which apply to objects of a specific kind. In the fourth part of this section, he compares the material axioms with Husserl's laws of essences and goes on to evaluate the contribution of Husserl in this regard. He recognizes the importance of these ontologies for the foundation of individual sciences, including the natural sciences, but he argues that *Ideas I* brings "nothing new in principle" compared to the *Logical Investigations* or to the contribution of Brentano, Meinong, and Stumpf himself. For instance, Brentano's descriptive psychology can be regarded as a form of regional phenomenology, and its contribution to the formulation of material axioms and *a priori* principles of psychology as a whole is not negligible. Indeed, Stumpf lists some of these principles: "that everything mental is somehow directed toward an object [toward something real, according to Brentano's later conception]; that each judgment includes presentations (1939, 160 f); that presentations underlie all mental acts; that each act is directed toward a primary and a secondary object (itself), and again toward itself in a threefold way, as in presenting, self-evident judging, and loving or hating" (1939, 182). These principles are the core of the phenomenology in the *Logical Investigations*; some of these principles, as we saw earlier, are also evident in *Ideas I*. Stumpf also mentions his own contribution to the formulation of axioms in his *Raumbuch* and *Tonpsychologie*, which, as we noted, inspired several ideas for Husserl in his *Logical Investigations*, in particular his theory of wholes and parts, in which several axioms are formulated (1939, 24). However, according to Stumpf, most of these axioms have their origin in the field of elementary sense phenomena, and a regional ontology whose task is to formulate the material axioms essential to empirical sciences must therefore take as its point of departure the study of first order phenomena and sense perception, which provides a direct access to the former. Hence the importance of Stumpf's own phenomenology in this discussion.

As to Stumpf's stance toward pure phenomenology, his overall diagnosis

overlaps, in many respects throughout his work, his understanding of Kantian and post-Kantian philosophy (see Stumpf 1873; 1891; 1907b). It is important to emphasize in this context Stumpf's remarks on the Kantian character of Husserl's philosophical project in *Ideas I* (see Husserl 1913, 8) and, moreover, on his kinship with the Kantian tradition (Stumpf 1939, 189, 190). Stumpf was certainly acquainted with Husserl's memoir on Brentano, in which he explicitly recognizes his disagreement with Brentano's severe judgment on Kantianism in his philosophy of history, and acknowledges having changed his attitude toward Kantian philosophy (Husserl 1919, 666) as confirmed in *Ideas I*. But Stumpf remained convinced until his last work that the kind of philosophy practiced in the Kantian tradition represents, in the course of history, a stage of degeneration of philosophy both in its method, its empty postulates of *a priori* forms of thought and sense, and its failure to take into account the empirical sciences, especially regarding their research in the fields of psychology and phenomenology. But what interested Stumpf in his commentary is less Husserl's connection to Kantianism than the consequences of this conversion on what he considers to be the achievements of the philosophy of experience since Lotze (see Stumpf 1907, 165 f). Hence, Stumpf's radical critique of the very idea of a pure phenomenology: it is an empty frame, "a chimera, even a contradiction in itself" (1939, 192). The contradiction lies in the fact that the domain of sense phenomena seems to play an ancillary role in Husserl's book and that this phenomenology is nothing more than a "phenomenology without phenomena." That is what Stumpf seeks to demonstrate in analyzing in particular the nature of its principles, the reliability of his method, and its consequences on empirical sciences. We will very briefly describe some of the arguments that support Stumpf's criticism and conclude with a Spinozist note on Stumpf's somewhat enigmatic interpretation of Husserl's parallelism between noesis and noema.

Stumpf first tries to find what the axioms of pure phenomenology are in Husserl's book. Not finding any, he questions the meaning of Husserl's opposition between the adjectives "regional" and "pure" in which Husserl sets apart regional axioms and those of pure phenomenology. He argues that the opposite of *regional* in this context is not *pure* but universal and accuses Husserl of confusing the adjective "universal" (formal axioms are more universal because they have more extension) with that of "pure," which Husserl uses in expressions such as "purified transcendental consciousness," "pure I" or "pure vision of the I" (comparing it with the mind's eye), which Stumpf characterizes for precisely this reason as chimera or phantoms. Moreover, as we noted regarding axioms, they are essences, immediate self-evident judgments on which all other judgments are based. In Section 5 of *Ideas I*, Husserl argues that these axioms need a noetic grounding, that is, "insight, a certain vision of essences [...]; and this vision too [...] is based on sighting of individual particulars of the essences, but not on their experience" (1913, 14). This *Wesensschau*, adds Husserl, is based on mere "imaginary presentations" [*Phantasievorstellungen*], that

is, in the vocabulary of Stumpf, on second order phenomena. Stumpf wonders, first, whether these axioms (regional) relate to the essences of things as suggested by Husserl or to basic intuitions, that is, to first order phenomena that are given in sense perception. Second, in emphasizing the imaginary presentations, sense perception seems superfluous. In both cases, however, the challenge rests on Stumpf's phenomenology, to which sense perception gives access directly. Stumpf claims instead that axioms (regional) relate exclusively to sense intuitions (1939, 167, 190) and he sees no reason why we should cling to mere imaginary presentations, especially in our search for the general laws of sensory content. Stumpf's argument is based on his research on the differences between mere presentations and sense perceptions (see Stumpf 1918), in which he tries to demonstrate that there are significant differences of intensity, *Lebhaftigkeit*, clarity, etc. between first order phenomena and presentations; therefore, a pure vision of species based solely on mere imaginary presentations teaches us nothing about the properties of the visual field, particularly on the question as to whether it has the attribute of intensity or extension. We must bear in mind that the notion of psychological part and that of dependency relations have a phenomenological origin, and Stumpf claims here that without this phenomenological basis, Husserl's *Wesensschau* is entirely blind. Even worse, argues Stumpf, is that it is comparable to Schelling's intellectual intuition and reminiscent of "the nirvana of the Indian penitents who gaze steadily at their navel" (1939, 192).

Husserl's essences, notes Stumpf, are in a sense Spinozist to the extent that he opposes essences to existence, for as we know, eidetic sciences must ignore reality. Hence, the importance of the method of reduction by which the existence of objects are placed into brackets and therefore, as Husserl explains in Section 60 of *Ideas I*, all eidetic and material disciplines. In his commentary on that section, Stumpf wonders what exactly one gains in this way and warns against the dangers of such an armchair [*Schreibtisch*] method, a criticism that we often hear today from philosophers working in cognitive sciences. He points out that this danger is real, as evidenced by the "phenomenologists" in Husserl's school, who study perception without taking into account the psychological and physiological theories they describe as "simplistic and naive" (1939, 319). What is more comfortable, asks Stumpf, than sitting at a desk "glancing through the smoke of cigars in order to vision the essence of objects?" (1939, 199). Comfort and indifference towards the observation and experimentation inevitably lead, according to Stumpf, to doubtful and superficial results. Let us take, for example, the topic of attention, to which Stumpf attaches great importance in his *Tonpsychologie* (1883, 67 ff; 1890, 276 ff). In his commentary on Section 92 of *Ideas I*, in which Husserl sketches his theory of the radius of attention, Stumpf sees evidence that this method is misleading. Using Lotze's mocking remark, he argues that, according to this theory, attention is comparable to a light with which the soul roams in its dark attic room, a theory which comes

down to nothing more than “the oldest and most popular point of view”. These are just pictures, adds Stumpf, “stones instead of the bread of really enlightening knowledge” (1939, 195). He claims that we can obtain more conclusive results scientifically and philosophically, and at the same time maintain the universal character of philosophy. For Stumpf grants philosophy a special status in his classification of sciences and defines it above all as metaphysics whose main task is the study of the most general objects (1906b, 86 ff) However, unlike Husserl, he believes that his phenomenology is a necessary precondition to philosophy precisely because the field of phenomenology and experience provides, so to speak, its raw material. In this perspective, a phenomenology properly understood does not deal with issues relating to worldviews, but with the “special epistemological question of the existence and formulation of material axioms” (1939, 200).

### Final Remarks

It seems that Stumpf did not look at other philosophical works of Husserl after *Ideas I*, but there is evidence that Husserl showed interest in at least some of Stumpf’s work after the publication of that book. We refer specifically to a draft of a letter that Husserl addressed to Stumpf in 1919 (Husserl 1996, 174 ff), which is unexpectedly relevant to our study since it sheds new light on an enigmatic remark in *Erkenntnislehre* on the parallelism between noema and noesis in *Ideas I*. The letter is a long commentary on two studies by Stumpf on the parallelism between the attributes of thought and extension in Spinoza’s *Ethics* (Stumpf 1919b). Stumpf claims in his studies that Spinoza’s parallelism has nothing to do with the psychophysical parallelism that dominated since Fechner; it is to be understood, rather, “as the parallelism between the immanent objects of the acts directed toward them, as it was taught since Aristotle” (1919b, 19) and which, via the Scholastic, made its way up to Brentano and perhaps Husserl. Stumpf argues that these two attributes are immediately given to consciousness, and the discipline that studies the law of that parallelism is nothing other than descriptive psychology. It is in this context that he refers to Husserl, saying that rather than descriptive psychology, Husserl would be comfortable with the term phenomenology, “because it [Parallelitätsgesetz] is grounded *a priori* through a vision of essence” (1917b, 34 f). Yet, according to the remark in *Erkenntnislehre*, the noesis-noema parallelism behaves exactly like Spinoza’s parallelism between the attributes of thought and extension under the principle that “*una eademque res, sed duobus modis expressa.*” It follows from this principle, Stumpf adds, that in the same way that for Spinoza the laws of nature are also laws of thought, for Husserl the laws in the noetic domain, that is descriptive psychology, should also be the laws of the noematic and consequently of pure phenomenology, (1939, 196). If this is indeed the case—as Husserl’s letter seems to confirm—, then descriptive psychology and phenomenology form a single discipline applied to two classes of objects as stipulated by Spinoza’s principle. Stumpf concludes that Husserl can no

more separate (ontologically) phenomenology from descriptive psychology (or a phenomenology of acts from a pure phenomenology of noematic content) than we could have “an arithmetic of pears and an arithmetic of nuts” (1939, 196).

### Summary

The purpose of this study is to examine the meaning and value of Stumpf’s criticism of Husserl’s phenomenology in *Ideas I*. The presentation is divided into four parts: I briefly describe the relationship between Stumpf and the young Husserl during the latter’s stay in Halle (1886-1901); I then comment on Stumpf’s remarks regarding Husserl’s definition of phenomenology as descriptive psychology in his *Logical Investigations*; in the third part, I examine Husserl’s notice in Section 86 of *Ideas I*, in which he compares his own terminology to that of Stumpf’s; finally, I comment on Stumpf’s criticism of Husserl’s phenomenology in his last book, *Erkenntnislehre*.

**Keywords:** Stumpf, Husserl, phenomenology, descriptive psychology.

### Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Studie untersucht Bedeutung und Gewicht der Stumpf’schen Kritik an Husserl’s Phänomenologie in dessen *Ideen 1*. Der Beitrag ist in 4 Teile gegliedert: zunächst wird die Beziehung zwischen Stumpf und dem jungen Husserl während des Aufenthalts des Letzteren in Halle (1886-1901) beschrieben; anschließend werden Stumpf’s Bemerkungen über Husserl’s Definition der Phänomenologie als beschreibender Psychologie in *Logische Untersuchungen* erläutert; im dritten Teil wird Husserl’s Hinweis in Abschnitt 86 von *Ideen 1* untersucht, in welchem er seine eigene Begriffsdefinition mit der von Stumpf vergleicht; zum Abschluss wird Stumpf’s Kritik an Husserl’s Phänomenologie in seinem letzten Buch *Erkenntnislehre* diskutiert.

**Schlüsselwörter:** Stumpf, Husserl, Phänomenologie, deskriptive Psychologie.

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