

## CHAPTER I

*Introduction: Conscious Mental Phenomena***I Setting that stage whereupon a succession of discussions shall proceed**

Early in *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (1874/1973, p. 4), Franz Brentano spoke dualistically of the intimate mind/body interactions proceeding in every healthy human being. It is enlightening to compare the “dualist interactionism” Brentano proposed with the “psychophysiological parallelism” advocated systematically, at the next mid-century, by Austrian/American philosopher Gustav Bergmann, the leading guru of “methodological behaviorism.” See Natsoulas (1984b), Chapter 6 here, and references therein (e.g., Bergmann 1981).

Proposedly, Brentano’s mental/physiological interactions transpire notwithstanding the very different characters he assigned our mental states vis-à-vis our physical states. Both state-kinds were asserted to essentially comprise us. Therefore, consequences arise pertaining to each kind owing to occurrences of the other kind. The reality of such connections does not mean for him that, after all, physiological investigation can provide sufficient basis for acquiring psychological knowledge (cf. Hebb 1972). Some neuroscientists seem to feel in the latter way and must be responded to.

I have consistently taken a monist position on the mental/physiological relation (Natsoulas 1987; Sperry 1972, 1980, 1982). And I have contended that psychologists should seek at all points to make inroads too from the first-person perspective upon the intrinsic nature of the states of consciousness transpiring within a person’s brain (Natsoulas 2001a). Accordingly, I suggest the following is not true. “The function Brentano prominently designated with his term *inner consciousness* can provide us only with appearances.”

Given this age of high-stakes advertising and sustained propaganda, I would characterize the latter, false statement as promulgated for ulterior purposes, inimical to scientific psychology’s progress. Whether one is a

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behaviorist, one must guide oneself in everyday life based on that very function of Brentano's (Armstrong 1968; Marcel 1988; Natsoulas 1989, 1998b, on "tertiary consciousness"). See, for example, Natsoulas (2013, chapter 2) for discussion of skepticism regarding consciousness itself (cf. Bruner 1982). Such reactivity emerges in psychology repeatedly on poorly developed grounds.

Mental states are of course of scientific interest to psychologists, but so too are they to physiologists. These two kinds of scientists often concur quite fundamentally, for example, to the effect mental states are at the very least causally connected to physical states. Brentano (1874/1973) modestly described psychology as "dependent" on every other science. Yet, he also predicted this science of his, which was just getting started, would rise in time to commanding heights.

Psychology will come to be broadly determinative given the many effects it will have on how human society is organized and operates. As will be seen, Brentano contended furthermore psychologists already have an epistemological advantage over the physiologist. Indeed, psychologists are proposed to have that kind of advantage over other kinds of scientists as well. Why Brentano held as much begins coming into view as he lays out psychology qua science as a first order of business.

He is expounding on the psychology field out of a larger effort in progress. His major purpose is an accurate picture of the characteristics instantiated by the laws governing those very special phenomena of primary interest to psychologists as scientists. But, as other scientists too must do, psychologists have first to rely, albeit not exclusively, on their own applications of the "perceptual systems," the visual system, auditory system, and so on, as Gibson construed them (1966; Reed and Jones 1982).

About Gibson's treatment of experiential phenomena occurring in the latter contexts, see especially Gibson (1979), Natsoulas (2013), and Chapter 7 here. Incompatibly with Gibson's position, Brentano holds however all such externally directed perceptual activities, wherein psychologists and all people commonly engage via their senses, have "mere phenomena" for their objects. Thus, none whereof we thereby have awareness belongs to the world wherein, according to my likely controversial view (Natsoulas 2013), we all have our one and only existence.

Those perceptual phenomena whereof we have awareness do not, according to Brentano, "really and truly" exist. They are nonexistent beyond the transpiring of what seems to be their making an appearance to one. In his view, those perceptual phenomena themselves are merely as though one is having direct contact with matters outside one's mind. Those particular

mental phenomena that are parts of one's experiential stream and one's perceptual systems are responsible for important awarenesses that are plain false.

Those erroneous perceptual phenomena do of course transpire. They are durational components of one's experiential stream no less than one's other mental phenomena are. Plus, as they transpire, one also experiences inner awareness of them. Brentano's having inner awareness as a function of "internal perception" distinguishes it from the function he described as "so-called external perception." As will be seen, a further issue is whether some of one's mental phenomena transpire unconsciously, without being objects of inner awareness.

## II Some introduction to purportedly wholly truthful internal perception

Throughout, I will frequently employ *inner awareness*. My usage will remain as consistent as possible in meaning and reference. I employ *inner awareness*, as previously (e.g., Natsoulas 1995, 1998b), to pick out a certain quite crucial property of one's experiential stream, or pulses of experience. Also, one of the chapters of a recent book (Natsoulas 2015, chapter 4) is devoted to that particular ordinary consciousness concept to which my usage here of *inner awareness* is most closely related.

Chapter 4 of Natsoulas (2015), "The concept of consciousness<sub>4</sub>: The inner-awareness meaning," will help in a preliminary way. It contains discussion regarding that distinct concept of consciousness which is the concept of inner awareness as employed in ordinary thought. That chapter begins with considering the relevant subentry under *consciousness* in *The Oxford English Dictionary* (2011) and a detailed comparison with an earlier edition (*OED* 1989) about what is evidently the same concept, yet it is otherwise as well.

The topics discussed there include (a) a "faculty" of consciousness the 2011 *OED* in effect proposes exists, (b) the experiential stream's relevance to the concept of consciousness, and (c) a certain closely related technical concept of consciousness. See, too, Natsoulas (2013, chapter 10) on inner awareness in the context of visual perceiving. Brentano's account of internal perception maintains that, in contrast to the occurrent awarenesses comprising sensory perceiving, one's occurrent inner-awareness instances are all true to their respective objects.

Accordingly, a uniquely "immediate insight" occurs of each mental phenomenon's happening in one. Brentano (1874/1973) attributes this ability

to each of us and explicates it as functioning to provide its owner with “clear knowledge and complete certainty” regarding the existence of each one of his or her mental phenomena. Moreover, “a mental state which [its owner] perceives in himself [or herself] exists ... just as he [or she] perceives it” (p. 7). Nothing else exists that we can know so well.

Thus, whereas Brentano insists on much error in external perception, he would seem to rule out, without exception, error in internal perception. Perception of this unique inner kind is not to be conflated with perceiving one’s body or with one’s having perceptual occurrent awareness of physical happenings inside one’s body. Concerning Brentano’s internal perception, there evidently must be something very special proposed to be the case. Internal perception is supposed to work so fantastically well as to make misperception impossible.

And, one also can tell firsthand, somehow, one’s inner awarenesses are veridical and accurate in apprehending their objects. These are exclusively one’s mental phenomena and each is proposed to be in reality just as it appears in that special way of one’s own (Brentano 1874/1973, p. 15; cf. Bergmann 1964, 1981). In addition to its tremendous accuracy, one’s “inner consciousness” of one’s mental phenomena Brentano considers a “witting” inner awareness, in my term, rather than an unwitting one.

Note the index of Natsoulas (2015) includes several entries under *witting*. Briefly, any unwitting awareness transpires sans its owner’s apprehending its occurrence (cf. Natsoulas 1998b). According to Brentano, one has inner awareness of both one’s internal perceptions and one’s having such awareness of the respective mental phenomena, the objects of those occurrences. That one’s mental phenomena are just as one perceives them to be “is attested to by the evidence with which they are perceived” (Brentano 1874/1973, p. 15).

Brentano seems to assert the evidence for one’s mental phenomenas being just as they appear to be, is obvious to one’s having “immediate insight” thereof. One does not have such awareness of anything else, including anything standing mediationally for them. Accordingly, one need not search for grounds to believe in true and real properties of one’s mental phenomena. Compared to psychologists, other scientists are thus disadvantaged. They must always locate such grounds regarding those matters assigned them for investigation.

Among much else Brentano adds: an emphatic characterization of one’s mental phenomena as those items of all items “the most one’s own.” He may have in mind one’s mental phenomena at a point even prior to their owner’s self-appropriating them. *The most one’s own* might apply even if,

according to Brentano, self-appropriation of one's mental phenomena does not happen until after inner awareness of the particular mental phenomenon transpires. That is, self-owning rests on self-apprehending and not the reverse.

Brentano is implying the relation one stands in to one's mental phenomena is more intimate than one stands to other parts of oneself, whether as occurrent as mental phenomena or, instead, substantial parts of oneself. Brentano raises in this connection whether "the self" is a certain collection of one's mental phenomena or, instead, identical to the substantial bearer of that collection. To the contrary, Holt (1912, p. 355) claims in no sense does consciousness occur within one's nervous system.

### **III Well before the revolution came, behaviorism already was an influence**

The special access that Brentano too called "inner," and that we all possess, may be well conceived of as experiential. He distinguished it quickly from what it is not. Internal perception is not an activity engaged in. It is not equivalent, as would seem, to inner observation or introspection. He explains in this connection: one does not in internal perception "direct [one's] full attention to a phenomenon [either mental or other] in order to apprehend it accurately" (1874/1973, p. 22).

One has internal perception of each of one's mental phenomena as they transpire, but this awareness is always only "incidental." The mental phenomena that one is having internal perception of, thus directly apprehending and directly knowing them, are in themselves "elsewhere" directed. About other people's mental phenomena, in contrast, one can only indirectly know the latter. Such knowledge comes from having external perception of certain of the observable effects that are produced by other people's mental phenomena.

These observable effects include reports people issue concerning their own mental phenomena. Brentano's (1874/1973) discussion at this point gives him reason to insist on, among much else, the following ontological truth regarding those observed behavioral effects, useful as they may be. "It is obvious that these signs are not themselves the things that they signify" (p. 30). Their service as signs, even at the point when they are deliberately issued, does not transform them into versions of their causes.

Brentano expressed, as he did above, an open disdain for certain "foolish" behavioristic moves colleagues of his were making. I do not disagree with Brentano, but this volume of mine consists of three main parts, the

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second part respectively putting to controversial use the thought of three important twentieth-century behaviorist thinkers. Their views are discussed here as may be relevant to improving our understanding of the basic durational components a person's experiential stream is comprised of.

In the nineteenth century, some psychologists were already proposing such methodological moves. Well before the behaviorist revolution, some psychologists were seeking to convert colleagues to believe other people's mental states can be objects of observation for psychologists via external perception by unaided sensory-perceptual systems. Compare Natsoulas (1999b, 2011) contra Holt (1912), Lombardo (1987), and Weiskrantz (1997). After behaviorism became well established, a former student of Brentano's felt impelled to comment as his teacher had much earlier.

The starting-point for this investigation is provided by a unique fact, which defies all explanation or description – the fact of consciousness. Nevertheless, if anyone speaks of consciousness, we know immediately and from our own most personal experience what is meant by it. ... Extreme lines of thought, such as the American doctrine of Behaviourism, think it possible to construct a psychology which disregards this fundamental fact. (Freud 1938a/1964).

See Chapter 3. Freud did notable work on consciousness theory (Laplanche and Pontalis 1967/1973, pp. 84–88; Natsoulas 2001b). Brentano spoke of one's own mental phenomena, there all being “invisible” to other people. And they are even literally invisible to oneself their subject; for, Brentano held internal perception is not performable by any of our perceptual systems. However, we can also learn a great deal about “conscious life” by observing other people, particularly reports about their mental phenomena.

Brentano (1873/1974) allows that one is capable of falling into “self-delusion” about one's conscious life. And one may be aided to extract oneself therefrom by learning about “what others have experienced in themselves” (p. 30). Of course, knowledge of one's own mental phenomena can be derived also from contemplating them as remembered. It will be of special interest throughout my present volume how mental phenomena in general should be conceived of or what characteristics all of them possess in common.

Brentano points out, as well, that we can distinguish mental phenomena of our own from other mental phenomena of our own, as belonging to different classes. He means our mental phenomena possess certain characteristics they share only with some of the rest of our mental phenomena,

along with characteristics they all have in common. Brentano adds to his latter point that he will be showing that our mental phenomena are such as can be divided among a few fundamental classes.

First, where do mental phenomena come from? One of the characteristics every such phenomenon shares with every other pertains to how each is produced, caused to transpire. One after another, one's mental phenomena pulsationally constitute one's stream, but how does this happen? Among the many happenings transpiring in one's brain, certain physical states "exert an essential influence" upon all one's mental phenomena and "constitute [the] conditions" for the latter's occurrence (Brentano 1873/1974, p. 46, cf. Dulany 1997, p. 185).

#### IV On the question what it is our mental phenomena are in themselves

Why does William James (1890) come to mind? Compare Chapter 2 here and, particularly, his "stream of consciousness," and how he proposed it comes into being. In the same context as earlier, Brentano (1874/1973) had already spoken, repeatedly, of "the succession of [one's] mental phenomena" and of laws governing that succession, or how mental phenomena happen one upon another. These laws "require for their explanation *an exact analysis of the physiological states* with which they are connected" (p. 35).

James asserts: one's "total brain process" is responsible for one after another of the experiential pulses successively comprising one's consciousness stream. Except for "time gaps," the total brain process itself as well keeps undergoing change moment by moment and thereby continuously generating the experiential stream with its compulsive alterations. Regarding those same laws, Brentano argues, *inter alia*, that, for us to determine what they are, requires we be successful as psychologists in distinguishing different fundamental classes of mental phenomena.

Attention to how ordinary language is employed may be useful for the latter purpose (Dewey 1906) and may even facilitate discoveries (Natsoulas 1983a, 1983b, 1983c, 1983d, 2001a, 2001b). But, Brentano warns, employed without caution, some ordinary concepts can be misleading. For example, common-language usage frequently exercises different concepts via the same word and may produce inconsistencies and conceptual confusions. Also, a word may be redefined for scientific purposes as Holt (1912) did *consciousness* while maintaining its true referents are not as others purport.



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Readers might consult a volume (Natsoulas 2015) that treats of what *consciousness* officially refers to, as well as beyond those limits. Returning to what, according to Brentano, mental phenomena in general are, as distinct from physical phenomena, one may likely inquire as follows contradicting his dualist interactionism. Do not mental phenomena, after all, consist exclusively of certain subcategories of brain states that are purely physical? Although transpiring there, these states would be unlike other physical states also occurring there.

Alternatively, do mental phenomena instantiate features disqualifying them from possibly being physical states? Or, will those same features come to be understood as their being physical owing to an improvement in our understanding of them or, more generally, of the nature of the physical? According to Brentano, all our mental phenomena, in their every instance of occurrence, involve intrinsically in their very structure the feature of “presence,” as I have called it (e.g., Natsoulas 1999a).

Every mental phenomenon’s occurrent instance is intrinsically a “presentation” explicated as always an “act of presentation.” Brentano means and, therefore, needs explicitly to distinguish (a) a mental phenomenon that, of course, is something that transpires in a person from (b) that item or items that his or her respective mental phenomenon is presenting, or possesses as part of its content. That a mental phenomenon presents something, Brentano states, constitutes the “foundation” of every occurrent instance of a mental phenomenon.

All our mental phenomena refer to, are of or about, something. To judge, desire, fear, or hope requires the respective mental phenomenon presents something. Brentano (1874/1973, pp. 61–62) quotes Johann F. Herbart’s supporting statement from fifty years before. “Every time we have a feeling, there [is] something ... presented in consciousness, even ... something very diversified, confused and varied, so that this particular presentation is included in this particular feeling. Likewise, whenever we desire something ... we have before our minds that which we desire.”

Note what Herbart mentions the feeling is a presentation of. A feeling presents whatever something or other it may be it is about. Brentano soon addresses, in his chapter on the distinction in general between physical phenomena and mental phenomena, a view different from his own, very much opposed to his own understanding of which characteristics distinctively belong to every mental phenomenon. And it has much relevance to what the present book’s title refers to as “states of consciousness.”

James (1890) employed synonymously this term and *thoughts* and *feelings*. Each mental phenomenon that successively makes up “the stream



of consciousness” as it proceeds, James would designate interchangeably a thought, a feeling, or a state of consciousness (cf. Langer 1967, p. 21). Owing to its intrinsic nature, among other things every state of consciousness in James’s sense is both a feeling and a thought as these two words ordinarily mean (Natsoulas 1998c; contrast Myers 1986).

My latter article was one of a series addressing the intrinsic nature of our states of consciousness. I especially discussed in the 1998c installment the “feeling aspect” of these states of ours. James proposed the feeling aspect is possessed by every basic durational component of one’s stream of consciousness, or one’s “experiential stream.” The view mentioned lately here as alternative to Brentano’s concerns those mental phenomena that qualify in the ordinary sense instances of feeling or desire.

## **V Whether the intrinsic nature of feelings is such as to present something**

Brentano attributes that alternative view to Jürgen Bona Meyer in his study of Immanuel Kant’s psychology. According to Meyer, the following is not only possible, but indeed takes place. Mental phenomena of such kinds as feelings and desires will sometimes transpire within a person without, in Herbart’s phrases, their “presenting something to [one’s] consciousness” or without one’s therein “having something before one’s mind.” Is this tantamount to admitting unconscious mental phenomena, whereas Brentano strongly doubts any such occur?

“Presentation [only] begins when the [mental] modification which we experience ... can be understood as the result of an external stimulus, even if this at first expresses itself only in the unconscious looking around or feeling around for an external object which results from it” (Brentano 1874/1973, p. 62, quoting Meyer). In one’s experiential stream, there initially occurs, owing to external stimulation, mental modification thereof that Meyer holds presents nothing until one apprehends occurrent modification external stimulation produced.

To the contrary, however, according to Brentano (1874/1973, p. 62), the initial mental modification in the aforementioned succession “already involves an abundance of presentations, for example, the idea of temporal succession, ideas of spatial proximity and ideas of cause and effect.” Brentano thus suggests all he is mentioning as examples of presentations and more, are perforce parts of the mental phenomenon of theoretical interest, including that very mental phenomenon which yields the spontaneous behavioral pattern “looking around” of Meyer’s.

As do all the rest of the mental phenomena comprising the succession under discussion, the initial mental modification thereof enters consciousness, or into the stream of consciousness as James (1890) would want to say, owing simply to the fact of that modification's coming into its transient being. Using the notion of entering consciousness, Brentano insists contra Meyer: no mental phenomenon ever transpires within one without bringing "something before one's mind," as Brentano quotes Herbart to say quite rightly.

A mental phenomenon does not appear in experience without presenting something or other. "As we use the verb 'to present,' 'to be presented' means the same as 'to appear'" (Brentano 1874/1973, p. 62). Thus, Brentano rejects such a hypothetical mental phenomenon as having a feeling in the absence of one's experiencing therein any corresponding presence. In a passage Brentano (1874/1973, pp. 62–63) quotes from Meyer, Brentano detects implicit agreement with his view on the necessity of presentations.

Admittedly, Meyer's passage expresses the matter at issue differently than Brentano would. To find as much, he must allow (a) a feeling may result from a sensation wherein a simple presentation does transpire and (b) this consequent feeling does itself provide that presence unexceptionally required in accordance with Brentano's theory. It is that feeling that is presented, or presents itself, to the mind. So I understand Brentano's (1874/1973): "whenever something appears in consciousness ... it is presented" (p. 62).

Do mental phenomena themselves appear in consciousness? It is easier to interpret Brentano at this point as requiring a mental phenomenon in any instance presenting something other than itself. Every mental phenomenon would involve the occurrence of presence, but this would take the form of the respective mental phenomenon's consisting of a presentation only of something else. However, Brentano also speaks about feelings of pain or pleasure evoked by a cut or a burn or a tickle as follows.

In such cases as the latter, he distinguishes those feelings of pain or pleasure as their being mental phenomena from the respective physical phenomena whose appearances are owed to external perception. Those feelings of pain or pleasure "accompany" the physical or "so-called sensory phenomena" that are objects of external perception. Brentano's (1874/1973) main conclusion under construction is to reject "there is no presentation at the basis of the feeling of sensory pain experienced when one is injured" (p. 65).

Accordingly, it is a concomitant physical phenomenon Brentano is claiming always transpires in such cases and presents itself in the experiential