WILHELM DILTHEY'S

FOUNDATION OF THE HUMAN SCIENCES

By

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WILHELM DILTHEY'S

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SCOPE AND CONTENT: The thesis traces the development of Dilthey's thought, explicating the latter seventeen years in detail. This period begins with Dilthey attempting to outline a descriptive and analytical psychology, which could serve as foundational for the human sciences. The gist of Dilthey's psychology is that consciousness is a structural interconnectedness, and this must remain the starting point for both psychology and epistemology. The criticism which follows Dilthey's statement of faith in the ideal of descriptive psychology over-influences him to the point that he soon begins to doubt and eventually rejects his theories of description. Consequent to this he develops the method of 'understanding', which he hopes can satisfy the need of foundation in the human sciences. Through this method Dilthey encounters the problems of historicity and relativism, which come to occupy an important place in his analysis of human existence.
Finally, at the end, Dilthey was apparently striving for a return to descriptive methodology in an attempt to found the human sciences upon a science of man.
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PREFACE

The original intent for this paper was to abstract the theory of consciousness from Dilthey's pertinent writings, which were for the most part left unprepared for publication. Dilthey's work stretches through fifty years and several volumes of writings. Although my interests concern mainly the work of the latter seventeen years, it remains very difficult to pin down a decisive viewpoint or breakthrough in his thought. Since something had to be done about this, I will at this time give an account of the procedure used for the selection of texts.

Dilthey placed psychology at the base of any theory of consciousness, and a theory of consciousness was to be the necessary foundation of the human sciences (Geisteswissenschaften). His theories about psychology and the structure of consciousness were never seen apart from their relation to the human sciences. Thus, the task of this paper was forced to include both his work with psychological methodology and the human sciences. The problems involved in his
thought came forth mainly in the *Introduction to the Human Sciences* (1883). The solutions to these problems he promised to present later in a great work to be called the "Critique of Historical Reason". Unfortunately this work never appeared and we are forced to gather his later works together in an attempt to see significant conclusions that may have been developing.

In 1894 Dilthey presented his solutions to the problems of psychology encountered in the "Introduction". This work, entitled *Ideas Concerning a Descriptive and Analytical Psychology*, begins a period of seventeen years up until his death in 1911. The conclusions of the "Ideas" persist until 1906 or 1907 and then a change can be perceived which will be a significant part of this paper. In the final two years of his life Dilthey reshifted his position, turning toward more general statements concerning life and history as a whole. The last section of this study concerns itself with this period.

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I

INTRODUCTION

As an introduction to this study it seems advantageous to give a brief description of Dilthey's background to trace his educational influences and also of his work and interests up to the point where this study begins.

He lived eighty years; born in 1833 at the end of the romantic era and living until 1911, his life extended over most of what may be regarded as the most stimulating century of philosophy in history.

Son of a Calvinist minister, Dilthey grew up in the Rhineland -- in an intellectual environment permeated by the influence of Lessing, Goethe, and Novalis. He began university at Heidelberg in the Divinity school in 1852. His stay here, however, was only for one year, as a significant turning point in his life took place in the encounter with Kuno Fischer, a philosopher of the history of ideas. Fischer's influence turned Dilthey away from divinity and toward philosophy. Although his stay in Heidelberg was brief, Fischer's lasting effect can be seen in Dilthey's later work in the history
of ideas, specifically in his treatment of the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries and the rise of anthropological and historical thought.

Dilthey next moved to Berlin where he came into direct contact with the German Historical School. He attended the philological lectures of Böckh and Grimm and was trained historically in the seminars of Leopold von Ranke. At Berlin he studied philosophy under Adolf Trendelenburg, who left a lasting impression upon the mind of young Dilthey. Also here he had his first encounter with Psychology, when he studied social psychology under Steinthal.

It was in Berlin that the close association of Dilthey with the work of Schleiermacher began. In 1858 he assisted Ludwig Jonas in editing the letters of Schleiermacher. Within two

1Böckh, 1785-1867, founded the historical science of antiquity. He researched, through the philology of texts, the life of the Greeks. Jacob Grimm, 1785-1863, is known as the founder of German philology. He wrote an historic and grammatic study of the German language.

2Adolf Trendelenburg, 1802-1872, was an Aristotelian scholar, opposed to both Hegel and Herbart. Besides Dilthey, he influenced Brentano greatly. His main contribution was Logische Untersuchungen, 2vols.
years Dilthey himself was to become the sole editor of the complete literary remains of Schleiermacher. At this time of involvement in the biographical concerns with Schleiermacher, it seemed as though history and literary criticism were to be the life work of Dilthey. In 1867 he published his *Life of Schleiermacher* and in the meantime also wrote on Novalis, Goethe, Tieck, Lessing, and Hölderlin, not to mention many more.

However, it is during this decade of concern with Schleiermacher that Dilthey seemed to make a turn to more philosophical interests. Perhaps the theological and hermeneutical speculations of Schleiermacher are much the reason for this. In his work with the history of ideas Dilthey became aware of anthropological thought developing along side that of the natural sciences and philosophy. He could not help but notice the lack of method and foundation in these human sciences. Such thought also lacked structure: different concerns arose here and there with nothing in common except their mutual interest in the doings of man. It was the problem related to this peculiar historical happening that finally brought Dilthey consciously away from history proper to philosophy. As he stated in a diary of the period, he
was "too abstract, too much drawn to questions of the
mind to remain in history."³

After lecturing in philosophy at Berlin for five
years he became a full professor at Basel in 1867,
meeting Burckhardt, the famous historian of the Renaissance
and Reformation. From Basel he went to Kiel and then to
Breslau. During this period he remained consistently
involved in the history of ideas and literature, but
developed a keen seriousness about the problem of anthropo-
logical thought. In 1875 he wrote a short essay
titled "On the Study of the History of the Sciences
of Man, Society, and the State."⁴ This essay was mainly
an answer to the positions already taken by Comte and
Mill on the status of what the former called the his-
torical and social sciences and what the latter called
the moral sciences.⁵ I must now briefly give an account
of what it was that Dilthey wished to criticize.

³Der junge Dilthey: Ein Lebenbild in Briefen und
Tagebüchern. 1852-1870. Edited by Clara Misch.
Stuttgart, B.C. Teubner; Göttingen, Vanderhoeck and

⁴G.S. V, 31-75.

⁵Comte can be read in Method of Positive Philosophy,
published in 1842; Mill contributed in A System of Logic,
chap. 6: 'The Logic of the Moral Sciences'.

According to Comte, as each science develops along the three stages (theological, metaphysical, and scientific), it is defined by the phenomena which it studies. And as phenomena can be seen to be arranged according to increasing complexity, so the sciences are arranged in an analogous manner. In this development it is Comte himself who establishes the science of man, which he called sociology. This science became one more added to the list of natural sciences; it, too, was to be governed by the methods of the natural sciences.

Comte was a severe critic of introspection and denied the possibility of psychology, giving its supposed functions to both physiology and sociology. Thus, it is sociology which is the real science of man, and it is dependent not upon a psychology, but physiology.

Mill was not quite this extreme. He went along with Comte's account of the development of the natural sciences, but, in the English tradition of Hume, could not disregard introspection and a knowledge of the laws which govern the mind. And, of course, any science of man or society must depend on this knowledge. So psychology was given status independent of the natural sciences and therefore also the studies which rest upon it.
Along with the positivist trend of the time, even Mill desired that such moral sciences be submitted to the methodology of the natural sciences for the sake of order and clarity.

In this essay Dilthey agreed with Comte about the arrangement of the natural sciences and also with Mill about the independent status of psychology and its position as the foundation for the 'moralische-politische' sciences. Going further, Dilthey sets out to delimit entirely such sciences from the natural sciences. He states that the given for the natural sciences is only the "sense-appearance of bodies", whereas for the moral and political sciences the object is a "singled-out mental unity, the individual mind, as it is given in perception."^6

Further he says that "all actualities in society are intelligible to us because, on the basis of the inner perception of our own states, we can reconstruct (nachbilden) them."^7 But concerning the laws of interactions within society we can form no analysis. The moral

^6G.S. V, 46.

^7G.S. V, 61.
and political sciences can understand, but they cannot explain as in the natural sciences.

From the preceding Dilthey concluded that knowledge of history and society must be constructed differently from that of nature, and that therefore the laws of scientific development laid down by Comte must not apply to the moral and political sciences. But Dilthey did not stop here without trying to discover his own principle of development for the moral and political sciences. Looking at history he saw that the social sciences do not form themselves into a hierarchy but arise side by side out of experience. He could see two stages which make up the formation of concepts in any particular science. The first was practical; concepts being formed out of the necessity to organize or reform. Later as more scientific, academic reflection arises, it borrows the same concepts which arose directly out of the experience of the earlier, more practical interests.

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8By way of note, at this time Dilthey had not yet begun use of the expression 'Geisteswissenschaften' for the human sciences. Formal use did not begin until the 'Introduction' in 1883.
After writing many more historical and literary essays, in 1882 Dilthey went back to Berlin to take the chair of philosophy, formerly held by Hegel and just vacated by Lotze. And there, in 1883, he published his first systematic work concerning what he now would call the human sciences. Appropriately, with regard to the future Dilthey had in mind for the eventual conclusion of his ideas, this book was titled Introduction to the Human Sciences. The great work Dilthey had planned was a 'Critique of Historical Reason', which would do for the human sciences what Kant and Comte had done for the natural sciences. In his foreword to the 'Introduction' Dilthey sketched his plan for the Critique, which was to be in five books of which the 'Introduction' comprised the first two. These first two books were to show the present condition of the human sciences and their need of an epistemological foundation. It was also to show decisively how the historical attempt to found them on metaphysics has failed. The third book was to continue with a history of the individual sciences and epistemology and evaluate them through to the present. The final two books would present Dilthey's own foundation of the human sciences.9 We must now briefly outline the important points of the first two books, the 'Introduction'.

9G.S. I, XIX
He begins by acknowledging how the individual sciences began to be liberated from metaphysics in the middle ages, and how to this century, however, the sciences of history and society have remained in the old service of such metaphysics. In these areas he sees the first breakthrough to historical rather than metaphysical consciousness coming with the German Historical school. But this lacks connection with an analysis of the facts of consciousness, in short it lacks a philosophical foundation in relation to epistemology and psychology. "Thus we are left with Comte, Mill, and Buckle attempting to comprehend the historical world by the rendering of natural scientific principles and methods."\(^{10}\) According to Dilthey, these answers destroy the historical reality.

A firm ground for historical thought can be found, states Dilthey, in inner experience, in the facts of consciousness. All experience has its interconnection and validity in the conditions of consciousness, and it must be realized that we cannot go behind these conditions. Dilthey wishes to describe this viewpoint as the "epistemological" and says that modern science cannot afford to accept any others. A foundation of the human sciences therefore must come from this standpoint -- the analysis of facts of consciousness occupying the centre of such a foundation.

\(^{10}\text{G.S. I. XVI-XVII.}\)
To grasp the facts of consciousness means to be able to grasp the individual — exactly what the Historical school failed to do. For the achievement of this task Dilthey turns to psychology. But to be the foundation of the human sciences, psychology, as it then existed, could not be accepted. To complete the task Dilthey wanted to give it, he had to demand many changes in both aims and methodology. Dilthey was to struggle with the problems of such a psychology for many years and this struggle and its eventual outcome will make up the main portions of this paper. However, the demands and references to psychology made in the 'Introduction', although brief, are important in furnishing a point of departure which leads to his more explicit concerns with psychology itself.¹¹

First, Dilthey dismisses any thinking that would take man as an abstraction apart from history and society, calling this position "a fiction of genetic explanation".¹² Any true science must begin with man as a component of society, and so the difficult problem of psychology becomes that of achieving "analytical knowledge of the universal characteristics of this man."¹³ Seen in this way,  

¹¹These concerns were to come later in the projected fourth and fifth books of the 'Critique'. These, however, never were completed as planned, but the problems were discussed at length in Ideas concerning a Descriptive and Analytical Psychology (1894). This essay will be dealt with in the next part of this paper.
he places psychology and anthropology\textsuperscript{14} at the foundation of all historical knowledge. These sciences must posit the individual as the subject of universal propositions whose predicates will be all evidence concerning the individual, which helps gain an understanding of the historical and social reality.

Next, as Dilthey looks to the hitherto existing forms of psychology, he sees nothing but the building of hypothesis upon hypothesis in attempts to derive the whole of mental life from a few presuppositions. This kind of psychology, which he calls explanatory, can never meet the task he wants to assign to it as the foundation of the human sciences. To meet such a task psychology must keep "itself within the limits of a descriptive science which ascertains facts and uniformities between facts."\textsuperscript{15} Only in this way can the human sciences obtain a firm foundation.

\textsuperscript{12}G.S. I, 31.

\textsuperscript{13}G.S. I, 32.

\textsuperscript{14}Anthropology here is taken to be the science of human nature or a typology, in contrast to psychology which merely provides the facts of consciousness.

\textsuperscript{15}G.S. I, 32.
At this time Dilthey acknowledges the problems even of such a descriptive psychology. The truths of psychology, although foundational for the human sciences, contain only a part of the historical and social reality and thus must operate to an extent through assumption. Therefore to explain psychology's relation to this reality and to the other human sciences, an epistemological foundation is required. This problem is only mentioned and will be dealt with later. It here suffices to call attention to the rigid distinction between descriptive psychology and all forms of explanatory psychology.

What has been said should do well for the needed recognition of the 'Introduction' of 1883. Ten years later Dilthey published a further statement of his views on psychology and its relation to the human sciences. It is to the detailed study of this to which we now turn.
II

DESCRIPTIVE PSYCHOLOGY

1. The Task of a Psychological Foundation

Of the Human Sciences

In the Journal of the Prussian Academy of Science Dilthey gave his solutions to the problems of psychology discovered in the 'Introduction'. The "Ideas concerning a Descriptive and Analytical Psychology" (1894) was to cause much discussion, specifically from the Baden Neo-Kantians and Ebbinghaus, a psychologist. After examining Dilthey's essay, I will also take these criticisms into account and show how they affected Dilthey in his later work.

He begins by presenting criticism of the existent methods in psychology, specifically the Association Psychology of Herbart, Spencer, Taine, and the different forms of materialism. He classifies all this under Explanatory Psychology and states that it might better be described as 'Constructive Psychology'. Explanatory psychology explains inner life according to its components, forces, and laws, just as physics and chemistry explain
the physical world. And as Dilthey understands it, it can only do this through a combination of hypotheses.¹ He shows how in the natural sciences a causal connection within nature originates only through our comprehension of it, going on to say that hypothesis therefore "is the necessary means for the progression of natural knowledge".² So explanatory psychology goes wrong in adopting the hypothetical methods of natural science in the sphere of inner experience. One example of such a hypothesis which Dilthey mentions is the reduction of all workings of the mind to atomistic elements that act in lawful relations.

But what is it about inner experience that makes it invalid to follow the practices of the researchers of nature? This question Dilthey must answer carefully for it is the gist of his argument against the prevalent forms of psychology. First, he states that the facts of inner experience are given in consciousness originally in contrast to those which are given from without.

¹G.S. V, 140.
²G.S. V, 140-41.
These facts are given as reality and as a living interconnectedness (Zusammenhang). Next, it yields itself that in external perception interconnectedness is given only by means of the conclusions derived from a connection of hypotheses. On the other hand, in the inner experience required by the human sciences such a living interconnectedness is grounded everywhere as primarily given. From these considerations Dilthey could say "We explain nature, we understand inner life." Contrary to explanatory psychology, the psychological base of the human sciences experiences interconnectedness first and the distinction of individual links comes later.

Next, Dilthey returns to the problem of the relation between psychology and epistemology, which he only briefly acknowledged in the 'Introduction'. Epistemology, like the human sciences, has need of a psychological foundation, for it could never appear prior to some kind of psychology, whether this psychology is given explicitly or not. The consequences of this can be grave if epistemology were to be grounded on some type of explanatory psychology.

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3G.S. V, 144.
He compares the dilemma of epistemology to that of the human sciences. Without an understanding of the inner interconnectedness the human sciences would be "an aggregate, a bundle, but not a system."\(^4\) The situation is the same for epistemology.

The inner interconnectedness forms the background of the processes of knowledge and therefore must also form the background from which they are to be studied. Experience of this interconnectedness is the foundation of all comprehension, whether of mental, historical, or social facts. So Dilthey sees the foundation of epistemology in a generally valid description of this interconnectedness, in which the processes of knowledge take place. Description here means what Dilthey calls self-reflection (Selbstbesinnung), embracing the whole of inner life.

If explanatory psychology cannot satisfy the great tasks Dilthey wants psychology to complete, then he argues that we must turn to something new, basing itself on description. Here Dilthey had help in the growth of the theory of descriptive science, or positivism. This theory, stimulated by Mach and Avenarius with whom Dilthey had contact, stated that physical laws do not

\(^4\)G.S. V, 148.
describe anything causal in nature, but only how our perceptions are related to one another. The purpose of science is not to go behind these appearances of phenomena. Taking this theory to psychology, Dilthey offered a descriptive and analytical psychology in opposition to explanatory or constructive psychology.

Under descriptive psychology Dilthey understands "the representation of the interconnectedness and the uniformly appearing components of it in each developing human inner life; an interconnectedness not constructed but experienced." This interconnectedness is represented in a typical man through experimentation and comparison. Every interconnectedness of limited parts must be verifiable through inner perception and must be shown to be a link of the embracing interconnectedness of all inner life.

This descriptive psychology must strive toward representation of the totality of man rather than particular aspects. As he said about Kant and Hume: they could see only the diluted juice of reason running through the veins of men, not living blood. Dilthey wants to see the whole man from within as he may see and feel himself, not as an impersonal observer. Here he refers to the creativity of the poet and also religious reflection as examples of an understanding of man in his

5G.S. V, 153.
6G.S. I XVIII.
total reality. Such understanding leaves explanatory psychology far behind, and descriptive psychology must strive to give systematic expression to this understanding, which has always been left without it. These works have never been able to give clear representation to the universal interconnectedness of inner life.

Dilthey concludes the first section of the essay by saying that his descriptive psychology, to remain superior to explanatory psychology, must maintain a rigid descriptive support, a defined terminology, exact analyses, and the essential means of control for its hypothetical constructions. More about this will be said later.

Dilthey then proceeds to trace the history of explanatory psychology. In doing so he concentrates on showing how, at each point of its development, it was governed by the direct influence of the natural sciences. He sees the decisive point in its growth as that coming from the English tradition, referring to Hume, Mill, and Spencer.

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7G.S. V, 153.
2. A Descriptive and Analytical Psychology

We have seen that Dilthey declared that the interconnectedness of inner life is given from within in lived experience (Erlebnis) and that it must remain the rigid and certain foundation of psychology. This interconnectedness is a structure (Struktur),\(^8\) not constructed through the synthesis of its parts but given in experience. Psychological analysis discovers the parts through articulation of the given structure. The task of the description of the parts or smaller interconnectednesses within the whole must fall to analysis. Thus descriptive psychology must at the same time be an analytical psychology.

Every problem analysis poses for itself and every concept that it forms are conditioned through relation back to the given interconnectedness, in which they have their place. Analysis always keeps within itself something of the living, artistic process of understanding the whole. According to Dilthey, "how impossible a scientific representation of inner life would be which renounced knowledge of its interconnectedness."\(^9\)

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\(^8\) Structure, for Dilthey, can be described as the articulation or arrangement of a totality. Structure can be detached and formalized from the material grounded in it. It is relatively constant over against the change of contents.

\(^9\) G.S. V, 175.
A descriptive psychology must lift this structural interconnectedness out of developing inner life. It must discover the law of structure, through which the various aspects of inner life\(^{10}\) are combined to the whole. Such a law of structure must give clear representation to the inner interconnectedness.

In addition to such a vertical representation of inner life, descriptive psychology must discover the law that governs the teleological character of the interconnectedness. This law may be described as that of development (Entwicklung). Development is the experienceable fact that all processes of inner life work together to bring about interconnectedness, to give form to the inner life. Attempts at explaining this fact by Schopenhauer (blind will), Herbart and the materialists (atomistic play of mental elements), and transcendental philosophy (transcendental synthesis) are rejected as inadequate expressions for the aforementioned properties of our inner life.

\(^{10}\)For example, the intelligence, feelings, and instinctual drives. Dilthey's classification of mental life will be discussed in detail in part III of this paper.
Up to this point the task and the nature of a
descriptive psychology have been quite thoroughly
represented. Dilthey had described what its methods
must be and what it must accomplish through the use of
these methods. Thus, it is fitting that in the final
section in the treatise on psychological methodology
he would give his views on the possibility of the
success of his descriptive psychology. The three sections
after this he devotes to his own psychology on the nature
of inner life. These sections will be accounted for
in the next part of this paper, dealing exclusively
with Dilthey's theories of the structure of consciousness.

In turning to the final section on methodology,
Dilthey opens by saying that obviously the success of
descriptive psychology depends upon the fact that we
can indeed perceive inner states. The evidence for this,
he says, lies without doubt in the actual knowledge
which we possess concerning our mental states.

All of us know what a feeling of pleasure,
an impulse of will, or an act of thought is.
No one is in danger of confusing these with one
another. Where such knowledge exists, it must
also be possible. How could the objections also
be correct, which have been raised against this
possibility?
He again attributes these objections to the adoption of the methods of natural science, -- the improper transference of that which is valid for outer perception to inner perception.

Every outer perception rests on the distinction between the perceiving subject and his object. However, inner perception is nothing other than the inner consciousness of a state or process.\footnote{G.S. V, 197.}

The perception he is speaking of here he defines as an 'intentional perceiving', what he would call 'observing'. When the involuntary play of our thought makes comprehension through attention impossible, he calls upon the memory as an aid. The memory is regarded as a reliable means of catching such facts after they have passed in our inner life. So the possibility of knowledge of inner states exists.

Dilthey here acknowledges a serious limitation to this possibility of inner knowledge however. Every mind is constantly in the process of change. Mind itself is process. Nothing further is said about this at this point, but we will see later how this fact of 'process' finally becomes quite decisive for Dilthey and gives great stimulus to a change of view concerning the possibility of such inner perception.
Another point that will also become very significant later is what he here calls the 'comprehension of the inner life of foreign persons'. He admits the defects of such a procedure, but speaks also of the great inner relationship of all human mental life. This, so to speak, is setting the stage for later work on the understanding of other persons. Related to this comprehension of other persons' inner life is the use of objective products of inner life. "In language, in myth, literature and art, in all historical achievements we have before us mental life becoming objective." ¹²

Dilthey leaves it open whether the problems of a descriptive psychology can be solved or not, even with the mentioned aids. Regardless, he is satisfied that in the meantime it occupy itself with the uniform interconnectedness of the human inner life. Since many individual processes have been investigated by psychological analysis, it is the ideal to take all these particular processes and classify them in a general interconnectedness of inner life.

¹²G.S. V, 200.
Following the publication of the "Ideas", discussion and debate surrounded Dilthey from all sides. This criticism came philosophically from the Baden Neo-Kantians: Windelband and Rickert; and psychologically from Ebbinghaus. The criticism that concerns us here is the same from both sides. They both insisted that Dilthey is wrong in saying that the structural interconnectedness is directly experienced in inner perception.

According to the Neo-Kantians, inner perception does not give a coherent interconnectedness as Dilthey says. Rather, only fragments are given and they must be made intelligible, like those in external perception, by use of the categories. For the most part, Ebbinghaus says the same thing by way of criticism. He acknowledges the inner perception of various individual unities, but denies the possibility of perception of the unifying interconnectedness of the whole. Thus, he insists that Dilthey's structural interconnectedness is a hypothetical construction.

13 Windelband's and Rickert's comments appeared in various passages in their writings, specifically in Windelband, *Geschichte und Naturwissenschaften* (1894). Ebbinghaus wrote the article "Über erklärende und beschreibende Psychologie" in the *Zeitschrift für Psychologie*, Bd. IX.
Dilthey's answers to these criticisms can be found on three pages of notes at the conclusion of the "Ideas".\(^{14}\) Here we find Dilthey to a great extent agreeing with Ebbinghaus. He admits that our inner perception is fragmentary, but insists that each fragment thus experienced is in itself a structural whole. The structural unity of the total inner life is not different in kind from these smaller individual unities, so we may say that the total structural interconnectedness is abstracted from individual cases but in effect it is the same structure that we are experiencing.

Whether this reply of Dilthey's is sufficient is a good question, for it obviously has its weaknesses. Essentially, the reply is presupposing the uniform structure between the whole and its parts. Regardless, I will leave it as is and conclude by saying that these criticisms influenced Dilthey greatly while he was attempting to overcome them. However, he seemed to maintain his position for another ten years and then finally radically reexamined his earlier views of the "Ideas". This point is reserved for part IV, and now we must turn to Dilthey's own psychology, his theory of the structural interconnectedness of consciousness.

\(^{14}\)G.S. V, 237-40.
We saw in the preceding part how Dilthey devised a descriptive and analytical psychology as an attempt to provide a foundation of the human sciences. He did this by emphasizing that a descriptive psychology must precede and lay the base for epistemology. It was beyond the scope of the "Ideas" to carry this forward and present the needed epistemology of the human sciences. Such an epistemological foundation would require a rigid description of the processes of knowledge. And since the only experienceable regularity between the various processes of inner life is that of interconnectedness, a description of the knowledge processes can only come after description of the particular processes within the whole inner life.¹ We will accordingly begin this part with Dilthey's theory of consciousness and then proceed to his attempt at a 'phenomenology of knowledge'.

¹G.S. VII, 14.
1. The Structure of Inner Life

The self finds itself in a change of states, which become unified through the self-consciousness of a person; at the same time it finds itself conditioned by the outer world and also working back toward it through the attention of consciousness, which is determined to know from the acts of sense-perception... From this, an arrangement exists among inner states. I describe this arrangement as the structure of inner life. And it is descriptive psychology which grasps this structure... 2

Dilthey describes this structure to us in various places, including the last three sections of the "Ideas". He also gives detailed accounts in the "Studies toward the Foundation of the Human Sciences" (1905) and in fragments written at later dates and left unprepared for publication. 3

The course of mental life is composed of processes which tend toward the production of a growing inner interconnectedness. Through observation of these processes, and their moments of the same process, the impression of this belonging-together is directly experienced. It is the task of psychological description to make, as it were, a cross-section of a single state of this interconnectedness, concerning itself only with the actualities of experienced processes. Explanation of the origin of such a mental interconnectedness lies totally outside its area.

2G.S. V, 200.
3G.S. VI, 312-316 (1908). G.S. VII, 323-324 (1909)
In a cross-section of consciousness, Dilthey finds that what is given is always a consciousness-of something, a living-through something. So, what is primary to mental life is lived experience (Erlebnis). Lived experience is there not as the duality of a consciousness and its object, but as a unified whole.

Lived experience does not stand opposite to me like something perceived or represented; it is not given to us, because the reality of lived experience is there for us; rather we become aware within it; I have reality in some sense immediately belonging to me.\(^4\)

Although lived experience, as a moment of consciousness, is a unity, we can distinguish that of which we are conscious from our consciousness of it. Dilthey calls that of which we are conscious the content (Inhalt, and sometimes Gehalt), and the consciousness of such a content he calls by the different names of act (Akt) and attitude (Verhaltungsweise or Verhalten). It seems as though he never definitively decides on one of these, as they all at times appear to be ambiguous terms. What he is apparently trying to keep away from is that we are aware of something which is doing the acting or maintaining

\(^4\)G.S. VI, 313.
the attitude toward a content. He states that as a rule a self or an ego is in no way contained in lived experience.\(^5\)

The attitudes appearing in lived experience are of many kinds, but Dilthey classifies them into three main types. These types are the comprehending or cognitive, the feeling or emotional, and the willing or volitional. In inner perception Dilthey finds that in one state of consciousness there is not only one of these attitudes in relation to a content, but that all three are combined in interconnectedness with each other toward the one content.

A physical pain, like the burn of a wound, contains outside the strong unpleasant feeling a sensation of an organ in itself, which is qualitative nature; moreover, it includes a localization. Likewise, every instinctual process, attention, or volition includes such a cognizing content within itself.\(^6\)

He continues to describe how feeling is very much effective in our drives and also determines the interest toward which the attention of our perceiving is directed.

\(^5\)G.S. VII, 21.

\(^6\)G.S. V, 201-02.
Feeling is placed at the base of most all volitional life, producing motives for the majority of all acts of the will. As for our so-called purely rational activities, he points out that careful observation can show the presence of emotion even in our thought and cognitive behavior. Of course the reverse is also true. Dilthey gives the example of looking at a landscape through differently colored glasses as producing different moods, showing the effect of color-perception upon our feeling life.  

Although each state of consciousness is an interconnectedness of the three types of attitude toward a content, the total state is described either as feeling, willing, or cognizing. This is done according to the predominating attitude as discovered in inner perception. However, this alone is not what decides concerning the nature of any particular state or lived experience. More important in this respect is the inner relation which exists between the attitude and the content. This inner relation is structural and it is constituted differently for each type of attitude.

\[7\text{G.S. V,202.}\]
Attitude and content are related but also distinguishable because neither determines the other. "The attitude supposes or asserts, feels or desires or wills the content. I ideate, judge, fear, hate, desire: these are attitudes, and it is a "What" toward which they relate themselves, thus every contentual determination in these lived experiences is there only for an attitude."\textsuperscript{8} Different attitudes can relate themselves toward the same contents and, on the other hand, the same attitude can relate itself toward different contents. It is through this inner relation between attitude and content that lived experience is a structural unity.

The second structural relation adhered to in mental life is that relating lived experiences of the same attitude to one another, even though they may be separated temporally. According to this relation, in the cognitive sphere for example, perceiving, remembering, judging, and inferring are all connected as stages within a single process -- the acquiring of knowledge. The same situation applies in the various phases of the volitional process,

\textsuperscript{8}G.S. VII, 20.
and also of our emotional life. It is through this relation that these differing spheres of our life come to constitute organized wholes distinguishable in experience.

It is between these organized wholes or attitudes that Dilthey discovers the third structural relation. All three attitudes stand in relation to one another and constitute a totality, bringing forth the inner interconnectedness of all mental life.

Knowledge is in the researcher an interconnectedness of purpose: here the relation which we name willing is connected to the structural unity which we describe as objective comprehending, and in this whole interconnectedness of purpose individual achievements cooperate toward the production of states which are ends or values for the individual consciousness.9

The cognizing attitude produces knowledge, while our feeling life brings about the placing of values and this in turn effects the attitude of willing in its positing of purposes. All these processes are inter-connected through structural relation to compose the unity of mental life.

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9G.S. VII, 23.
Dilthey often describes the cooperation of these three attitudes as teleological (Zweckmässigkeit). However, he does not mean by this that mental life pursues some fixed and definite goal of life. In fact he prefers to call this inner teleology a 'resoluteness' (Zielstrebigkeit), in which there is no definite purpose but merely the property of striving, as directly experienced in the structural interconnectedness.\(^{10}\)

Next in importance to the structural interconnectedness of mental life is temporality (Zeitlichkeit). Dilthey demands that the inner movement of time be described just as it is experienced, in contrast to the abstract time which is characteristic of the natural sciences.

Concrete time exists in the restless forward movement of the present, in which the present continually becomes past and the future becomes present. Present is the filling of a temporal moment with reality,...

This is the character of real time.

\(^{10}\)G.S. VII, 330.
The ship of our life is carried along so to speak on a continually advancing stream, and the present is always where we live, suffer, will, and remember upon these waves, in short where we experience in the fullness of our reality. But we are carried along incessantly on this stream, and in the same moment when the future becomes present it already sinks again into the past.  

It is the relation between this past, present, and future which constitutes the unique character of our individual existence. For that remembered from the past is interconnected with the present and, in fact, has a certain power in the present which Dilthey describes as presence (Präsenz).

In later writings Dilthey expanded his notion of temporality and found that it had serious consequences for the possibility of a descriptive psychology. This problem will be dealt with later when we will examine in detail Dilthey's doubt about the clarity of inner perception. At this point, however, Dilthey had much to say about the theory of structure and its relation to an epistemological foundation of the human sciences, and it deserves an account.

11G.S. VII, 72-3.

12These comments on time can be found in fragments assembled by his students under the title "Entwürfe zur Kritik der Historischen Vernunft". (1907-1911) G.S. VII, 191-291.
2. **The Theory of Structure and Descriptive Psychology**

The foundation of the human sciences must cover all classes of knowing which evolve themselves from the three types of attitude in mental life (cognitive, emotional, and volitional). Thus, it must relate itself toward the area of knowledge of reality, the giving of values, and positing of purposes. We have seen, however, that these processes are interconnected with each other; so, any theory of the production of knowledge is bound to all three processes.

Again I want to stress that just as the total interconnectedness of mental life is characterized by a subjective resoluteness, so also is each individual process. On this point Dilthey insists that the process of objective comprehending is bound to a resoluteness toward the production of objective and valid knowledge. And here a distinction shows itself when the knowledge of processes are to be analyzed. Descriptive psychology can indeed exhibit that there is such a 'resoluteness' in mental life, but Dilthey insists that it cannot judge whether this aim is actually achieved. "He (the descriptive psychologist) wants to ascertain how this interconnectedness
is. In the course of his analysis of the thought processes naturally the origination of error has its place beside that of the abolition of it..."13

To complete the task begun by description, Dilthey calls upon philosophy to answer the question -- whether and to what extent knowledge is possible. Its method for a theory of knowledge will be self-reflection upon the correct thought processes and the character of awareness of reality in lived experience. This theory of knowledge must always be able to relate its abstractions back to the lived experiences in which knowledge originates. It must be grounded in description and analysis of what is given in experience. At this point Dilthey recognizes the closeness between his demands and the intents of Husserl, acknowledging the excellent investigations carried forth by him in his founding of a rigorously descriptive method as the 'Phenomenology of Knowing'.14

13G.S. VII, 8.
14G.S. VII, 10.
Dilthey insists that if a theory of knowledge remains bound to the 'correct' thought processes and to reality as given in lived experience, since such thought processes and the character of lived experience are only given in description, then the problems of an epistemological foundation of the human sciences can only be determined from the foundation of description itself. And this is nothing else than the theory of structure, for description per se can occupy itself only with individual processes. Even though the character of interconnectedness is directly experienced in any mental state, the structure itself which ultimately grounds the process of the production of knowledge must be grasped.

The theory of structure is the main part of descriptive psychology and as such is about as far as description can go. Inner perception can exhibit the existence of the inner relations and thus becomes evidence for the theory of structure. However, a perfect comprehension of the structural interconnectedness necessitates knowledge of the nature of the experienced inner relations. And for this knowledge Dilthey turns to expressions of inner life.
In language, in the understanding of other persons, in literature, in the expressions of the poet and the historian, a knowledge of the regular inner relations faces us. I have sorrow about something, I have pleasure doing something, I desire the occurrence of an event -- these and a hundred other expressions of language contain such inner relations. I express in these words an inner state without having to reflect over it. Always it is the inner relation which therein comes to expression.\textsuperscript{15}

Here Dilthey questions wherein these expressions have their objective knowledge of inner relations grounded. He states that ultimately objectivity must somehow be grounded in lived experience. So the problem develops as the nature of the relation between lived experience and expressions of it.

The necessity of the relation between a defined lived experience and the corresponding expression of the mind is directly experienced. It is the difficult task of structural psychology to complete judgements which reproduce the structure of lived experiences with a consciousness of adequation.\textsuperscript{16}

We apprehend immediately the expressions of everyday life and literature. Dilthey insists that the hermeneutic of this form of communication also must be used

\textsuperscript{15}G.S. VII, 18.

\textsuperscript{16}G.S. VII, 18.
for the conscious understanding of expressions of lived experiences, for both lie grounded upon the rigid structure which appears regularly in all expressions of mental life.\textsuperscript{17}

But even though it is the case that our knowledge of structural relations returns to our experience and makes possible interpretation of mental processes, it still seems most difficult to ascertain the exact connection between this knowledge and experience itself. Unfortunately in this matter, it is only under very restricted conditions that lived experience is able to be observed in inner perception. However,

in the direct expression of experience which the great poet and religious person have produced, we can draw from the whole content of experience. How poor and scanty our psychological knowledge of feeling would be without the great poets, who have expressed the whole manifold of feeling and often in surprising ways have elevated the structural relations in the universe of feeling!\textsuperscript{18}

The work we have been examining was done by Dilthey in 1905 -- at a time when he still had faith in a descriptive psychology. I have shown, though, how he seemed to be turning more and more to what he called structural psychology, as the process of adequating expressions of mental life back to their origin in lived experience itself.

\textsuperscript{17}G.S. VII, 19.

\textsuperscript{18}G.S. VII, 19.
He stated at the close of the first of the "Studies toward the Foundation of the Human Sciences" that the problems encountered with expressions of lived experience and the relation of knowledge and experience should be pursued further and that psychology must concern itself with the careful distinction of what is to be understood under 'experience', 'introspection', and 'reflection on lived experience', and also what is given in these different ways of structural relation.

These three aspects of the study are important at this point because within years Dilthey will disregard it and form a new one, with which he will then begin again at his attempt to found the human sciences epistemologically.

In the second "Study" of 1905, Dilthey presented his descriptive analysis of consciousness, specifically emphasizing description of the processes of knowledge. It is his answer to the 'Phenomenology of Knowing' of Husserl and deserves attention.

Dilthey emphasizes that the mutual function of all thought processes is to represent (repräsentieren) to clear consciousness the contents and structural relations of lived experiences. When pursuing the relation
between experience and mental object, "we have to do here everywhere only with representations of experience. For example, the concept of the mental interconnectedness describes a reality provided that the representations which produce it are doubtlessly contained in experience."¹⁹

The most fundamental of these processes is what Dilthey calls the 'elementary logical operations' or 'silent thought'. These operations have the job of clarifying that which is contained in experience, raising it to the level of perception. Instances of synthesis, separation, and comparison are such elementary operations. These operations relate only to contents, not to attitudes. The relations are found in the given, they are not provided by these elementary operations. "The validity of the given relations is independent of the acts of consciousness, in which they are comprehended."²⁰

Dilthey goes on to show that these elementary operations contain the seeds for the development of the forms of discursive thought. He defines discursive thought

¹⁹G.S. VII, 32.
²⁰G.S. VII, 37.
as "that thinking which is bound to language or another of its corresponding sign-systems, like that of number."21 The forms of discursive thought always relate themselves toward the structure of perception, which is conditioned by the elementary operations. Perception at the level of the elementary operations is always fragmentary. For example, in the perception of a tree what is actually given is only trunk, parts of branches, leaves, etc. The form is completed through representations which are unified in their relation to the same object. The elementary operations, linguistic descriptions, and ideational representations are all connected in a system of inner relations. When these systems are completed we have what Dilthey calls the total-idea (Totalvorstellung) or 'tree'.22

Of course the vehicle of discursive thought is language and Dilthey uses to a great extent Husserl's analyses from the Logical Investigations. The important point in these for Dilthey is that ultimately all meaning must depend on its expression's reference to experience. Along with this, Dilthey, in showing the construction of human knowledge, relates all truth-value

22G.S. VII, 33-34.
back to the 'conviction of consciousness', which depends ultimately upon its knowledge-structure's foundation on the data of experience.

Cognitive lived experiences strive to express and grasp an objectivity always more adequately. It is already given that they pass from the particular to the general. This is carried out through the use of names, then concepts, and finally judgements. All lived experiences which grasp the same relations come eventually to represent the same objectivity and in so doing develop a homogeneous system. For example,

All science relates itself toward a delimitable objectivity; in this it has its unity. And the system of the areas of science gives the propositions of knowledge their belonging-togetherness. The completion of all relations contained in experience would be the concept of the world.23

On this point we must mention Dilthey's concept of the categories. The formal categories originate from the elementary operations and represent everything comprehensible through these elementary achievements. Such formal categories are unity, plurality, likeness, difference, degree, relation. Appearing in our primary thought, they have the same value and nature in discursive

23G.S. VII, 41.
thought: they are the condition of both knowledge and understanding, and also of both the natural sciences and the human sciences.

Next Dilthey distinguishes what he calls the 'real' categories. These categories are never the same in the human sciences as they are in the natural sciences. Here the distinction is made on the basis of the type of given, what can be called different realms of experience. The real categories of the physical world are typified by space, substance, and causality, etc. In the mental world they are temporality, meaning, purpose, and value, etc. These latter will be dealt with in detail in the next part. For Dilthey the real categories are not imposed by the understanding subject as they are for Kant. Even categories like substance and causality, though not derived from our experience of the physical world, also are not a priori forms imposed by the understanding. As Dilthey said in the "Ideas", they are abstracted from inner experience and projected into physical experience.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{24}G.S. V, 140.
The purpose of an analysis of the processes of knowing of course was to found knowledge of lived experiences. For the comprehending of lived experience necessarily requires knowledge of the operations of comprehending as its psychological foundation. For this reason Dilthey could state "that since the comprehending of lived experience takes place only within the cognitive lived experiences, it is the condition for the objectivity of all psychological comprehension."²⁵ I have shown how Dilthey characterized lived experiences of cognition by their teleological direction toward a grasping of objectivity.

But it is exactly because of his demand for objectivity that Dilthey began to doubt knowledge of mental processes through observation. In a fragment written as early as 1905 we find Dilthey beginning to seriously doubt the objective value of inner perception of lived experience, and even the possibility of introspection as far as knowledge of the structural relations are concerned.²⁶ It is this critical point in Dilthey's philosophy both of psychology and the human sciences that I will attempt to make explicit in the next part.

²⁵G.S. VII, 319.
²⁶G.S. VII, 319, 322.
IV

EXPERIENCE, EXPRESSION, AND UNDERSTANDING

1. Understanding Expressions of Life

Both the human sciences and their epistemological foundation presuppose everywhere a knowledge of lived experiences and their structural relations. Whether this reality described as lived experience has behind it something else as its condition is wholly outside the sphere of the human sciences. But the point here is that in 1905 Dilthey was concluding

that the directly experienceable (lived experiences) is very restricted for the purpose of the production of a knowledge. Unending plentitude, however, is contained in the area of expressions of lived experience and concepts concerning them; these reach far beyond that accessible to intentional psychological ascertain-
ment. Deliberate attention toward inner processes alters and pollutes their energy, indeed even the existence of the processes themselves.¹

The limited view of lived experience gained in introspection must be completed in such a way as to bring the wealth and interconnectedness of inner life to knowledge. And for this purpose it is most significant that the inner attains to expression in the outer and

¹G.S. VII, 319.
can then be understood backwards from it.

Here we find Dilthey turning his attention away from reliance upon inner perception for knowledge of inner life and turning toward the method of understanding external expressions of it and relating this understanding back into the inner structure whence it originated. The reasons for this change are many and are very important, because this evolving new critique of introspection turns wholly against the thesis of his earlier work in the "Ideas".

First, Dilthey questions the accuracy and efficiency of inner observation for gaining knowledge of mental processes. As was just quoted, he decided that any deliberate act of observation has the effect of changing the states which are to be observed. Also in this respect he questions the range of mental life which is even open to observation and description. "What do we know of the process of judgement, whether through observation, memory, or even experiment?" He never admitted knowledge of the causes of processes such as this, but at least left them open to description. Now even this is doubted.

\[2\text{G.S. VII, 321.}\]
Secondly, Dilthey can no longer sustain his view that the structural interconnectedness itself can be discovered by introspection.

I have pain concerning the death of my nephew; I thereby remain localized in space and oriented within time. This is now made the object of my observation through introspection. Can I ground a science thereon? Do I want to express this observation in words, so that this would belong to a multi-conditioned usage. The observation itself is conditioned through the questions which I ask. When I question myself or others whether the aesthetic impression of a mountain would contain empathy, empathy is there at once... Further, concerning the classes of lived experience, I cannot assert whether some sensation is a determined feeling, or whether feeling is always only an undetermined sensation. From this and from other grounds the borders between the experienced states are uncertain. Are there feelings without relation to a content? Is hate a feeling, or does it also include an impulse?  

Dilthey goes on in this same fragment expressing his new respect for Comte as the greatest critic of the introspective method. We saw in Part I how he contested Comte's aversion to such a method thirty years earlier.

Finally, Dilthey began to acknowledge the consequences for introspection of his theory of the temporality of mental life. Lived experience is a process in time and every state changes before it can become an object to be grasped.

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3G.S. VI, 317-18.
The smallest part of the constant movement of time still encloses a temporal course within itself. The present never is; what we experience as present always has the memory joined to it, as what was present. Under other moments the continual working of the past shares as power in the present.4

Thus, to want to be able to experience this flow of life is like wanting to stand on the one constant shore of Heraclitus, and this "decays the law of life itself, according to which every moment of life which is observed is the remembered moment, no longer the flow itself."5

This condition of real time makes the experienceability of the course of life impossible, 'in the rigorous sense'. "While we want to observe time, the observation destroys it when it is fixed upon through the attention."6 We do not experience the course of life in itself, only change of what was, and that indeed change of what was does take place. If this is the case, as Dilthey concluded, then a science founded upon the inner observation of states and processes goes by the board.

4G.S. VII, 194.
5G.S. VII, 195.
6G.S. VII, 195.
So another method is to be found which will lead further and attain a true knowledge of inner life. This method uses a middle link and arrives at inner life in a round-about way. Lived experience always obtains an expression which represents it in its fullness. This takes place 'without psychological reflection or concept formation and does not even require it.' The old formula of 'experience, introspection, reflection on lived experience' is replaced by 'experience, expression, and understanding'.

In expression the fixity of lived experience increases. A creation from the contents of lived experience faces us independently of it, is external to it, and is constant. And thus expression originates in the sphere of attitude; it grasps reality of all types, about to find in it a means of relation; feeling expresses itself in countenance and gesture, it finds symbols in word and act; the will attains firm expression in regulations and laws; thus the mind (Geist)objectivates itself, and this objectivation is external to it and still its creation. And the relation of expression and understanding extends itself in the reciprocal communication of individuals in their immensity, it originates human society.

Here the problem of time is overcome as expressions give experience some degree of permanence.

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7G.S. VI, 318.

8G.S. VII, 329.
As for the first problem of introspection, concerning the range of mental life which is open to us in inner observation, "the expression contains more from lived experience than can be found in introspection. What appears in experience without sense is drawn out of the depth of inner life in the expression of experience." 9

If we cannot know of judgement through observation, then Dilthey concludes that we must analyze its expression in the sentence to grasp it. "Before all, the comprehension of the structure of inner life rests on the interpretation of works, in which the interconnectedness of inner life comes to total expression. The embracing expression, language itself, supplies here the most fruitful information." 10

These conclusions supplied the foundation for Dilthey's new method. This method was to occupy him for the last years of his life.

We must now turn to Dilthey's analyses, which show just how this method is possible and in what way it can count as a foundation for the human sciences. In this

9G.S. VII, 328.
10G.S. VII, 322.
first matter I will examine the essay "The Understanding of other Persons and their Life-expressions", written probably in 1909.  

Dilthey begins by saying that there are three different classes of life-expression and that each of these classes results in a different type of understanding.

The first class of expressions includes concepts, judgements, and larger thought-forms. These expressions represent contents which are independent of the place, time, and person in which they appear. In this case understanding is directed upon a pure thought-content, and thus is more complete and accurate than when in reference to other expressions.

The next class of expressions is actions. An action originates because of its relation to a purpose, and it is almost impossible to ascertain all the circumstances involved in the decision to act. "And without explanation of how circumstances, purpose, means, and interconnection of life are combined in the act, no universal determination of the inner life from which the act originated can be produced."  

\[11\text{G.S. VII, 205-220.}
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\[12\text{G.S. VII, 206.}\]
But the situation is wholly different with expressions of lived experience. These expressions are involved in a special relation between life, the expression, and understanding of it. Such expressions "contain more of the inner interconnectedness than any introspection can perceive." However there is a problem in that the relation between the expression and the mind can only be brought to understanding under very specific conditions. The problem here is not one of 'true or false' as in judgement, but one of 'authentic or inauthentic'.

But in great works of art an inner life (ein Geistes) gains autonomy from its creator, the poet, the artist, the writer; here we step into an area where deception ends. No truly great work of art can want to mirror...an inner reality foreign to the mental content of its author; indeed it wants to say nothing at all of its author. Authentic in itself, it stands fixed, secure, and enduring, making possible a certain understanding of it.\textsuperscript{13}

At this point Dilthey distinguishes between the elementary forms of understanding and the higher forms. The elementary forms arise first from the interests of practical life, for people must make themselves understood. "By such an elementary form I mean the interpretation of an individual life-expression. Logically it can be represented in a conclusion of analogy."\textsuperscript{14} The basic

\textsuperscript{13}G.S. VII, 207.

\textsuperscript{14}G.S. VII, 211.
relation within this form is that of the expression to what is expressed in it. And this is not one of cause and effect. Because of the relation between expressions and mind, any expression and that which is expressed form a unity. This can only be elaborated by presenting Dilthey's concept of 'objective mind' (objektive Geist).

By 'objective mind' Dilthey means all the manifold of forms in which what is common between individuals has objectivated itself in the world of the senses. In this realm the past is always included in the present. This includes everything from "style of life, forms of communication and interconnectedness of purpose, to morals, law, state, religion, art, science and philosophy."\textsuperscript{15} It is only within this world of objective mind that other persons and their life-expressions can be understood. Everything that is part of objective mind contains something common between the 'I' and the 'thou'. The individual understands gestures, facial expressions, words and sentences, "only because it encounters them always as the same and with the same relation to what they mean and express. Thus the individual orients himself in the world of objective mind."\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{15}G.S. VII, 208.

\textsuperscript{16}G.S. VII, 209.
Here we must draw a distinction between Dilthey's use of the term 'objective mind' and the sense in which Hegel used it. Dilthey was very concerned with drawing such a distinction, going so far as changing his use of the expression to 'objectivation of life'.

17 G.S. VII, 146, ff. Concerning Hegel, Dilthey states that "the assumptions by which Hegel had placed this concept (objective mind) can today no longer be adhered to. He constructed the community from the general, rational will. We must today begin with the reality of life; in life the totality of the inner interconnectedness is effective. Hegel constructed metaphysically; we must analyze the given. And the present analysis of human existence fills us all with the feeling of fragility, the power of dark instincts, all the suffering from the darkness of illusions, the finality in all that life is, even in the highest structures of social life. Thus we cannot understand the objective mind from reason, because the unities of life must go back into the structural interconnectedness, which continues even in social life. And we cannot arrange the objective mind in an ideal construction, much more we must ground its reality in history...

"While for Hegel life in its totality was placed at the point of general reason; for us, with lived experience, understanding, historical interconnectedness of life, power of the irrational, the problem originates -- how is the science of history possible. For Hegel this problem did not exist. His metaphysics, in which the world-mind has nature as its externalization, the objective mind as its realization and the absolute mind through philosophy as the realization of its self-knowledge -- all these, identical in themselves -- has this problem behind itself."
In the commonality of objective mind the inter-
connection of the expression and the expressed is given.
It contains an arrangement of articulated orders.
These refer to differentiation of races downward to the
differences of ways of expression and morals within a
race. Orders of another kind are contained within
cultural systems. And in this respect, it is in passing
from practical to historical interpretation that the
higher forms of understanding arise out of the elementary
forms.

The further the inner distance between a given
life-expression and its understanding is, the more
often uncertainty originates. The first beginnings
of the higher forms of understanding originate
when understanding passes from the normal inter-
connectedness of the life-expression to the mind
expressing it.\(^{18}\)

The higher form of understanding rests on the
relation between the outer and the inner. This under-
standing always has the individual as its object. And
here it leaves the area of practical interests, for the
understanding of the individual is valued in itself.
The individual is of interest not only as a case of
general humanity, but as an individual whole. Under-
standing embraces the wealth of the individual, humanity,
and men’s creations. The world of mind is determined at

the same time by the power of the individual and by the objective mind. But we must ask just how such an understanding of the individual takes place. And Dilthey's answer to this included three different aspects: transposition, reconstructing, and reexperiencing. We must now see what he had to say about these processes.

The highest achievement of understanding, in which the totality of an inner life actually becomes intelligible, is that of reconstructing (nachbilden) or reexperiencing, (nacherleben). Understanding is not wholly an intellectual process, for all the processes of our mental life combine in it.

The features of experience recur in the reconstructing from the life-expressions of other persons. We can first of all conceive the understanding of foreign states as a conclusion from analogy, which leads from an outer physical process, by means of its similarity with such processes which we have found bound with determined inner states, to an inner life like this. In this determination, however, lies only a rough and schematic representation of that which is contained in the process of reconstruction. The idea in the form of an inference severs the inner states, both those from which the inference takes place and the others which are added through inference, from the constant interconnectedness of inner life,
while it is from the relation toward this that reconstructing first receives its certainty and its approaching definiteness. This can be confirmed through the following facts. The interpretation of foreign expressions is very different according to recognition of the interconnectedness, to which such an expression belongs, or according to the type of inner life which grounds it, in most cases without reflection. And the limit of our understanding lies always where we cannot reconstruct further upon the interconnectedness. But the links of the reconstruction process are not only bound with one another through logical relation, something like inference. To reconstruct is exactly to reexperience. 19

So the task of understanding is to discover a living interconnectedness in whatever is given. And the possibility of this exists in the fact that the one who is doing the understanding experiences interconnectedness within his own lived experience in countless ways. This interconnectedness is always available with all its inherent possibilities. It is in reference to this process that Dilthey also uses the expression 'transposition' (Sichhineinversetzen).

In understanding the totality of an inner life, the process of reexperiencing must follow step by step in the actual temporal order the experiences of the other mental life. The verses of a lyric poem allow us to reexperience an interconnectedness of lived experiences.

19 G.S. V, 276-77.
The succession of scenes in a play makes possible the reexperience of the fragments from the life-courses of the appearing persons. The narrations of the writer or historian, which follow the historical course, obtain in us a reexperiencing. The triumph of reexperiencing is that in it the fragments of a process are so completed that we believe to have before us a continuity.20

Dilthey emphasizes that the reexperience and understanding of that which is foreign and past can only be carried on by a special kind of person. He names such a skillful understanding 'exposition', and states that the art of this is called 'hermeneutics'.

2. The Hermeneutical Circle

For Dilthey the interconnectedness is much more than the sum of its parts. We cannot grasp the whole without understanding the various experiences. And on the other hand, we cannot understand the parts without grasping the whole interconnectedness. This seems like an insoluble dilemma, but Dilthey recalls Schleiermacher's method of hermeneutical circularity, under which both whole and parts can be understood by a process of mutual dependence. This, then, becomes the key to understanding the interconnectedness of mental life and even history.

"This interconnectedness becomes comprehended under an embracing category, which is a manner of statement concerning all reality, -- the relation of whole to parts..."

And this relation of whole to parts for Dilthey is the category of meaning (Bedeutung), which he places next in importance to 'experience, expression, and understanding'.

Just as we are aware of the relation between our experiences and the expressions which express them and thus can transpose this relation in understanding another's experience from his expressions, the category of meaning originates from our own experience in understanding our own life as a whole. On this ground it too can be carried over and used in the understanding of another's course of life.

But what is the sense of this term 'meaning', as it develops in our own life experience? Dilthey states that interconnectedness is only given by way of the memory when we survey our past course of life.\(^\text{22}\)

A moment of the past has meaning because of its relation to the future or our life as a whole. For example, an act of the past or its external result is meaningful if

\(\text{21}\) G.S. VII, 195.

\(\text{22}\) G.S. VII, 231. This is a far cry from the "Ideas", where interconnectedness is given in immediate experience.
it produces some kind of determination of the future. The individual moment has meaning through interconnection with the whole, through the relation of past and future. A problem arises, however, in that to grasp the meaning of a part for the whole one must be able to look at the past from the point of view of the future whole of life. But on the other hand, even the whole itself is not understood except from the meaning of the parts. The process can never be complete, for understanding always must hover between both these points of view. "Our comprehension of the meaning of life changes constantly. Every plan of life is the expression of a grasping of the meaning of life. For what we set up as the purpose of our future conditions the determination of the meaning of the past." 23 And likewise, the meaning of the past determines our future purposes. In this interconnectedness of whole and parts, 'meaning' has a close relation with understanding.

In turning to understanding expressions, Dilthey says that the simplest case in which meaning appears is in the understanding of a sentence. In a sentence:

23G.S. VII, 233.
the individual words each have a meaning and from their connection the sense (Sinn) of the sentence is derived. And an interaction exists between the whole and parts and also between the parts themselves, by virtue of which the indeterminateness of sense, both of the whole and the individual words, is determined.24

This same relation of meaning and sense also applies in reference to a course of life. Every event that a person executes has a relation to something which it means, just like the words of a sentence. But in the case of life-expressions, meaning derives from their expression of something belonging to life. However, this meaning can only be understood by reference to the whole, in other words, by reference to past and future. All life-expressions are interconnected in this way because the experiences which they express are interconnected. This relationship of interconnectedness between life-expressions is given in the possibility of reexperiencing. Life-expressions should not be seen as separate from the process of life itself. They are what Dilthey called 'objectivations of life'. Based upon this Dilthey states

24_G.S. VII, 235._
that reexperiencing

is the general method, as soon as understanding leaves the sphere of words and their sense and does not look for a sense of signs, but the much deeper sense of life-expressions. It is the method first suspected by Fichte. Life is like a melody, in which it is not the sounds that appear as the expression of the real inhabiting realities of life. The melody lies in life itself.\textsuperscript{25}

So, given Dilthey's concept of life, this relation of whole and parts as the category of meaning can also be applied to history. It is on this basis that Dilthey calls upon hermeneutics to "seek relation to the universal epistemological problem of proving the possibility of knowledge of the interconnectedness of the historical world. Then it must discover the means toward its realization."\textsuperscript{26} Dilthey believed he had found the means in his hermeneutical formula 'experience, expression, and understanding', and, temporarily at least, attempted to develop the human sciences on this, rather than on his descriptive and analytical psychology.

\textsuperscript{25}G.S. VII, 234.

\textsuperscript{26}G.S. VII, 218.
V

LIFE AND THE HUMAN SCIENCES

1. **Historicity**

In examining the consequences of Dilthey's new theory for the human sciences, we are faced with a method which can no longer claim the exactitude and general validity that he demanded in the "Ideas". Interconnectedness cannot now be seen as the primarily and immediately given characteristic of mental life. In understanding, it is given only by means of the category of meaning, which Dilthey refers to as the 'embracing category for the unanalyzed interconnectedness of life'. The emphasis is now directed upon life regarded as a whole.

Attitudes no longer can be seen as distinct entities, but as the infinitely numerous ways of relation which a mental life may have to the outer world. "Feeling or willing are only concepts which are a hint to reconstruct the corresponding part of life."¹ Dilthey calls upon his new method to carry out a classification of these ways of relation. He sticks to his former types, cognitive,

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¹G.S. VII, 238.
emotional, and volitional, but bases the distinction now on "the fact that the division into reality, values, and purposes runs through the entire domain of mind."² Obviously, he calls only for adequate expression, not any kind of so-called scientific precision.

I must now turn to some of his systematic writings which employed understanding as the foundation of the human sciences. The problem of temporality encountered in psychology now becomes the problem of grasping the historical.

The human sciences have as their embracing given the objectifications of life. And it is through these objectifications of life that we attain to an understanding of the nature of the historic.

Everything here arises through inner (geistiges) doing and therefore carries the character of historicity. In the sense-world itself it is woven as a product of history. From the arrangement of trees in a park, the order of homes on a street, the expedient tools of craftsmen through to the penal judgement in the courthouse, hourly historical happenings are about us. What mind (Geist) invests of its character into its life-expression today, is history tomorrow as it stands objectivated. With the forward march of time we are surrounded by Roman ruins, cathedrals, and pleasure castles of aristocrats. History is not something estranged from life, not something segregated from the present through its temporal distance.³

²G.S. VII, 327.
³G.S. VII, 147.
In emphasizing history's identity with the character of life, Dilthey is speaking about the fact that objectivations of life are interconnected and dynamic like life itself. They express a reality ever-changing, a living process. Dilthey's problem is that of expressing this dynamic character through concepts, to the consequence of understanding it. Hitherto, the human sciences have used static concepts which do not do justice to the nature of life. Dilthey presents the human sciences with the task of developing new concepts which adequately represent their given, ceaseless process.

Dilthey presents his own solution to the task by characterizing the human world as Wirkungszusammenhang. This can be translated as the interconnectedness of effects, or somewhat loosely as a dynamic interconnectedness, in which every part of history is constantly effecting the other parts and the whole. It can be seen as Dilthey's view of historical causation. He distinguishes this from the Kausalzusammenhang of nature in that his dynamic interconnectedness produces values and realizes purposes according to the structure of mind. "In the individual, in history, in cultural systems and

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4G.S. VII, 152.
organizations, everything is conceived in constant change, and these changes are being obtained through Wirkung..."\(^5\) History and all its parts, themselves smaller interconnectednesses, are dynamic, coherent wholes effecting one another.

All concepts employed by the human sciences contain the character of process and activity so long as they represent components of a dynamic interconnectedness. "Where objectifications of life are analyzed as finished, bygone products, the further task always exists to grasp the dynamic interconnectedness, in which such objectifications originate."\(^6\)

We are all embedded within the embracing, dynamic interconnectedness of history. In this realm every particular past event represents something common. Every word, sentence, work of art and historical fact is only intelligible because in understanding a commonness is revealed. In the realm of objectifications of life the great power of past history is present through the character of dynamic interconnectedness. "The individual understands history because he himself is an historical being."\(^7\)

\(^5\) G.S. VII, 257.
\(^6\) G.S. VII, 157.
\(^7\) G.S. VII, 151.
But what does it actually mean when Dilthey refers to man as an historical being? It was stated earlier that man knows himself only in history, not through introspection. Just as in an individual life where the present situation and the outlook on the future determine the meaning of a past event in the memory, here history can be regarded as the memory of mankind and the determination of the meaning of anything past is determined by the present horizon. Dilthey regarded this point of view accurately with what he called the rise of historical consciousness. With historical consciousness the variability of all human forms of existence is seen as being conditioned historically, and everything conditioned historically is also relative in value. Human nature here is identified with history; "the type man dissolves and changes in the process of history."\(^8\) History is, in the final analysis, the succession and coexistence of Weltanschauungen, with no ultimate point of view beyond the relativity of them all. Dilthey gave quite a systematic statement of his Weltanschauungslehre and it deserves some attention.\(^9\)

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\(^8\)G.S. VIII, 6.

for unlike most philosophers Dilthey never regarded his own position as superior to the relativity of Weltanschauungen. His philosophy was seen as a direct result of the consequences of historical consciousness.

The ultimate source of Weltanschauungen is life itself, as it is experienced and reexperienced by every individual. Such experience comprises not only the unique world of lived experience, but also the accumulated wisdom of mankind as expressed historically in custom, habit, and tradition. Every great experience shows to us a unique side of life, and as these experiences coalesce and connect, we develop an attitude toward life. These attitudes change as experience shows life in always new ways, but eventually a certain attitude comes to dominate in each individual. Dilthey names the most embracing of these attitudes optimism and pessimism in their various forms. It is these attitudes which form the substratum for the development of Weltanschauungen.

Dilthey maintains that all Weltanschauungen have the same structure. A Weltanschauung is the response of the total mind to all its experience and, thus, it is structured in the same way as mental life.
This structure is everywhere an interconnectedness, in which on the basis of questioning a world-image (Weltbild) decides on the meaning and sense of the world and derives from it ideals, the highest good, and supreme principles of conduct.¹⁰

The world-image forms the foundation for valuation and comprehension, and these in turn lead to a higher level of consciousness, in which we find ideals, the highest good, and the rules of conduct through which the Weltanschauung first receives its practical energy. Even this higher level goes through various stages, concluding finally when all aims are systematized to form a comprehensive plan of life. All this takes place with the same lawfulness that goes throughout all inner life in forming its structural interconnectedness.

Men everywhere live and have lived under very differing conditions, from climate, race, and culture, to different eras in history. On this basis a countless variety of Weltanschauungen form and enter into a struggle for survival. The ones most suited to life-enhancement have survived and evolved into more perfect structures. These structures can be subjected to comparative study, according to which certain types can

¹⁰G.S. VIII, 82.
be classified. After acknowledging the need for caution and the provisional character of all types classified, Dilthey proceeded to give his own typology of Weltanschauungen as they are expressed in religion, art, and philosophy. He found three main types and characterized them in detail. Here I will only name them (the names are revealing): Naturalism, the Idealism of Freedom, and Objective Idealism. As representatives of Naturalism Dilthey names Epicurus, Hume, and Comte; of the Idealism of Freedom he names Bergson, the Neo-Kantians, and the pragmatists. Objective Idealism finds among its adherents Spinoza, Leibniz, Schelling, Goethe, Hegel, and Schleiermacher.¹¹

One thing Dilthey never did, however, was to search out one particular Weltanschauung and place it in a position of truth or even as the best. In fact he never openly formulated his own Weltanschauung to give it systematic expression. Instead, he was content to lay in the open the three types and leave them side by side, in conflict and in a state of relativism. Why was this the case? Because of what Dilthey always referred to as the power of historical consciousness.

¹¹G.S. VIII, 104, 107, 112.
Just as historical consciousness produces doubt and relativism regarding all thought, it also contains the ability to determine the limits to relativism. First, all Weltanschauungen develop according to an inner law and apparently can be related back to the three types. These types maintain themselves beside one another over the centuries. Thus, Dilthey concludes, these Weltanschauungen must be grounded in the nature of the universe and the relation of the comprehending subject to it. Each Weltanschauung must express a side of the universe. "Each Weltanschauung is herein true, but each is one-sided. It is denied us to view these sides simultaneously. The pure light of truth is seen by us only in variously broken rays."

2. Anthropology

In contrast to his method employing the historical category of understanding, Dilthey refers to a 'content psychology', or 'concrete psychology', and also to 'anthropology'. He states that the greatest opposition exists between his anthropology and the proper science of psychology as it has formed itself today.

\[^{12}\text{G.S. VIII, 224.}\]
"Anthropology stands close to questions about the meaning of life and its values because it stands so near to concrete life itself."

It is also able to construct a typology of Weltanschauungen according to the significance of life realized in such types. Also Dilthey mentions what he calls 'anthropological reflection'. This consists of all the records of introspection and reflection on life, and also understandings of other persons: in short, a knowledge of man. It is a vast literature of almost limitless extent and is that which Dilthey called upon descriptive psychology to systematize in the "Ideas".

In an essay written in 1909 Dilthey lists the human sciences and we find psychology included among them. Of course, by this he means the proper science of psychology as it has formed itself today, and not his content psychology or anthropology. However, the methodical task of this anthropology was left unclear. There is evidence that Dilthey never was totally able to renounce his demand for a descriptive psychology as the foundation of the human sciences.

\[13\] G.S. VII, 239.

\[14\] G.S. VII, 79.
The point is that if anthropology bases itself solely upon the objectivations of life or history and the method of understanding, then it cannot claim status as the foundation. For in deriving its concepts from expressions, it would be on the same level as the other human sciences.

In examining some of the very last things Dilthey wrote, indeed we find him referring to an anthropology which seems to embody a return to a descriptive methodology. In a fragment intended for his first draft of a 'Critique of Historical Reason', Dilthey acknowledges that man knows himself in history not in introspection. However, he then speaks hypothetically of a science of man which would be anthropology. This would attempt to understand the totality of lived experiences according to the structural interconnectedness. Apparently he finds that history does not go deeply enough to yield the totality of inner life. "Always the individual man realizes only a possibility of his development, which from the station of the will could always have taken another direction. Man is only there for us at all under the condition of realized possibilities."15

15 G.S. VII, 279.
Finally, in a fragment called "The Problem of Religion" Dilthey speaks of the anthropological method as that which describes and analyzes

the succession of concrete states of mind: it finds these determined through an inner movement forward and external influences. The inner determined movement is compared to a forward-pushing energy, which we recognize as the structural interconnectedness...

There is, however, one very great difference between anthropology and the former descriptive psychology. Dilthey had originally viewed his descriptive psychology as a science, not in the sense of employing natural scientific methods of course, but in the sense of producing objectively valid knowledge of inner life. The new anthropology, on the other hand, seems much closer to art than to science. In the fragment on religion Dilthey states that anthropological research is very close to poetry, concluding that "lived experience here is constructed in the imagination according to the inhabiting meaning in it, and thus here the relation of the inner course to surrounding life is represented in its concrete reality." If this is the case then it appears as doubtful that such a descriptive process could be placed as the foundation of the human sciences.

17 G.S. VI, 305.
Dilthey never did finally work this out, as he was struggling with the problems of hermeneutics and description right until the end.\textsuperscript{18} However, it is significant perhaps that Husserl, in his correspondence with Dilthey just three months before his death, could write that there were no serious differences between their respective philosophies.\textsuperscript{19} This seems certainly to point to Dilthey's return to a rigid description of inner life.

\textsuperscript{18}G.S. VII, vii-viii.

VI
CONCLUSIONS

Although it may be a simplification, it appears that one can see opposing forces operating in Dilthey's thought over the years. On the one hand, he, from the beginning, was reacting to positivism in the attempt to go beyond its shallow and naturalistic interpretation of mental life. Dilthey saw the reasons for this in positivism's transference of natural scientific methods and principles into the sphere of inner perception. He insisted that justice must be done to the whole inner side of man -- drives, feelings, and imaginative powers; and in this respect Dilthey was being true to his romantic origins. He never ceased taking seriously the picture of man represented by Goethe and Novalis.

However, on the other hand, it seems that Dilthey never really escaped the spirit of positivism in its demand of an 'objective scientific knowledge'. It is from this point of view that Dilthey had to abandon his theory of descriptive psychology as the foundation of the human sciences. Dilthey the positivist felt the need to base the human sciences upon an 'objectively valid' description of facts, and eventually came to the conclusion
that his descriptive psychology could not satisfy this requirement. But for Dilthey this did not mean that he had to resort to positivism's demand for natural scientific methods. For as a consequence of Dilthey's rejection of descriptive psychology we have probably his greatest legacy in the method of understanding, which he then called upon to found the human sciences. Since Dilthey, understanding has been developed in psychology and the human sciences by Jaspers, Weber, and Sombart; it has been explicated and expanded by Spranger, Litt, and Häberlin, who were students of Dilthey. And eventually the method became conscious of itself in the English speaking world through the work of Theodore Abel and Ernest Nagel.

Finally we saw how in the end the romantic in Dilthey was gaining a final victory. His late call for an anthropology as a method of attaining a science of man, to recognize even the possibilities in man which are not realized in history, went far beyond what Dilthey the positivist could regard as scientific objectivity. This method was more akin to art, and thus was Dilthey's final attempt to overcome positivism and achieve systematic explication of the total man, human nature so to speak.
I have shown the importance of temporality and historicity in Dilthey's thought. But through all his relativism, the one thing that remained stable in his idea of life was the structural interconnectedness of inner life. This was the ultimate presupposition that made the method of understanding possible. Dilthey's concept of structure has greatly influenced both Gestalt psychology and structural anthropology. But again, the important point is that the matter or stuff containing in this structure is conditioned historically and thus also its objectivations or expressions. Everything human in the last analysis is relative except the movement of human life itself: history.

To conclude, I will turn to one of the last things Dilthey wrote, in which he expressed his hopes as an implication of his life work.

"The historical consciousness of the finitude of every historical appearance, of every human or social state, of the relativity of every type of belief, is the last step toward the liberation of man. With this man attains the sovereignty to wring from every experience its content, to surrender himself wholly to it, unprejudiced, as if no system of philosophy or faith could bind him. Life is free from knowledge through concepts; the mind becomes sovereign in the face of all tissues of dogmatic thought. Everything beautiful,
everything sacred, and everything sacrificial, reexperienced and interpreted, open perspectives which disclose a reality. And likewise we take the wicked, the dreadful, and the ugly in us and give them their place in the world, as comprising a reality to which justice must be done in the interconnectedness of the world. Something which cannot be disregarded. And over against this relativity, the continuity of the creative force makes itself valid as the central historical fact.\(^1\)

\(^1\)G.S. VII, 290-91.
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