

STUDI

What is in a name? Psychological Humanities and the logic of presentism

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Abstract The recent proliferation of the term “*Psychological Humanities*” (PH) raises many questions, not least of which is the wide variety of ways in which the term is employed. After noting some of this variety, we focus on a related question that has been insufficiently discussed: the extent to which PH represents a genuinely new contribution and approach, and to what extent it represents a renaming. To address this question, we examine examples of past efforts to theorize the relation between psychology and the humanities. We explore Dilthey’s argument in favor of “two sciences” and C.S. Snow’s description of “two cultures”, which offer somewhat different models of the relations between science and the humanities. We then discuss the application of these models to the discipline of psychology, first by Dilthey himself and later by Sigmund Koch, noting similarities to descriptions of the project for PH as currently described. We question the need for a renaming of the project and call attention to the risk of PH exhibiting its own form of presentism while critiquing the presentism of (in) “mainstream” psychological science.

KEYWORDS: Psychological Humanities; Wilhelm Dilthey; C.P. Snow; Sigmund Koch; Philosophical and Theoretical Psychology

Riassunto Cosa c’è in un nome? Le *Psychological Humanities* e la logica del presentismo – L’uso crescente del lemma *Psychological Humanities* solleva diversi problemi, non ultimo l’ampia varietà di modi in cui questo è impiegato. Dopo aver portato l’attenzione su alcuni usi di questo lemma, ci concentreremo su una questione collegata, fin qui trattata in maniera insoddisfacente: fino a che punto le *Psychological Humanities* rappresentano un contributo e un approccio davvero innovativo e in che misura sono solo una nuova denominazione. Per affrontare questo problema, prenderemo in esame alcuni tentativi compiuti in passato per trattare il rapporto tra psicologia e discipline umanistiche. Prenderemo in considerazione l’argomento di Dilthey in favore delle “due scienze” e la posizione di C.S. Snow circa l’esistenza delle “due culture”, che offrono modelli leggermente diversi rispetto alla relazione tra scienza e discipline umanistiche. Discuteremo poi l’applicazione di questi modelli alla psicologia, seguendo dapprima lo stesso Dilthey per poi considerare il modello di Sigmund Koch, mettendo in risalto le loro affinità con le descrizioni correnti del progetto delle *Psychological Humanities*. Discuteremo poi la necessità di una nuova denominazione per questo progetto per richiamare l’attenzione sul rischio che le *Psychological Humanities* possano esibire una propria forma di presentismo mentre criticano il presentismo della scienza psicologica “mainstream”.

PAROLE CHIAVE: Psychological Humanities; Wilhelm Dilthey; C.P. Snow; Sigmund Koch; Psicologia filosofica e teoretica

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1 Introduction

RECENTLY A WAVE OF ESSAYS and papers are dedicated to a new way of conceiving the present status and the future of psychology: the *Psychological Humanities* (hereafter PH). The emergent status and normative implications of this approach are expressed, for example, in the title of the very recent publication *Toward the psychological humanities: A modest manifesto for the future of psychology* (FREEMAN 2024). Based on consideration of the subject matter and methodological implications that follow, the central idea of PH is that psychology should more explicitly incorporate if not (re)approximate the humanities or human sciences because the natural science model is either wrong or at least insufficient to deal with the full subject matter of psychological science.¹

The fact that this journal is dedicating this special issue to the topic shows how appealing the name PH seems to be to many psychologists. By and large, the presentations of PH in the psychological literature have been favorable rather than critical, though Barbara Held (2021) offers important reasons for caution and calls for greater specificity in relation to PH as a disciplinary corrective. Similarly, in her commentary on the papers in the volume *A humanities approach to the psychology of personhood* (SUGARMAN & MARTIN 2020), Suzanne Kirschner raises several important questions, including the objectives of the authors who “promote” PH (KIRSCHNER 2020, p. 115).

Although we ourselves are generally sympathetic to the sentiments behind PH, we recognize two related problems. The first is that a proliferation of divergent ideas fall under the same label (*Psychological Humanities*), leaving us unclear as to its very meaning and function, not least its coherence. The reason this is important is that PH is not merely a descriptive project. That is, if the goal of PH were not to *change* psychology substantially, either by broadening or replacing its conceptual and methodological foundations, the problem of coherence in definition or aim would be less weighty.² A second problem concerns the extent to which the concept of PH represents a theoretical novelty in psychology. We might note that some authors pay homage to past efforts to include the humanities in psychology, or in various ways to use the interpretive approaches more closely aligned with them (HELD 2021; KIRSCHNER 2020; MARTIN 2020; TEO 2017, 2020), but the relations between PH and earlier versions of a similar project have not been examined with any elaboration.

In this paper we focus principally on the second of our questions, namely the extent to which PH represents something genuinely new, and what that new contribution might be. To address this issue, we adopt a threefold strategy. First, we offer a brief examination of some of the ways PH is described,

with a comparison of the associated aims and goals. Second, we explore two historical cases of similar proposals. Third, exploring the apparent lack of historicity in contemporary literature, we discuss the logic of presentism behind those debates.

2 Psychological Humanities in contemporary debates

Descriptions of PH and its projects are quite varied. Thomas Teo, for example, understands PH in transdisciplinary terms, meaning that «psychology needs to draw on the knowledge and practices of the humanities to access extensive content and material as well as a long tradition of research on the processes and products of human mental life» (TEO 2017, p. 281). Indeed, it is specifically the «connection to scientific traditions» (p. 281) that distinguishes the psychological humanities from the humanities proper. Yet he distinguishes PH from the *medical humanities* on the grounds that the latter require debate on ethical research and practice without questioning medicine’s natural science foundation, whereas psychology’s status as a science has been debated at least since the 19th century.

Moreover, according to Teo, PH should not be conflated either with Amedeo Giorgi’s understanding of psychology as a human science, or with Rollo May’s insistence that psychology should deal with the meaning of life, or with the idea of a hermeneutic-based psychology. Although Teo does not discuss these specific differences, he claims that PH is broader than all these psychological projects; it includes, additionally, the «concept-driven social sciences» (p. 282). Among the purposes of such broadening is to augment the store of conceptual resources available for psychological theorizing, both critical and constructive (theory-building) projects. The intent is to supplement rather than replace existing resources, to show the relevance of other disciplines and thus to expand general psychology in the direction of the more transdisciplinary project he imagines that it could be. The constructive project for which Teo considers the humanities most relevant is that of building theory relating to subjectivity.

Teo later reiterates the connection of PH to the project of a broader general psychology as well as a broadened theoretical psychology, acknowledging philosophy (thus philosophical psychology) to constitute just one domain of the humanities (TEO 2019). Connecting philosophy largely with the goal of critique, he again underscores the need for constructive theoretical projects, as well as those that are reconstructive, offering a rethinking of traditional conceptualizations. He summarizes his vision more recently as follows:

Psychological humanities is an umbrella term for

the work on mental life that has been accomplished in the humanities, arts, and the social sciences. The psychological humanities, often based on hermeneutics, rely on construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction (TEO 2020, p. viii).

Jack Martin also uses the term PH to refer to his contributions to theoretical psychology. He suggests an addition to Teo's list of contributing disciplines: «*biographical studies*, understood as the study of individual lives within collective interpersonal, sociocultural, political, and historical context» (MARTIN 2017, p. 215). According to Martin, adding this biographical perspective to PH «demonstrates that there can be surprisingly little separation between the lives and works of influential psychologists» (p. 221). The idea, then, is to understand psychological theory and practices against the background of the personhood of psychologists, and to return to psychology the personal dimension, a project he elaborates with an edited volume dedicated to developing a humanities foundation for a psychology of personhood (MARTIN 2020). Contributors to the volume share their own understandings of PH, drawing from the different disciplinary sources that inspire their approaches.

An example from Martin's volume is Mark Freeman's (2020) approach to PH, which departs quite notably from that of Martin.³ Freeman similarly draws upon Teo (2017) to promote the idea of PH but diverts from the project of prioritizing critique or theory development. Instead, he expresses a desire for psychology to become more literary or poetic and less scientific – less theory focused and argumentative. Because of the narrative structure of human lives, Freeman claims, psychology has been mostly misconceived, thus «*entirely new ways of conceiving the discipline are called for*» (FREEMAN 2020, p. 30), ways that include expressive, creative projects. To deal with this literary dimension of human beings, Freeman understands psychology itself as literature, which is another way of talking about PH. More specifically, he envisions that psychologists might make “hybrid” contributions that integrate literary and poetic sensibilities with contributions to psychological knowledge, giving the example of his work on dementia. This hybrid model also serves as a basis for demarcating the territory of PH:

Perhaps this is one way of distinguishing works of pure literature from works of literary psychology, situated as part of the psychological humanities: if the former seek generally to leave conclusions and “takeaways” to readers, the latter generally seek to say something of a more declarative sort about the phenomenon or realm of phenomena being explored. In this respect, there is some measure of detachability of what is being said from the manner of its saying, but of a limited

sort, one that gestures in some direction pertinent to the phenomenon or phenomena in question but, of necessity, stops short of those more robust conclusions and takeaways that tare the norm in most psychological inquiry (pp. 42-43).

As another example from the same volume, Jeff Sugarman (2020) appeals to historical ontology to expand and complement the idea of PH. In his view, «[h]istorical ontology is an approach to studying psychological description that presumes that personhood is a historical project» (p. 84). Rooted in the work of Michel Foucault, historical ontology so conceived «entails tracing how features of persons are articulated and made intelligible, legitimated, and altered by practices of definition and exclusion» (p. 84). In contrast to Freeman's more literary project, Sugarman describes historical ontology as adding to «psychological explanation and understanding [...] investigating the self-descriptions and practices of a sociopolitical-historical context to reveal the conditions of possibility it furnishes for producing certain kinds of persons» (p. 86). In studying strategies of psychological description and self-description, this approach «exemplifies what Thomas Teo advocates as the psychological humanities» (p. 84). Once again, the reference to Teo's definition is obvious, though it is interpreted in divergent ways in keeping with different kinds of projects.

The variation in understanding the scope and meaning of PH is not out of keeping with the very broad transformation Teo envisions, of course. Moreover, we might identify a common narrative thread binding psychobiography, hybrid works of literature and psychology, and analysis based on historical ontology. At the same time, the differences in aim are glaring, especially considered against Teo's own emphasis on adding conceptual “building blocks” for theorizing subjectivity and critical reflection on the discipline and its foundations (TEO 2017, p. 288). These differences are implicated in Kirschner's helpful commentary on the chapters in the volume on PH and personhood, wherein she describes important challenges the new label PH has to face, one being «how best to articulate the rationale for drawing all of these various substantive psychological phenomena and processes, methods of inquiry, and modes of representation under a psychological humanities banner» (KIRSCHNER 2020, pp. 115-116). Similarly, in recognizing the heterogeneity of proposals in psychology that underlies the PH, she asks:

Can that label do justice to such a broad and heterogeneous assortment of objects of study and ways of knowing? Should it encompass a correspondingly varied range of assumptions about human nature, social life, and the goals of inquiry and creative work? (p. 101).

Outside the Anglo-American context, a group of scholars at Lübeck University in Germany developed a parallel conception of PH that focus on a metatheoretical level of analysis. The broader context is critique of the existing emergence of “metascience” as a basis for disciplinary critique. According to the “Lübeck model”, the label PH was created to remedy a deficit of reflection (*Reflexionsdefizit*) in psychology (both in theory and practice), and to promote the conception of a humanities-based criticism to complement or expand the existing metascience model, which uncritically invokes a myth of a single scientific method and conceptualizes psychology as a science. Psychological humanities thus provides, so to speak, a new «space for criticism, reflection, and integration» (MALICH & KELLER 2020, p. 108).⁴ Accordingly, the PH should pursue two complementary goals – integrative and reflexive:

On the one hand, they should take a humanistic and cultural-scientific look *at* psychology, its historical formation and its social context. On the other hand, they should promote the debate of theoretical and ethical questions *within* psychology that arise with respect to psychological research and practice (p. 92).

Here there is an important difference in relation to Teo’s conception of PH, in that the authors of the Lübeck model do not reject mainstream psychology – understood as a psychology modeled after the natural sciences – but try to integrate it into a broader conception of psychology *in dialogue* with the humanities.⁵ In this sense, the idea of PH has a bridging function (*Brückenfunktion*) that is absent from the Anglo-American model. Moreover, the authors insist, the new PH should not only be understood in terms of theoretical criticism; it also has an intervening function, because it develops «alongside critical positions, also concrete forms of intervention in research and practice» from productive dialogue with natural science models of psychology (p. 109).

We can see that given its broad semantic spectrum, the label PH can be used in different ways, seemingly to cover as many things as desired. Therefore, quite naturally, questions related to its meaning, coherence, aims, and applications arise. Accompanying the problem of coherence, the variation introduces a set of questions concerning the subject matter and epistemic implications: how psychological knowledge is to be conceived, to what extent generalization of knowledge is (or can be) involved, and how knowledge claims arising through PH should be evaluated.

Bracketing these problems, we focus for the remainder of the paper on one additional big question we consider to be unanswered: to what extent and in which sense does PH represent a *novelty* for

the discipline and those on its fringes? To be able to answer this second question, we will take a look first at some historical examples of similar proposals in the history of science and psychology. Then, we will discuss the delicate question of presentism in articulations of PH.

3 Historical precedents

The term PH is new in the literature, but it echoes earlier efforts, a long path already trodden. In this section, our goal is to explore some similar conceptions that historically preceded that idea and influenced theoretical debates on the nature and scope of psychology. Some of these are acknowledged as precedents, especially in Teo’s writing (TEO 2017), but there is little detailed analysis of the similarities available. In our more focused exploration of historical precedents, we examine both the general philosophical foundations and their direct applications to psychology. Although much could be written on both relevant philosophical precedents and applications to psychology, here we have space for detailed discussion of only two examples.

We first review (1) Wilhelm Dilthey’s (1833-1911) distinction between the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*)⁶ and the natural sciences (*Naturwissenschaften*), and (2) Charles Percy Snow’s (1905-1980) division of the intellectual world into two cultures.⁷ Then, we will show how those ideas were applied to psychology, more specifically by Dilthey himself and by Sigmund Koch (1917-1996).⁸ The point of this exercise is to provide a basis for reviewing some of the central ontological, epistemic, and methodological aims of Dilthey and Snow. The hope is that this may invite further exploration of their relation to the claims of proponents of the PH.

3.1 Two sciences

Although the term *Geisteswissenschaften* was not coined by Dilthey, there is no doubt that he established its first systematic definition and use, which has generated debates in the German culture and beyond since the end of the nineteenth century. In fact, the term can be traced back to the eighteenth century and the tradition of German Idealism, in which the *Geist* (spirit) appears as a central concept. However, no precise meaning was associated with it before Dilthey.⁹

It was in 1883, in his *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften* [*Introduction to Human Sciences*], that Dilthey first presented his systematic conception thereof, which remained incomplete despite his later writings on the foundations of the human sciences (MAKKREEL & RODI 1984b). However, before the publication of his *Einleitung*, Dilthey had already struggled with the idea of a

group of sciences that differed in principle from the natural sciences, for which he used other terms related to the human sciences, such as cultural sciences, sciences of the spirit, moral-political sciences, and sciences of man, society, and history.¹⁰

Two questions are most relevant to the comparison with PH: (1) how did Dilthey justify the distinction between the human and the natural sciences? and (2) what is the meaning and reference of the concept of *Geisteswissenschaften*?

The first thing to note is that Dilthey's point of departure is the achievements of the so-called Historical School and the studies of historical and cultural phenomena.¹¹ This school, according to Dilthey, «has, in short, no philosophical foundation. Lacking a healthy relationship to epistemology and psychology, this school has not attained an explanatory method» (DILTHEY 1989, p. 48).¹² Thus, he explains, «there arose in me both a need and a plan for the foundation of the human sciences» (p. 49).

Such a foundation can be understood at three different levels: ontological, epistemological, and methodological. In other words, Dilthey wants to show that socio-historical reality (the human society or the historical and cultural phenomena) is unique and not reducible to other aspects of the world, thus constituting a distinctive subject matter for scientific investigation; that the conditions of knowing human culture and society are not the same as of knowing nature; and that the methods used by both groups of sciences, therefore, must be different.

As a starting point, it is important to understand what Dilthey means by science in general (*Wissenschaft*) before the human and the natural science dichotomy can be made meaningful. "In general" means that there are at least some basic characteristics that both groups of sciences must share with each other. In Dilthey's words:

By a "science" we commonly mean a complex of propositions (1) whose elements are concepts that are completely defined, i.e., permanently and universally valid within the overall logical system, (2) whose connections are well grounded, and (3) in which finally the parts are connected into a whole for the purpose of communication (pp. 56-57).

Now, if there is science in general, why do we need to divide it into two groups? Here we have the first level of distinction. Dilthey refers to the spirit (*Geist*) to indicate the central source that gives unity to all human sciences: «the depth and totality of human self-consciousness» (p. 58). In other words, the facts that constitute the socio-historical reality derive from human self-consciousness, which possesses an ontological specificity when compared to other natural (material) phenomena.

Even before he is concerned to investigate the

origin of human spirit, man finds within his self-consciousness a sovereignty of the will, a responsibility for actions, a capacity for subjecting everything to thought and for resisting, from within the stronghold of personal freedom, any and every encroachment. *This differentiates him from the rest of nature. He exists in nature as a realm within a realm* (p. 58, our emphasis).

Dilthey appeals to freedom and the sovereignty of the will as the hallmarks of the ontological uniqueness of human beings; this is given in the facts of consciousness. There is an incommensurability between nature and mind (spirit), in that freedom contrasts with the natural necessity of physical facts and acts of the will conflict with the mechanical forces of nature.¹³ As a result, Dilthey affirms, «acts of the will generate a development in the person and in mankind that is more than the empty and tedious recapitulation in consciousness of the course of nature» (p. 59).

However, this first incommensurability that shows the inherent limits of our experience (facts of consciousness and physical facts) is not sufficient to ground the distinction between the human and the natural sciences. There is also an epistemic limit, «in that the facts of the human world cannot be subordinated to those established by the mechanic conception of nature» (p. 63). In other words, our knowledge of nature is different from our knowledge of the human world to the extent that the facts of the human order cannot be interpreted, classified, or known as aspects of the material order (atoms, particles, physical systems, etc.). In this sense, it is not possible «to subordinate relations among the facts in the one region to those among facts in the other» (p. 64). This does not mean, for Dilthey, that spirit and nature are completely independent of each other, as if there were no relationships at all between them. On the contrary, the basic unity of analysis in the human sciences is the psychophysical individual, whose mental life is identifiable and separable from their physical conditions «only by means of abstraction» (p. 67). From these life-units (psychophysical individuals), society, cultural systems, and history arise. In this way, we can say that the subject matter of the human sciences comprises those life-units in their socio-historical connection, thus forming a totality in itself.

Dilthey speaks of the human sciences in the plural because all contribute to the project of knowing socio-historical reality as a whole. Moreover, they share the same goals: «to apprehend what is singular and individual in socio-historical reality, to recognize the uniformities operative in its formation, and to establish goals and rules for its further development» (p. 79). Because this can only be done through division of labor, each human science takes a particular piece of the pie, by «isolating a partial content of socio-historical re-

ality» (p. 79). Consequently, each human science «knows socio-historical reality only in a relative way, with an awareness of that discipline's connection to other human sciences» (pp. 69-70).

After establishing the meaning of Dilthey's concept of the *Geisteswissenschaften* – those sciences that investigate socio-historical reality – it is worth examining its reference. To which sciences does Dilthey refer? Does he mean ideal sciences to be formed in the future or the present imperfect ones? In the first place, psychology or anthropology have as their object «merely the individual who has been singled out from the living context of socio-historical reality» (p. 82). We should understand it as the most basic human science, because it «provides the basis of all knowledge of historical life, as well as of all rules for the guidance and further development of society» (p. 83).¹⁴ However, the number of human sciences or disciplines Dilthey envisions is almost infinite: history, political science, ethnology or comparative anthropology, ethics, jurisprudence, philology, etc. On the other hand, the natural sciences comprise physics, chemistry, biology, geology, and the like.

The last point to make here concerns the methodological justification for the distinction between the natural and the human sciences. It is not uncommon to focus only on this methodological side of Dilthey's proposal, ignoring its ontological and epistemic foundations. But the two are inseparable. He reasons that as we have two modes of experience and two ways of knowing reality, it is natural to assume that we must also have two methods for studying it. This is precisely what he proposes, by distinguishing between the method of understanding (*Verstehen*) the human world and the method of explaining (*Erklären*) natural facts:

The term “understanding,” as it first applied to an individual inner state, designates the interpretation of that psychic state in the context of the whole of psychic life and conditioned by its milieu. In the realm of human affairs this (term) corresponds to what we designate as “explanation” in the realm of knowledge of nature. Strictly speaking, explanations of human affairs can be expected only to the extent that a reduction to exactly definable (and preferably quantitatively determinable) external facts is possible. But understanding is the domain of all who are actively involved in human affairs, and differs from explanation by participating in life, which is possible only on the basis of life. Life is the great object as well as the organon of those who are concerned with human affairs. (p. 439)

3.2 Two cultures

If Dilthey was principally responsible for the establishment of a scientific division in the Ger-

man-speaking world, a British author helped reinforce and popularize a similar rift between two intellectual traditions in the English-speaking world. Almost a century after Dilthey, C. P. Snow claimed in a public lecture in Cambridge that there is an insurmountable clash between the humanistic and the scientific worlds, for which he used the expression “two cultures”.¹⁵ For Snow, it is not a British problem alone, «this is a problem of the entire West» (SNOW 2012a, p. 3). The central tenet of Snow's idea is that Western societies are split into two polarized groups of intellectuals who have different worldviews and attitudes, each with a distinctive emotional tone. On the one hand are scientists; on the other, literary intellectuals or non-scientists. The deep differences between these two groups (for him, poles) entail more than academic specialty or interest but reflect entrenched differences in *culture*, thus they invite mutual misunderstanding and even derision:

Literary intellectuals at one pole – at the other scientists, and as the most representative, the physical scientists. Between the two a gulf of mutual incomprehension – sometimes (particularly among the young) hostility and dislike, but most of all lack of understanding. They have a curious distorted image of each other. Their attitudes are so different that, even on the level of emotion, they can't find much common ground (p. 4).

Snow does not understand the divide in terms of two kinds of science, but in terms of a division between science and what he calls non-science. This can be explained by the fact that, since the second half of the nineteenth century in Britain, the word “science” means “natural science”, and “scientist” was a label applied only to those trained in physics, chemistry, biology, engineering, and similar fields (ROSS 1962). This implies that humanistic disciplines are not scientific at all, leading Snow to speak of two cultures – the scientific and the non-scientific – instead of two sciences.

At one pole, the scientific culture really is a culture, not only in an intellectual but also in an anthropological sense. That is, its members need not, and of course often do not, always completely understand each other; biologists more often than not will have a pretty hazy idea of contemporary physics; but there are common attitudes, common standards and patterns of behaviour, common approaches and assumptions. This goes surprisingly wide and deep. It cuts across other mental patterns, such as those of religion or politics or class. [...] In their working, and in much of their emotional life, their attitudes are closer to other scientists than to non-scientists who in religion

or politics or class have the same labels as themselves. If I were to risk a piece of short-hand, I should say that naturally they had the future in their bones (SNOW 2012a, pp. 9-10).

Of interest is that Snow defines the nonscientific – the literary – as the traditional one, the hallmark of which is a «total incomprehension of science» (p. 11). Moreover, he insists, it tends to become *anti*-scientific. He also equates commitment to science with an orientation toward the future and toward solving humanity's problems: Thus, «[i]f the scientists have the future in their bones, then the traditional culture responds by wishing the future did not exist» (p. 11).

Important to note is Snow's conception of culture, which he originally left implicit. It was only in his second look at the previous paper that he made this clear, noting that «[t]he term "culture" in my title has two meanings, both of which are precisely applicable to the theme. First, "culture" has the sense of the dictionary definition, "intellectual development, development of the mind» (SNOW 2012b, p. 62). It was the second meaning, however, that motivated him to use the term:

The word "culture" has a second and technical meaning, which I pointed out explicitly in the original lecture. It is used by anthropologists to denote a group of persons living in the same environment, linked by common habits, common assumptions, a common way of life. [...] For scientists on the one side, literary intellectuals on the other, do in fact exist as cultures within the anthropological scope (SNOW 2012a, p. 64).

But the two cultures polarity also points toward another direction of division, which includes a defense of industrialization and its social impact. In the second part of his essay, Snow claims that science and industrial revolution go hand in hand, whereas the traditional (non-scientific) culture rejects it: If we forget the scientific culture, then the rest of western intellectuals have never tried, wanted, or been able to understand the industrial revolution, much less accept it. Intellectuals, in particular literary intellectuals, are natural Ludites» (p. 22).¹⁶ With such an attack on the non-scientists, Snow leaves anthropology and enters the arena of social or political criticism.

Snow's implied goal is to praise the industrial and scientific revolution and bring its benefits to the non-industrialized nations, thereby closing the gap between the rich and poor peoples. However, the two cultures polarization is an obstacle to reaching this social goal: «the West has got to help in this transformation. The trouble is, the West with its divided culture finds it hard to grasp just how big, and above all just how fast, the transformation must be» (p. 42). It would seem natural

to assume that the best solution is to close the cultural gap. This can only be accomplished through education,¹⁷ without which «the West can't even begin to cope». So, Snow insists, «[c]losing the gap between our cultures is a necessity in the most abstract intellectual sense, as well as in the most practical» (p. 50).

In sum, Snow seems to see the two cultures polarization as a social problem rather than a purely intellectual one. This is to say that the social consequences, as he understands them, namely a deep cultural divide forestalling social progress, are more important and far-reaching than the academic ones. Dilthey, by contrast, wants to defend the legitimacy of the human sciences on a par with the natural sciences. He does not address the social consequences of this division, neither does he acknowledge any problem in it. Both authors, however, point toward and affirm a deep divide, even a dichotomy. The poles assumed by each, though overlapping, are not exactly the same. Nevertheless, both dichotomies, as we shall see, contributed to prominent ways of understanding the conceptual and methodological situation of psychology, the current cultural divides it exhibits, of which the recent interest in PH is symptomatic.

3.3 Applications to psychology

In addition to understanding the historical and conceptual roots of the dichotomous positioning of natural and human science and of literary and scientific cultures, it is important to examine in some detail how psychology applied these to its own complicated discipline. We can begin by noting an important difference between the two examples we gave. Whereas Dilthey himself addressed the problem of psychology, as we discuss below, Snow did not comment on the status of psychological science. Instead, a psychologist referred to his idea to explain how psychologists should conceive of their discipline in a more expansive way, as we discuss in section 3.3.2.

3.3.1 Two psychologies

Historically, of course, Dilthey came first. In his paper *Ideen über eine beschreibende und zergliedernde Psychologie* (*Ideas concerning a descriptive and analytic psychology*), written in 1894, he applied his distinction between the natural and the human sciences to psychological science, thus splitting the latter into two autonomous parts – an explanatory and a descriptive-analytic psychology, respectively (DILTHEY 1977a).

When in 1883 Dilthey officially proposed a new foundation for the human sciences, he made it clear that psychology played a central role therein: «psychology is the first and most fundamental of the particular human sciences» (DILTHEY

1989, p. 84).¹⁸ The reason is that socio-historical reality is formed from psychophysical individuals, which Dilthey calls life-units, «given as facts in inner experience» (p. 80). The individual, then, is the subject matter of Dilthey's psychology. Moreover, an opposition between descriptive and explanatory psychology was also pronounced in his *Einleitung*. To be foundational, psychology must stay «within the limits of a descriptive discipline that establishes facts and uniformities among facts. It must clearly distinguish itself from explanatory psychology, which strives to derive the whole human, cultural world by means of certain assumptions» (p. 84).

Dilthey's project was not one of neutral description. By splitting psychology into two, Dilthey essentially defended the descriptive-analytic direction to the detriment of the explanatory one. Explanatory psychology, for Dilthey, is every psychology that adopts the model of the natural sciences,¹⁹ that «seeks to subordinate the manifestations of mental life to a causal system by means of a number of well-determined elements» (DILTHEY 1977a, p. 23).²⁰ For such a subordination, hypotheses or inferences must necessarily go beyond the phenomena. For example, when psychologists explain all mental processes as causally constructed from sensations and feelings, this is a kind of explanatory psychology. The problem, as Dilthey sees it, is the loss of what really matters for psychological analysis, psychological life, and human nature in its completeness:

Explanatory psychology arose from the analysis of perception and memory. The core of it was constituted from the beginning by elements – such as sensations, representations, agreeable and disagreeable affects – as well as by the processes among them, notably that of association, to which they were subsequently added, as other explanatory operations, apperception and fusion. It therefore did not have for its object the totality of human nature and the full content of the psychic nexus (p. 39).

That is the central point. For Dilthey, “no real blood flows” in this kind of psychology. Psychological analysis must deal with the totality of life as it is given in consciousness, not as broken down and analyzed in elements. «In psychology it is precisely the connectedness which is originally and continually given in lived experience [*Erleben*]: life exists everywhere only as a nexus or coherent whole» (p. 28). As a consequence, a specific kind of psychology – as a counterpart to explanatory psychology – is necessary:

By descriptive psychology I understand the presentation of the components and continua which one finds uniformly throughout all developed modes of human psychic life, where these

components form a unique nexus which is neither added nor deduced, but rather is concrete lived [*erlebt*]. This psychology is thus the description and analysis of a nexus which is originally and continuously given as life itself (p. 35).

To complete this task, Dilthey's psychology cannot study children or animals. Its object must be «the developed human, the completely evolved psychic life» (p. 52). In this sense, it is not only descriptive but analytic: «psychic life must be described and as far as possible analyzed in all of its reality» (p. 53). That is, it describes the mental nexus as a whole and decouples its parts, yet without losing sight of their connectedness.

Also worth noting is that Dilthey understands that which is given immediately in inner experience in terms of the tripartite structure of the mind: intellect, feeling, and the will – «the three great connected components of psychic life» (p. 62). That is how real life manifests itself to us. But this kind of individual psychological analyses faces some limits, to the extent that the genesis of our psychic nexus usually is not given immediately, it stands beyond human consciousness. For that reason, Dilthey's proposal also includes a kind of comparative psychology, which focuses on cultural products of the mind, such as language, myth, religion, customs, law, etc. These are objectifications of the human mind, which require new procedures:

This analysis of the products of human spirit – destined to open for us a glance at the genesis of the psychic nexus, of its forms and its action – must, in addition to the analysis of historical products, observe and collect everything which it can seize of the *historical processes* wherein such a nexus becomes constituted. It is precisely on the combination of these two methods that every historical study of the genesis, forms and action of the psychic nexus in man depends (p. 63).

An important question at this juncture concerns what aspects of real mental life are absent from explanatory psychology but should be included for the more holistic psychology he envisions? There are many things to name, but here, we will mention only the approximation between psychological analysis and literature. According to Dilthey, descriptive psychology would profit from considering the categories and analysis of poets and great writers, who can shed light on the depths of inner life:

But there is certainly a problem to resolve and matter for reflection for psychology in the manner in which the great writers and poets treat human life. One finds with them, in effect, an intuitive understanding of the whole of the en-

semble which psychology must equally strive to attain in its own ways [...] And, one can only hope for the existence of a psychology capable of seizing in the web of its descriptions what, up until now, one encounters particularly with these writers and poets: a psychology making use of the deeply penetrating thoughts of St. Augustine, Pascal or Lichtenberg, having such singularly dazzling illumination, in a generally valid system, first for a knowledge of man. Only a descriptive and analytical psychology can hope to resolve this problem (pp. 36-37).

In his inclusion of both literary and philosophic/theological examples, we can see Dilthey's vision of a necessary encounter between psychology and the humanities.

3.3.2 Psychological studies

In the second half of the twentieth century, psychologist Sigmund Koch complained that regarding the science-humanism antinomy, «[p]sychologists have been strangely silent» (KOCH 1961, p. 629). His intention was to break that silence and announce the role psychology should play in this debate. Here, Koch locates his contribution within the context of the two cultures distinction championed by Snow:

In his provocative anatomy of the two cultures, it is clear that by the "traditional" he has broadly in mind the humanistic culture, while by the "scientific" he means specifically the physicist-engineer culture. He leaves psychology and social science out of the picture and thereby, I think, effects a serious distortion. For, one of the unique features of psychology is precisely that this is an area at which the two cultures must be in contact (KOCH, p. 637).

For Koch, the problem is that Snow excluded psychology from his characterization, thus failing to recognize the prospects for psychology to serve as a kind of bridge between the two isolated cultures. Koch claims that «the position of psychology must be given special, if not central, attention [...] psychology, then, might be seen as a third force» (p. 629). By being a third force, psychology, then, would «fill up the gap separating the contenders» (p. 629).

Koch analyzes psychology and its situation at two different levels, or with two different vantage points. On one hand, he is diagnosing the present status of psychology in the beginning of the 1960s, a diagnosis which considers the discipline historically. On the other, looking toward the future, he is foreseeing a modified form of psychological science. Psychology, then, would be in a transition phase at that point in its history.

According to Koch's diagnosis, in the first half of the twentieth century psychology turned its back to the humanistic aspects of its content, thus reinforcing the scientific culture to the detriment of the humanities.

Ever since its stipulation into existence as an independent science, psychology has been far more concerned with being a science than with courageous and self-determining confrontation of its historically constituted subject matter. [...] In so doing, there has been an inevitable tendency to retreat from broad and intensely significant ranges of its subject matter, and to form rationales for so doing which could only invite further retreat. There has thus been, at least until very recently, an ever widening estrangement between the scientific makers of human science and the humanistic explorers of the content of man (pp. 629-630).

Given the distance that separates us from Koch's original context, it is helpful to clarify what he is referring to in his diagnosis. He means the influence of «logical positivism, operationism, neopragmatism, and related movements» (p. 630), which dominated American psychology in the first half of the twentieth century.²¹ It becomes evident, too, that his diagnosis applies mostly to the psychological tradition in North America.

One might ask why psychology has followed the problematic path Koch described. His answer is that two limitations are to blame. Importantly, he locates the limitations in both education and in *persons*; they are limitations of both the educational background and the dispositional qualities of those who pursue a career in psychology. First, psychologists typically have scarce, if any, background in the humanities. Second, and more intractable, is that the majority lack «sensibilities at esthetic levels and even as savors of experience» (p. 630). For Koch, the second limitation is worse than the first one, though they are related. For this reason, he defends a return to concrete experience and appeals to psychologists to cultivate more sensibility to human experience. On the other hand, he upholds the importance of the scientific temperament for psychologists, thus advocating a kind of fusion of the dispositional qualities typically associated with science and the humanities:

[M]ajor psychological problems cannot be embraced except in terms of levels of experiential sensitivity commonly cultivated, in the past, only in the humanities. [...] we need a new kind of psychologist who fuses a scientific temperament with a humanistic sensibility, and perhaps a subspecies of humanist with a similar admixture of traits (p. 631).

In the first part of his monumental six-volume

Psychology: The Study of a Science, Koch had already perceived some signs of change that could shape psychology's future (KOCH 1959b). Here, again, he mentions the existence of such a tendency, which predisposes psychology to transform itself toward a reconciliation with humanism. For Koch, there are two factors pushing psychology in this direction. There is first an internal movement:

Behaviorist epistemology is under stress; neo-behaviorism on the defensive; while neo-behaviorism enfolds itself in a womb of its own manufacture. There is a strongly increased interest in perception and central process, even on the part of S-R theorists: in fact a tendency for the central area of psychological interest to shift from learning to perception. There is a marked, if as yet unfocused, disposition on the part of *even* fundamental psychologists to readdress human phenomena and to readmit questions having experiential reference (p. 630).

The second sign of change comes from without, reflecting «the changing image of the nature of science projected by the philosophy of science» (p. 631). Koch means here the Polish philosopher Jacob Bronowski (1908-1974) and the Hungarian-British polymath Michael Polanyi (1891-1976), who had recently published two influential books on the nature of science, defending a new philosophy of science foregrounding the importance of the particularity and personhood of the scientist (BRONOWSKI 1956; POLANYI 1958).²² What both show, Koch notes, is that «science, especially at theoretical levels, involves creative processes which no formalism can reduce to rule, processes in fact not dissimilar to those mediating the activity of poets, artists, historians, and other residents on the other side of the barricades» (KOCH 1961, p. 631).

In returning to human concrete experience, Koch insists that psychology should open itself to phenomena that have intrinsic properties – which he calls “value properties” (p. 633), instead of emphasizing only extrinsic goal-directed behavior. For example, even very common and everyday human activities such as cooking, eating, and looking at a painting involve much more than the satisfaction of drives or needs and the search for an organism's equilibrium. There are values involved, which are the real motivators of those activities.

The final point Koch emphasizes is the need for a new psychological language. To isolate and identify such value-laden phenomena, new categories are necessary, as the old ones are limited to the extrinsic properties of behavior:

to approach these matters, we will have to learn to attach language to experience with a new kind of specificity. We will have to arrive at a

highly differentiated set of metaphors, each of which is isomorphic with a significant relational aspect of experiential process, and learn to use these *intersubjectively* – i.e., so as to achieve reliability of communication among groups having relevant sensitivity, but not necessarily esoteric levels thereof (p. 636).

In a later paper, Koch (1999) referred once again to Snow's two cultures thesis. This time, however, instead of addressing the science-humanism problem, Koch tried to look behind that division to find the reason underlying the basic antagonism. The problem, as he understood now, was that both sides of the war suffered from a kind of cognitive pathology, which he termed «meaningful thinking» (p. 234), the main characteristics of which are method fetishism and a-ontologism. Although this affects all sciences and humanities in his view, he used «psychology as a kind of clinical exhibit of the resulting syndrome» (p. 257).

Although our purpose here is not to explore Koch's theory as a whole, only to show that his position makes use of the science-humanism dichotomy, it is important to note that his defense of a rapprochement between psychology and humanities does not imply a kind of “anything goes” approach. In all his papers he forwards a more balanced position, one which tries to preserve the positive advances of scientific, experimental psychology while acknowledging the limitations of exclusive reliance on this approach. In this sense, the mere emergence of the movement of humanistic psychology cannot be considered a realization of Koch's proposal, given his trenchant critique of the latter (KOCH 1973), nor can social constructionists consider themselves to be his heirs, as he makes explicit in one of his last writings:

But in my now ancient invitation that psychology, in many humanly relevant areas, pattern itself more on the humanities than on the sciences, I was thinking of different strands within the humanities. I was also suggesting that psychologists be selected and trained relative to humanistic sensibility rather more than has been the case. I think it more important to be deeply conversant with a few great texts than to proclaim that human beings can be read as texts. Or that they *are* texts! (KOCH 1992, p. 965).

In the end, Koch gave up the idea of approaching psychology as a single, coherent science or discipline and proposed instead the label “psychological studies” that is, «a collection of studies of varied cast, some few of which may qualify as science, whereas most do not» (KOCH 1993, p. 902). With what seems the proposal of an interdisciplinary project, one in the spirit of more recent disciplinary hybrids such as “media studies”, Koch still

defended the rapprochement with the humanities:

But psychologists must finally accept the circumstance that extensive and important regions of psychological study require modes of inquiry (and correlative researcher sensibilities and training backgrounds) rather more like those of the humanities than those of the sciences (p. 903).

Although Koch's project has yet to be fully realized, its fundamental similarity to PH is undeniable, both in ontological and methodological foundations. For this reason we question the reason for a need to rebrand the effort and explore the possibility that PH is inflected with an unwitting but unhelpful presentism.

4 Psychological Humanities and the logic of presentism

We return to our central question: To what extent do current articulations of and calls for PH constitute genuinely new movements in psychology? We are led to the conclusion that there is very little that is genuinely new. Or perhaps more charitably, what is genuinely new in PH requires clarification on the part of those who promote it. As we have seen, one of the challenges Kirschner (2020) raises for PH is that of lumping together many disparate intellectual efforts to establish a contrast class to psychological science:

If psychology's prevailing scientism has had a procrustean effect on both the questions and the answers afforded by this discipline, could there be analogous risks in framing everything else as humanities? (p. 102).

We wish to underscore a related but somewhat different risk in the effort to establish an alternative to psychological science, namely a presentism that can creep into disciplinary prescriptions. In his recent Foreword, Teo (2020) calls out in the scientific discipline of psychology (the bulk of psychology that is not based on the humanities) what he casts as "*the logic of presentism*", meaning that «studies older than five (or x) years are considered outdated, without explanation» (p. vii). There can be little doubt of the accuracy of Teo's diagnosis regarding a great many psychological publications and in the education of psychologists. However, it is important to question whether alternatives to scientific psychology can avoid the same disease.

We understand presentism here as a historiographic category, related to the ways in which the history of science is referred to, narrated, or explained.²³ In its simplest sense, it means seeing the past through the present. Thus, there is the permanent risk of obliterating, distorting, abusing, or

ignoring the past (intentionally or not) because of our present choices, categories, and parameters. In a certain sense, presentism is unavoidable, to the extent that we live in the present and have no means to access the past except through the present, with our research problems and practices oriented by our current interests and perspectives. To varying degrees we are all presentists (e.g., JARDINE 2000; ORESKES 2013; SMITH 1988). However, dangers are minimized or at least reduced if we can be conscious of our own perspectives and know how they may constrain our knowledge claims. Self-critique and self-awareness seem to be part of the solution here. Yet it is never clear to what *extent* we can counterbalance the risks of presentism in understanding the current situation and the historical development of science in general, and of psychology in particular.

In the historiography of science, presentism has been understood in different ways and classified along distinct types (e.g., CHANG 2021; LOISON 2016; ORESKES 2013). Here, we want to distinguish two kinds of presentism relevant for our discussion of PH. In the first place, there is what British historian Herbert Butterfield (1900-1979) called «the Whig interpretation of history» (BUTTERFIELD 1931) or whiggism: the idea that we make abridgments of history and see the present as in a better situation in relation to the past. Second, and related to the first kind, there is what we call *conceptual-remaking presentism*: the idea that new terms represent advances in relation to the past, by displaying some continuity with the tradition and at the same time introducing novelty, without explanation. We may ask, then, whether articulations of PH would not indulge in one of these forms of presentism.

In our discussion, it is important to separate those cases with historical references from those where none is to be found. For instance, Teo (2017) refers to both Dilthey and Snow as historical antecedents of PH. He even claims that «[p]erhaps the project of the psychological humanities can be attributed to Dilthey» (TEO 2020, p. viii). However, despite such historical attributions, there is no further discussion on how the PH would relate to Dilthey's proposal, given the fact that the latter is perhaps the origin of the very project at hand. Is the current opposition in psychology essentially the same as that envisioned by Dilthey, despite the new modes? Is scientific psychology committing today the same mistake of ignoring its relationship with the humanities? In which sense does the prominence of psychology in Dilthey's first program for the human sciences contrast with PH? Most importantly, if everything remains the same, why do we need a new label such as PH? If everything is not the same, what, exactly, is new?

We contend that to make a list of contempo-

rary intellectual currents such as post-structuralist, post-colonialist, and gender studies is not enough to answer those questions. Merely acknowledging the past is not sufficient to show continuity with it. Therefore, in the absence of these clarifications, it is impossible to know whether we are merely repeating Dilthey's idea disguised in a new label or whether there is something genuinely and substantively novel in PH as currently conceptualized.

Indeed, most proposals of the PH do not refer to those historical cases but instead make reference to other historical influences or else do not include discussion of historical precedents such as Dilthey. For example, Sugarmann (2020) understands PH as related to «the study of psychological description» (p. 84). However, he links psychological description to Ian Hacking's historical ontology (HACKING 2002), not to Dilthey. Mark Freeman (2020) calls for a psychology as literature that takes into account the narrative structure of human life, a position he grounds on the works of Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005) and Stephen Toulmin (1922-2009), among others. In his papers related to PH, Jack Martin defends a new psychology of persons and their lives (MARTIN 2017, 2020a, 2020b). Regarding its methods, Martin claims, «[a] form of life writing that holds particular significance for psychology, especially the psychology of personhood, is biography» (MARTIN 2020b, p. 50), and we might note Dilthey's insistence that biographical description is a fundamental part of a true psychology (DILTHEY 1989: 85-86). Finally, Malich and Keller (2020) set as one of the goals of the PH to analyze psychology from the point of view of the *Geisteswissenschaften*, acknowledging the German origins of the Lübeck model of PH, though no mention to Dilthey is to be found there.

It seems, then, that there are two signs of presentism in PH discussions. First, historical references to Dilthey and others are made with the sole purpose of preparing for the new proposal, but without explanation of PH's close ties to the past. In this way, one can say that history is used ahistorically, which is a facet of the logic of presentism. Second, we find in some instances the complete lack of historical references to Dilthey and others in the nineteenth century, as if psychology were in a completely new and unique situation of a divide between two models (natural science and humanities) to be solved by the conception of PH.

Similarly, we note the near complete silence on Sigmund Koch's similar proposal of a rapprochement between psychology and the humanities, one which he first articulated approximately 60 years ago and repeated forcefully toward the end of his life (e.g., KOCH 1961, 1993, 1999). Moreover, he was involved with the establishment of APA's Division 24 (*Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*) because of psychologists' attempts to come closer to phenomenology, existentialism and the humanistic movement

in general (ARAUJO 2019; WILLIAMS 1999). Is there a reason for such neglect of Koch or is it inadvertent? Is his proposal for the psychological studies outdated or wrong in a sense that PH is not?

To ignore Koch and his proposal without explanation is to erase or at least obscure the past, as if everything must sound like a new idea. And this is precisely what we call conceptual-remaking presentism. If it is important to rebrand the idea, it is then, and only then, that a new name plays its role, and the rationale for such rebranding should be logically defended. However, erasing or ignoring the past is not something a historically based psychology or PH can afford. It runs the risk of falling into a contradiction in terms and invites the logic of presentism to strike back.

5 Concluding remarks

Although supportive of recent calls to expand the disciplinary boundaries of psychology with deliberate inclusion of the humanities, we align with Held (2021) and Kirschner (2020) in noting that more precise conceptualizations are needed in order for PH to realize its intended aims. We have called attention to two problems, first the variety of conceptions of PH and the questions concerning their relation to one another; second the uncertain relation of contemporary calls for PH to the similar projects of the past. After examining similarities in the positions of Dilthey and Koch, we ended with a cautionary note about the dangers of presentism even in approaches to psychology that seek to overcome them.

Notes

¹ In the literature we are considering here, terms such as "humanities", "human sciences", and "humanism" are often conjoined as an implied contrast class either to natural science in general or just "scientism". We are aware, however, that all these terms can be used in more specific ways, depending on the authors' goals.

² Mark Freeman (2024), for instance, affirms that his proposal «embodies a quite contestable image of what the discipline ought to be – one that flies in the face of many of its most thoroughgoing and long-standing commitments» (p. 4).

³ In his more recent book, Freeman (2024) acknowledges that «it is but one version, or one dimension, of what the psychological humanities might be» (p. 4).

⁴ Translations from the German are made by the first author.

⁵ Here, we cannot help but noting that the very label "mainstream psychology" is misleading, to the extent that it refers to a certain illusory unity in psychology. Even if we take experimental psychology, in particular, its theoretical foundations and methods are so diverse – and sometimes incompatible – that it becomes difficult to point out what is "mainstream" and what is not. As a rhetorical device, however, the label plays an important role in giving cohesion to a vague idea of iden-

tifying and excluding an alleged enemy.

⁶ In the English-speaking tradition, Dilthey's *Geisteswissenschaften* has been usually translated either as "human studies" (RICKMAN 1976, pp. 1-31) or "human sciences" (MAKKREEL & RODI 1989, p. xiii). We will follow here the latter suggestion, as applied to the six volumes of Dilthey's *Selected Works*, edited by Rudolph Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi, which is the standard reference work in English. In this sense, the human sciences comprise the humanities, the social sciences, and at least part of psychology.

⁷ These are not the only examples, though. We might, for instance, explore the distinction between the nomothetic and the idiographic sciences (*die nomothetischen und die idiographischen Wissenschaften*) – first proposed by Wilhelm Windelband (1848-1915) – in the aftermath of Dilthey's proposal (WINDELBAND 1894). Windelband's idea, first applied to psychology by Hugo Münsterberg (1863-1916) in his 1898 Presidential Address to American Psychological Association (Münsterberg, 1899), also appeared in subsequent theoretical debates in psychology (e.g., BELTZ *et al.*, 2016; LAMIELL 1998; SALVATORE & VALSINER 2010; THOMAE 1999). However, it is not our goal here to offer an account of all historical antecedents of PH, only some examples.

⁸ In none of our analyzes, however, do we intend to offer a full account of Dilthey's or Snow's positions. Our sole intention is to identify the main points of contact with contemporary debates, so as to make our concerns about presentism clear.

⁹ For the historical reconstitution of the term and the concept, see, for example, Diemer (1974), Dierse (2003), Hamann (2014), Makkreel (2012), Riedel (1995), and Teichert (2011).

¹⁰ For a detailed account of Dilthey's development prior to the *Einleitung*, see Hans-Ulrich Lessing's in depth studies (LESSING 1984, 2001).

¹¹ By Historical School Dilthey means a group of historians, jurists, philologists, and politicians who shared the view that historical and social phenomena can be studied only from the point of view of their concrete development, in opposition to the abstract standpoint of those who seek general laws behind the historical world.

¹² We follow here the English translation of the first volume of Dilthey's *Gesammelte Schriften*, edited by Rudolph Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi, and published by Princeton University Press (DILTHEY 1989).

¹³ It is important, however, not to understand the *Geist* or spiritual dimension of the world in terms of a metaphysical substance or supernatural agent, as if human individuals were purely spiritual as opposed to material beings. For Dilthey, humans are concrete, psychophysical life-units.

¹⁴ In the next section, we will explore the specificity of Dilthey's psychology.

¹⁵ Snow had already announced the central idea of his Cambridge lecture in a short article published in a British newspaper three years before (SNOW 1956). However, it was his Cambridge lecture that sparked the debates and controversies. For an overview, see Collini (2012) and Ortolano (2008).

¹⁶ Reference to the nineteenth-century workers and craftsmen in England who protested against the industrial revolution, and whose leader was Ned Ludd.

¹⁷ In his second look, Snow reinforced the central role of education: «there is, of course, no complete solution. [...] But we can do something. The chief means open to us is education – education mainly in primary and sec-

ondary schools, but also in colleges and universities» (SNOW 2012b, p. 61).

¹⁸ It must not be forgotten, however, that Dilthey's initial enthusiasm with descriptive and analytic psychology gave place to a more nuanced position, in which hermeneutics played a central role. In his final writings, according to Makkreel (1977), «most processes of understanding no longer begin with the psychological description of inner experience, but with expressions or *objectifications* of experience» (MAKKREEL 1977, p. 12). For a good example thereof, see Dilthey (1977b). However, we will not explore this dimension of Dilthey's theory of interpretation here.

¹⁹ To add historical context, Dilthey himself considered the German philosopher Theodor Waitz (1821-1864) the founder of explanatory psychology (Waitz, 1849). Hermann Ebbinghaus (1850-1909), who replied to Dilthey's paper, also offers a clear example thereof (EBBINGHAUS 1896).

²⁰ For Dilthey's *Ideen*, we use the English translation by Richard Zaner (DILTHEY 1977a).

²¹ The neobehaviorist systems of Clark Hull (1884-1952), Edward Tolman (1886-1959), and Edwin Guthrie (1886-1969) are good representatives of what Koch had in mind. See, for example, the three first volumes of his *Psychology. A study of a science* (KOCH 1959a).

²² It should be noted that Thomas Kuhn would publish his acclaimed *The structure of scientific revolutions* only in the following year (KUHN 1962).

²³ François Hartog (2015) gives the term "presentism" a more general meaning to denote a regime of historicity or a specific way of experiencing time in contemporary society.

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