IMMANENT REALISM
IMMANENT REALISM
AN INTRODUCTION TO BRENTANO

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Springer
To Bruno Giordano Albertazzi, my father

For his independence, consistency and imagination

In memoriam
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Acknowledgements

I wish to express my thanks to J. Jan Koenderink, Osvaldo da Pos, Lia Formigari, Edgar Morscher, and Roberto Poli for their comments and criticism. Their patience with my questions and their care for my work have been truly invaluable. I would also gratefully mention the atmosphere of the Mitteleuropa Foundation, at which many chapters of the book have been conceived and written, while thinking of the future development of Franz Brentano’s ideas in cognitive science research.
Terminological note

There follows a list of some choices made in regard to the English translation of Brentano’s terminology. The choices have been made on theoretical grounds and they sometimes do not correspond to the currently available English translations of Brentano’s texts. In the case of quotations, if I have made changes to the already-existing translation, I have said so in the footnotes.

I have translated *Intentionale Inexistenz* as ‘intentional in/existence’, using the typological device to emphasise the Latin aspect of *inhabitatio* in the mental existence of psychic phenomena, while I have used ‘inherence’ for *Einwohnen*.

I have translated *Seele* as ‘psyche’, thereby respecting its Aristotelian origin, and preferring it to ‘mind’.

*Appearance* has been preserved to denote ‘physical’ phenomena.

*Vorstellung* has been translated as ‘presentation’, indicating the act or the psychic phenomenon. Its meaning is clearly distinguished from that of *Darstellung* (representation); in fact, the German prepositions *vor* and *dar* refer to different spatial relationships, from the exterior to the interior and vice versa. Specifically, the concept of *Vorstellung* refers to the concrete act of presentation here and now in the time of presentness. The concept of *Darstellung*, vice versa, is related both to the concept of *representance* (*Stellvertretung*) that is, the function of symbolising objects and states of affairs which in particular characterises the representative function of *language* (*Darstellungsfunktion der Sprache*) and to the concept of *communication* (*Mittheilung*).

I translate *intentionale Beziehung* as ‘intentional reference’ rather than as ‘intentional relation’, in order to emphasise the ontological character of psy-
chic reference to things by acts. I have used ‘relation’ \textit{(Relation)} for other cases.

\textit{Vielheit} has been rendered as ‘multiplicity’, and sometimes as ‘plurality’ if connected with the etymological meaning of ‘many’, \textit{Vielfachheit} as ‘being multiple’, \textit{Vielfältigkeit} as ‘multiformity’, in order to convey the different meaning of the entity and the different nature of the continua in Brentano.

As to Brentano’s works, for each of them I first give the German title and its English translation in brackets. In the case of works translated into English, their successive quotations bear the English title.

Finally, as far as quotations in Greek language are concerned, given the variety of accents used in the English translations of Brentano’s works, I have chosen to use a transliteration of the words without accents.
INTRODUCTION

“Psychology, in so far as it is descriptive, is far in advance of physics”
(Franz Brentano)

This ‘Introduction to Brentano’ is primarily aimed at conceptual interpretation even though it has been written with scrupulous regard to the texts and sets out its topics according to their chronological development. I have concerned myself at length with historical questions on other occasions, as when editing the Italian versions of the three volumes of Brentano’s *Psychologies* published by Laterza in 1997. Again for Laterza, and in accompaniment to the *Psychologies*, I have written a short *Introduzione a Brentano* (Introduction to Brentano) of which this book is the development.

Before these publications, I have sought to outline the origin and influence of the theses put forward by the school of Brentano, and subsequently those of the school of Meinong with colleagues (L. Albertazzi et. al. ed., *The School of Franz Brentano*, Dordrecht, Kluwer 1996, and L. Albertazzi et. al. ed., *The School of Alexius Meinong*, Aldershot, Ashgate 2001).

I have concentrated on these matters long enough to realize that it is still premature to attempt an exhaustive monograph on Brentano. Apart from the few texts published by Brentano during his lifetime, his writings – and especially those published posthumously by his pupils – are in a parlous state. And at the moment there seems to be no way out of the impasse.

This book is not an introduction to all the themes treated by Brentano, since this would be beyond its scope. Moreover, even less does it claim to be definitive.

The idea of writing this introduction to the thought of Brentano sprang from a theoretical exigency, namely to argue for a more defendable form of
realism, and from the conviction that, at the moment, a categorial apparatus able to handle the problems raised by contemporary science is lacking, in particular in cognitive science. The various forms of direct and indirect realisms are, in my opinion, inadequate to deal with the problems addressed by contemporary cognitive science. I believe, instead, that Brentano’s immanentist realism, with its sophisticated architecture, is a framework that can be applied and developed in various areas of scientific inquiry: for example, psychophysics and theory of perception, semantics, aesthetics, and more generally, the theory of consciousness (see L. Albertazzi ed., Unfolding Perceptual Continua, Amsterdam, Benjamins Publishing Company 2002). Brentano’s realism can oppose both the theory of Cartesian Theatre and the neureductionist proposal as well, and it is also a framework able to establish the scientific legitimacy of metaphysics (see L. Albertazzi ed., The Dawn of Cognitive Science. Early European Contributors, Dordrecht, Kluwer 2000). The book therefore pays close attention to Brentano’s writings on psychology and metaphysics.

No reader of Brentano can fail to be astonished by the multiplicity of the disciplinary references to be found in his thought and writings. Consequently, although this introduction privileges themes of psychology and metaphysics, it also takes account of Brentano’s other writings, especially those on language.

Moreover, few readers of Brentano will be able to resist the appeal of a multistable personality of such complexity that it would furnish material for a novelist or a film-maker. Brentano was an original, consistent, independent, multiform scholar of talent, the protagonist of historical and cultural events in Europe which marked the beginning of the twentieth century, and he was the founder of a school that characterized an entire generation of philosophers and experimental psychologists.

Brentano was also a classicist, and understanding his thought also requires a solid knowledge of the history of philosophy. A naïve approach to Brentano has given rise to diverse ‘Brentanos’ in the historiographical account. From time to time he is an Aristotelian, a Thomist and a mediaeval relic, an experimental psychologist, a linguist, a theologian, a forerunner of analytic philosophy and/or of folk psychology, even a writer of riddles or an inventor of a new opening move in chess, and so on, according to the reader’s sectorial interest.

Apart from a chapter on criticism, I have tried not to read Brentano through his interpreters. This book is not a inquiry into the history of philosophy. As his writings show, the novelty of Brentano’s thought is such that it is
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worth attempting to present it in its original articulation, bearing his concep-
tual categories well in mind.

Between the period when Brentano was writing – the late nineteenth and
early twentieth centuries – and today, an entire century has passed in which
his conceptual and categorial referents have been lost, swept away by an
essentially reductionist mainstream paradigm. Those who endeavour to read
Brentano in the light of Frege’s categorial apparatus, Russell’s theory of rela-
tions, or Austin’s theory of language, thus turning him into a forerunner of
analytic philosophy, are bound to become frustrated. In recent decades, the
same fate has been suffered by three of Brentano’s most outstanding pupils,
Marty, Meinong and Husserl.

I hope that this book will encourage further reading of Brentano. It fur-
nishes a reasonably coherent account of his thought, and it should arouse new
interest in his work. Above all, I hope that the book will attract the attention
both of philosophers and of psychologists with a close interest in the theoreti-
cal basis of their discipline: in other words, those who, like James, constituted
large part of Brentano’s interlocutors and admirers during his lifetime.

Despite the multiplicity of cultural and disciplinary references in Bren-
tano’s thought, and despite his profound metaphysical orientation, I have
never been able to escape the impression that for him, like the inhabitants of
Tlön, the imaginary town born of Borges’ phantasy, classical culture con-
sisted of only one discipline: psychology.

LILIANA ALBERTAZZI
Trento/Bolzano 2005
Chapter 1

A life, a novel

1 WHO WAS BRENTANO?

The figure of Franz Brentano appears in an oddly shifting light when one reads university chronicles and newspaper articles of his time, family accounts, and the memoirs of his pupils. For his detractors he was an ecclesiastic and a relic from the Middle Ages; for the Catholic Church a rebellious heterodox in odour of Ultramontanism. His most implacable enemies, Husserl tells us, even went so far as to call him, variously, a Jesuit in disguise, a pratter, a Pharisee, a sophist, and a scholastic.¹

On the other hand, we find enthusiastic descriptions of Brentano as an accomplished lecturer, the inventor of riddles, and the idol of fin-de-siècle Viennese society. His students adored him and rallied around him whenever he was attacked by the most reactionary fringe of academe. There is still today a ‘Brentano’s move’ in chess, a Verteidigung der spanische Partie (the Spanish defence).²

Constantly the target of furious attacks by his colleagues counter-balanced by the boundless admiration of his students, Brentano never yielded to the clerics; nor did he stoop to compromise by joining that lay milieu which could have offered him sanctuary.

Predominant in the memoirs of his students is the image of a master endowed with considerable charisma and great moral authority. Höfler, for example, writes:

Brentano was surrounded by a sort of romantic aura, the charm of a scion of the Brentano dynasty of poets and thinkers. His flowing black locks, his thick black beard, and his pallid face were enigmatic in their effect, with the silvery flecks of grey among the black […] the strange quality of Brentano’s face, which could only be that of a philosopher, a poet or an artist sprang from his coal-black eyes which, always lightly veiled, bore an entirely distinctive expression of weariness.³

1. Husserl 1976, 47.
2. Brentano 1900 (-1903).
3. Höfler 1917a, 67.
Expressions of devotion are to be found in the memoirs of Husserl and Stumpf; and the admiration with which Freud described him to Silberstein is well known (“a marvellous intellect”). Yet some dissonant notes were struck even within the innermost circle of his pupils. Ehrenfels writes, perhaps in the aftermath of an altercation between Brentano and Meinong:

The abundance of Brentano’s spiritual talent, the ease with which he deployed the arts of the intellectual game, his lively and wide-ranging wit often prompted him to draw an almost playful, sometimes feuilletonistic, veil over his scientific thought, so profoundly sound, clear and impetuous. This former Catholic priest who, after a purgatory of struggle and soul-searching courageously sacrificed his job, honour, social position, and the material wherewithal of his existence to the integrity of his convictions, saw himself gratifyingly adulated by the liberal intelligentsia of Phaecean society. As would shortly transpire, he was already planning to marry into the only social sphere accessible to him as a secessionist server of the Church: the Jewish intelligentsia. Thus he was unable to find a pitch which chimed with his true nature. With a semi-embarrassed smile he would venture to us his proofs of the existence of God. Sometimes I detected the unctuous tones of the preacher; on other occasions it seemed that I was sitting with a vaguely frivolous journalist. His behaviour in both public and private attracted attention because it fluctuated between two irreconcilable extremes.

No biographer, however, can gainsay Brentano’s charm, a mix of physical handsomeness and intellectual vigour. Stumpf describes him thus:

All this [Brentano’s competence] was enhanced by the personal impression of the teacher, who was inspired by the consciousness of a high mission, who became wholly absorbed in the great task of a reconstruction of philosophy, whose thinking and feeling merged in this one focus and once again emanated from it. Add to this the outward appearance of the tall ascetic figure in priestly garb with the very finely modelled, magnificent head of a thinker; the high, beautiful forehead; and the keen eyes hidden under a high brow and somehow drooping lids, which noticed every expression of doubt or questioning on the face of a student. His soft but very clear and well formulated speech compelled the listener to breathless silences and rapt attention during the abstract investigation; it was the force of the firmly structured logic of his thought rather than any special art that fascinated his students, although he did occasionally employ an appropriate anecdote. What a contrast to old Hoffman! The lecture hall was filled to the last chair and stayed that way; admittedly not everyone was registered officially.

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4. See Boelich 1989, 82, and below.
And then:

Tall, slim but strong and robust in appearance, the lineaments of his head and face were extremely finely drawn. During his period in Würzburg his features were those of an ascetic, while during his Vienna period, when he wore a long beard, they were those of an unusually handsome man, one of clearly southern extraction, with black curly hair of a luxuriance that persisted until his death.7

But who was Brentano? Historians of philosophy customarily view him as a proponent – albeit to a minor extent – of the late nineteenth-century ‘Aristotelian Renaissance’ carried forward most notably by Trendelenburg, Schwegler, Zeller and Bonitz, but also as a forerunner of the phenomenology of Husserl (who was his pupil) and as a theoretician of intentionality – although this is to overlook the fact that he indeed developed a theory of intentional reference but not a thoroughgoing theory of intentionality.8

One the one hand, therefore, Brentano is regarded as a philosopher and metaphysician with a strongly classical background; on the other, as a descriptive psychologist, a critic of Fechnerian psychophysics and, through the work of Stumpf, Meinong and Ehrenfels – three of his most outstanding pupils – one of the precursors of Gestaltpsychologie. How can these two views be reconciled? And how did Aristotelianism and empirical psychology, scholasticism and experimentalism, co-penetrate in Brentano’s thought?

2 A DYNASTIC YOUTH

Franz Clemens Honoratius Hermann Brentano was born on 16 January 1838 in Germany, at Marienberg am Rhein near Boppard, into a family of ancient lineage. The Brentanos were of Italian origin – from Tremezzo on Lake Como – and the term *brenta* (wine keg) had been part of the family coat-of-arms since the thirteenth century.9

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7. Stumpf 1922, 77-8.
Puglisi noted in his preface to the Italian translation of Brentano’s *Klassifikation der psychischen Phänomene* (*The Classification of Psychic Phenomena*), published by Carabba in 1913 as follows:

Those fond of genealogical research will find that in 1166 a knight named Brendanus lived in a castle on the River Brenta. The castle was destroyed towards the end of 1250. It was rebuilt by Tebaldo da Brenta and then again destroyed by Caldomazzo. It was subsequently inhabited by a certain Nicolò da Brenta, who waged war against the celebrated Ezzelino da Romano. The name ‘da Brenta’ is first recorded in 1465, being then transmuted into ‘Brentano’, and the family of the Brentanos of Tramezzo, from which the author of this book is a descendant, *propter multi praeclarissimarum virtutum suarum specimina* (because of many examples of his great virtues), as written upon its crest, in the seventeenth century was forced by plague and war to leave Italy.10

Brentano’s Italian origins were evident in his features. Von Hertling, who met him while at university in Münster, reports his first impression of him thus: “Also his appearance, with his hair parted and falling in ringlets on both sides, for me had something foreign about it”.11

Besides being of illustrious lineage, Franz Brentano belonged to a family of intellectuals, representatives of German Romanticism. His life was conditioned both by the artistic and literary environment in which he grew up and by the material and spiritual vicissitudes of his family. His grandfather, Peter Anton Brentano – with “an Italian temperament, impatient and impetuous”12 – had taken as his second wife Maximiliane von La Roche, a close friend of Goethe, who was a frequent guest at the family’s ‘house with the golden roof’ (*Goldenen Kopf*) in Sandgasse, Frankfurt. It seems, in fact, that Maximiliane provided the inspiration for Lotte in *Werther’s Leiden* (*Werthers Leiden*). Goethe always maintained a bond of affectionate friendship with the “geliebten und vehrheten Familie Brentano” (beloved and esteemed Brentano family), mindful of the many happy hours that they had spent together.

Peter and Maximiliane produced five children – among them Christian, who was Brentano’s father, Clemens the Romantic poet, “born of a marriage which mixed Italian and German blood, a composition not infelicitous for the descendants, but dangerous”; and Elisabeth, the future Bettina von Arnim, whom Goethe described as “the oddest person on this earth; woefully suspended between Italian and German, she was never able to keep her feet on the ground”.13 Evidently, there were many who noted a certain restlessness,

10. See Puglisi 1913, 1.
11. von Hertling 1919, 22.
extravagance and eccentricity in the members of the family. Clemens, especially, manifested symptoms of emotional instability.

Christian Brentano was well-off and enjoyed a private income, although his life was constantly beset by financial reversals. After marrying Emilie Gegner, a teacher by profession, for a certain period of time he lived in a property belonging to his wife’s family at the monastery of Marienberg. However, as a result of financial problems not unconnected with Christian’s religious opinions, and the sale of the property, the Brentano family moved to Aschaffenburg and took up residence in a house on a hillside overlooking the Spessart in the Main Valley. Still today the house bears the name Haus Brentano.

Christian Brentano turned his hand to a variety of occupations, working as a writer and painter. Endowed with artistic and literary talents inherited from his mother, he indulged in painting (the walls of the house in Aschaffenburg were lined with his canvases), composed poetry and wrote dramas of ethical and satirical content. A personal friend of the Dominican prior Heinrich, he associated with the Ultramontanists and wrote several articles for Katholik. Eine Zeitschrift zur Belehrung und Warnung (Catholic. A Journal for Education and Warning), the journal of German Ultramontanism. A religious crisis then induced him to embrace deterministic doctrines – an event which presumably influenced the spiritual development of his children. After converting back to Catholicism, Christian Brentano devoted himself mainly to religious matters, while his wife Emily, who amongst other things produced a posthumous edition of her husband’s religious writings, dedicated herself to pious works for the Church.

After his father’s premature death in 1851, Franz Brentano was brought up in Aschaffenburg by his mother in accordance with the precepts of a rigidly conservative Catholicism, and together with his four siblings: Maria Ludovica (Lulù), Sophie, Claudine and Ludwig Joseph (Lujo) – the future economist, Nobel prize winner, and precursor of German social policy. In these circumstances Franz Brentano, like all his brothers and sisters, was deeply influenced

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14. Christian and Emilie Brentano produced the first edition of Clemens Brentano’s Nachlaß (Gesammelte Schriften). The work was then continued by Emilie and Joseph Merkel. See L. Brentano 1852-55.
15. It seems that Christian was forced to leave the property by his support for the Catholic faction in the Prussian regime. The property passed first to Christian’s sister, Ludovica, who then left it to Lulù, Christian’s eldest daughter. It then had to be sold because of an ill-advised investment by Lujo Brentano.
16. According to Stumpf, the religious commitment of Brentano’s mother was not so inflexible as to constrain the individual freedoms of her five children. Not entirely clear, however, are the reasons for the religious vocation of Claudine, who seems to have been persuaded by her mother to take the veil. On Franz Brentano’s childhood see the ‘Brentanonummer’ of Pädagogischen Monatshefte 68 (1918), Burger, Innsbruck. See also L. Brentano 1931.
by his mother, to whom he remained profoundly attached throughout his lifetime.17

Brentano’s childhood must have been tranquil, and perhaps it was happy. Unlike Lujo, Ludovica and Sophie, he was not sent away to a strictly religious boarding school. Instead, as said, he remained in Aschaffenburg with his mother and was given a private education.

Haus Brentano was a meeting place for numerous intellectuals, both relatives and friends. Frequent guests were the Brentanos of Frankfurt, the senator and godfather Franz and aunt Antonia, daughter of the Austrian minister von Birkenstock, an admirer and close friend of Beethoven, who dedicated a sonata to her daughter, the clerics Christoper Moufang and Johann Baptist Heinrich of Mainz, representatives of the Mainzer Katholische Bewegung (Mainz Catholic Movement), the professor and family friend Merkel,18 and also the Hertling relatives from Darmstadt, who considered it a benefit to frequent the Brentanos of Aschaffenburg and through their friendship somehow acquire their brilliance.19

As later recounted by Claudine, the Schwester Serafica (angelic sister) Brentano was immensely talented: he sang so beautifully that passers-by stopped in front of the house to listen; he won constant praise from his violin teacher for a bravura which was certainly not due to practice alone; he took painting lessons in Munich from the Countesses Gelden, who even at an advanced age remembered how happy they had been to teach him; he loved games, especially chess, so much so that he forgot everything else when he played; he was a fine swimmer and athlete; and he won the affection of all those whom he met.20 Still today, moreover, as already mentioned, there is a ‘Brentano’s move’ in chess.

Brentano attended the Aschaffenburg city lycée, where the philologist Merkel – who taught literature and history of art – exerted a profound influence on the intellectual development of both Brentano and his brother Lujo.21 Having grown up in a literary household frequented by litterateurs, it is no

17. Scherg put it thus: “Franz Brentano’s relationship with his profoundly religious mother was such that as a novitiate he was her greatest pride; when he left religious orders he was her greatest sorrow”: Scherg 1951, 48. See also Baumgartner 1992, 117.
18. Brentano dedicated his Psychology of Aristotle (1867) to Merkel.
20. See L. Brentano 1918; Schad 1984; Witten-Jungnik 1984a, 1984b and 1984c. As an adult Brentano continued to play the violin and to paint: his portrait of Husserl and his wife Malvine, which he executed during a visit to Schönbühel, is famous. His sister remembered the final stanzas of one of Brentano’s early poems in which, comparing himself to Seneca, he said that as he prepared for death he would take painting lessons and die not of senility but laughter.
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wonder that at the age of twelve Brentano read Calderòn and Shakespeare (the poet whom he always loved most), and on a journey from the Tyrol to Riva read Dante’s *Divine Comedy* with his brother Lujo, discussing it with close interest. In his final years at school, his interests ranged among philosophy, mathematics and geometry until his reading of Aristotle prompted him to opt for philosophy. It seems that this decision was not unrelated to a youthful religious crisis, very similar in form and content to the one that his father had suffered.

Brentano’s wit and poetic talent was constantly apparent in letters and conversations which he often embellished with rhyming riddles.

3 MEIN BRUDER FRANZ UND DAS VATICANUM

Franz Brentano attended university at Munich, Würzburg, Berlin and Münster. His university studies were closely interwoven with questions of religious policy.

Brentano graduated from lycée in 1885. In the following year he enrolled at the Faculty of Philosophy in Munich, where for three semesters he studied philosophy and theology under, amongst others, Lassaux and Döllinger. He then spent the summer semester of 1858 at Würzburg, where he also attended courses in theology. Idealism held sway at Würzburg, under the continuing influence of Schelling and Baader. For this reason, and in a desire to study Aristotle, Brentano transferred for a semester to Berlin, where Trendelenburg was on the teaching staff. While in Berlin, Brentano renewed his acquaintance with his aunt Bettina von Arnim and with his Savigny uncles. Finally, he moved for two semesters to the University of Münster, where he studied under Clemens, a Catholic philosopher who introduced him to scholastic philosophy.

Historians of culture have often identified Franz Brentano as a ‘Catholic philosopher’; and this label has influenced, for good or ill, the reception of his thought, the interpretation of his theories, and the assessment of his personal choices. In effect, as far as his philosophical theories are concerned, Bren-
tano was long considered, even by his contemporaries, to be an anachronism - a sort of medieval relic.\textsuperscript{27}

The question of Brentano’s Catholicism is a complex one. Firstly, it involves certain aspects of his personal life; secondly, it relates to a highly specific academic situation (at Brentano’s time the philosophy faculties in Germany were almost all Protestant); and thirdly, it concerns the motivations and contents themselves of his philosophy. Brentano’s philosophical theory, therefore, was intrinsically bound up with the Catholic question, from his formative years, through his decision to join the official hierarchy of the Church, to his subsequent abandonment of it.

As regards the second aspect mentioned, the Protestant dominance of the German universities was so complete that it everywhere provoked heated debate and ideological pamphleteering.\textsuperscript{28} It is worth noting in this regard that Brentano chose to graduate under Clemens’ supervision and not Trendelenburg’s, even though he dedicated his graduation thesis to the latter. Immediately on meeting Clemens at Münster, Brentano spoke of him in glowing terms: “he is the professor of my heart,” he wrote to his uncles Savigny, and described to them his walks with Clemens as they discussed philosophy together.\textsuperscript{29}

Clemens’ lectures have been recollected by von Hertling, who was introduced to them by Brentano:

I attended lectures on metaphysics given by Professor Clemens […] Clemens was an excellent teacher: from him I later learned how to plan my own lectures. He would begin with a short dictation, which he then explained by talking extemporaneously. He was the first German university teacher to take up again the strands of medieval philosophy; for which reason when working in Bonn as a Privatdozent he had clashed with the Güntherians.\textsuperscript{30} That he preferentially drew on Suarez, the famous scholastic of the sixteenth century, was not a problem for me, of course.\textsuperscript{31}

Clemens was a philosopher, not a theologian. Yet he was a member of an intransigent and combative movement which sought to support and defend Catholicism on Thomistic grounds. His theories published in Katholik provoked in fact a schism between a group of German theologians led by Döllinger and the Ultramontanists of Mainz.

\textsuperscript{27} See Tatarkiewicz 1973, 76-77.
\textsuperscript{28} See Münch 1995/6.
\textsuperscript{29} Letter from Brentano to Gunda von Savigny, Münster 31.5.1859, cit. in Münch 1995/6, 126.
\textsuperscript{30} Followers of Anton Guenther (1783-1863) and of his semi-rationalist system according to which dogmatic definitions could be revised on scientific bases. Guenther’s theories provoked the ire of Pius IX and his works were placed on the Index.
\textsuperscript{31} von Hertling 1919, 26-7.
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Brentano was studying at Münster while the controversy raged, for which reason he decided to graduate from a faculty in which, as he wrote to his uncles in another letter, it was necessary “find oneself in agreement with the opinions of the examiner”.

Having abandoned his idea of graduating with submission of a thesis on Suárez, in 1862 Brentano was awarded his teaching qualification at Tübingen in absentia (Clemens had died in the meantime) for a thesis entitled Von den mannigfachen Bedeutung des Seienden nach Aristoteles (On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle) which dealt with a theme first developed by Trendelenburg – Aristotle’s doctrine of categories – but reasoned from a different point of view: instead of adopting the linguistic point of view on predication, Brentano chose to analyse the question in metaphysical terms.

Not without influence on this change of perspective – and in particular on Brentano’s notion of ens rationis, his doctrine of the judgement, and what later became his doctrine of intentional in/existence – was the Thomist philosophy set out in Clemens’ lecture (Clemens’ name was not mentioned in the thesis solely for reasons of academic expediency).

Brentano’s relationship with Clemens also seems to have been a decisive influence on his subsequent decision to join the priesthood, which he did on 6 August 1864 after a brief sojourn of reflection at the Dominican monastery of Graz.

Also dating to this period is Brentano’s friendship with Denifle, who, as reported by Brentano’s younger sister, declared:

I had never been so spiritually close to anyone, nor had I ever felt my soul so closely tied to anyone as it was to Brentano, so much so that any detachment from him seemed impossible.

Clemens’ influence on Brentano is also important because it gainsays the widely held view that it was primarily his family upbringing that induced Brentano to join the priesthood, while it was his contact with philosophy that subsequently prompted his decision to leave it. The reverse may be true: although Brentano was certainly influenced by the Catholicism of his upbringing, it was above all as a philosopher, and following his encounter with the Thomism then represented by German Ultramontanism, that he

33. See Brentano 1975.
34. On this see below, Chapter 2.
36. Ultramontanism was a conservative Catholic movement loyal to papal policy.
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decided to join holy orders and to study theology – but without forgoing his intention to pursue an academic career as a ‘scientist’. His decision to join the priesthood, in fact, was only taken when he had been reassured by the Bishop of Würzburg that he would be entirely free to follow his academic profession.

Following his period in Münster, Brentano spent a semester in Mainz at the seminary of that city, then an outpost of German Ultramontanism. While in Mainz he renewed his acquaintance with Heinrich and Moufang, a long-time friend of the Brentano family, as well as with Haffner, who had been a fellow student at Münster. He seems to have acted as theoretician for the group, if one judges from an anonymous article published by Katholik in 1862 (the year in which Brentano acquired his teaching qualification), “Aristoteles und die katholische Wissenschaft” (Aristotle and the Catholic Science), which propounded the re-founding of Catholic science on Aristotelian bases, and in particular on the doctrine of categories.37 This article was soon followed by others, which again called for an ‘Aristotelian Renaissance’, but, contrary to the revival proposed by Zeller, Bonitz and Trendelenburg, gave it more specific objectives.38

On 15 July 1866 Brentano qualified as a university lecturer at Würzburg on discussion of twenty-five Habilitationsthese written in Latin.39 One of these theses bore the title Vera philosophiae methodus nulla alia nisi scientiae naturalist est (The method of philosophy is the same as that of the natural sciences) and contained in nuce the entirety of Brentano’s thought: it not only attacked the idealism then paramount in the German philosophy faculties but also, and especially, advocated philosophy as a rigorous science à la Comte and Stuart Mill. Brentano, in fact, argued that the philosophical method should be no different from that of the natural sciences.40

In 1869 the question of the dogma of papal infallibility, proclaimed during the First Vatican Council and championed by the Jesuits, provoked heated controversy. Criticisms were brought against the dogma not only by the theologian Döllinger but by a number of bishops, notably Ketteler of Mainz and Hefele of Rottenburg.41 On the invitation of Ketteler, Brentano wrote a mem-

37. See Münch 1997.
39. Ad disputationem qua theses gratiosi philosophorum ordinis consensu et auctoritate pro impetranda venia docendi in alma universitate julio-maximiliana defendet... J.W. Schipner, Aschaffenburg 1866. Reprinted in Brentano 1893.
40. As Kraus observes, it would be therefore an error to classify Brentano simply as an Aristotelian, or as a scholastic or as a positivist. See Kraus 1919, 4-8.
41. Note that Marty, who later became one of Brentano’s pupils, was associated with Ketteler, having attended the theological seminary of Mainz.
orandum (anonymously) to be presented by the German bishops at the conference of Fulda.\textsuperscript{42} Between 1870 and 1872, however, he threw his energies into his lectures on logic, psychology and the history of philosophy, while he wrestled with the problem of the existence of God. In 1872 he was appointed to the chair of philosophy at Würzburg and gave an inaugural professorial address on \textit{The Main Stages of Development in Shelling’s Philosophy and the Scientific Value of the Last Phase of its Formation} (a topic most probably chosen by Hoffman). Yet in the following year he resigned from the post for no overt reason: we know, however, from his letters that he was induced to do so by the hostility of those who, although they may not have accused him of being an Ultramontanist, nevertheless regarded him as a cleric.\textsuperscript{43} As Stumpf recalls, the majority of the teaching staff at Würzburg were either hostile to Brentano or suspicious of him.

Brentano wrote thus to Stumpf:

\begin{quote}
At the moment it is quite bearable here, yet the thunderclouds always hover above my head. For you yourself know how many Ultramontanists live in the delusion that I have usurped an Ultramontanist post, and finally the appointment at Giessen would be [...] a step further toward emancipation and perhaps also would pave the way for another appointment. As long as I live here and I do not express my views in public, and here I may not do otherwise, people elsewhere will take me, if not for an Ultramontanist, at least for a priest.\textsuperscript{44}
\end{quote}

Despite his academic difficulties, Brentano’s teaching gained him great popularity among the university’s students, so much so that one of his colleagues was forced to suspend his lectures for lack of an audience. His courses were attended not only by students of theology and philosophy but also by a contingent from the faculties of medicine and law. In testimony to the climate at the time, Kastil has recalled that someone wrote ‘sulphuric acid factory’ on the door of the lecture room in which Brentano’s colleague Franz Hoffmann gave his lessons.\textsuperscript{45} Kastil also notes that the tense atmosphere produced by Brentano’s conflicts with his colleagues and theologians was one of the factors responsible for his abandonment of Thomism.

\textsuperscript{42} The memorandum was published in Freudenberg 1969, 295-334.
\textsuperscript{43} See Mill 1972, 1927ff.
\textsuperscript{44} Letter to Stumpf dated 30.11.1872, in Stumpf 1976, 32.
\textsuperscript{45} Franz Hoffmann, a disciple of Baader, taught courses on German idealism – in particular on the thought of Schelling – and mysticism. Not only the students but also the members of the academic senate and the faculty were greatly impressed by the manner in which Brentano set out and discussed his theories.
Those years also saw the formation of Brentano’s first group of pupils, among them Carl Stumpf and Anton Marty, but also Hermann Schell, Ernst Commer and Georg von Hertling, with whom he soon became friends, although Brentano’s subsequent behaviour caused the relationship to deteriorate.

In the meantime, Brentano exerted enormous influence in the faculty. The dean himself observed that his *Die Psychologie des Aristoteles, insbesondere seine Lehre vom nous poietikos. Nebst einer Beilage über das Wirken des Aristotelischen Gottes* (The Psychology of Aristotle, in particular his Doctrine of the Active Intellect. With an Appendix Concerning the Activity of Aristotle’s God) was to be considered the best piece of work produced by a member of the faculty in the past fifty years.

As said, one member of Brentano’s first circle of pupils was Carl Stumpf, whose memoirs furnish us with a good deal of information about the period. It was soon after the reopening of the university – after Würzburg has been shelled by the Prussian forces – that Stumpf first had occasion to attend a lecture by Brentano on the history of philosophy. The lecture attracted a huge audience, and Stumpf, who had chosen to study law at university because it would allow him to cultivate his passion for music, was so impressed by Brentano’s lesson that he switched to philosophy and theology.

Thereafter Brentano and Stumpf were accustomed to take long walks together in the Aschaffenburg countryside, during which Brentano would conduct veritable training sessions in philosophy. Like all of Brentano’s students, Stumpf was struck by his teacher’s profound religiosity – a religiosity which also bore traces of Greek philosophy. And as he came to know him better, he also discovered his gifts as a humorous raconteur and entertainer. It seems in fact that Brentano was fond of singing popular ballads in his tenor voice, especially ones about *Grossmutter Schlangenköchin des Knaben Wunderhorn* (Snake Cooking Grandmother of the Young Wonderhorn) which he took from a book of popular poetry edited by Clemens Brentano and Achim von Arnim, a legacy from his childhood.

We learn from Stumpf’s memories of the interests pursued by Brentano during his Würzburg period that he was greatly taken up with metaphysics which demonstrates that psychology was not his initial concern. Moreover,

46. See Marty 1916b. Hermann Schell (1850-1906), a future proponent of modernism, wrote *Die Einheit des Seelenlebens aus den Principien der aristotelischen Philosophie entwickelt* (The Unity of the Soul Life Developed from the Principles of Aristotle’s Philosophy) Freiburg i. Br. 1873. Graf Hertling, professor of philosophy at Munich, was a cousin of Brentano’s and frequently visited him in Aschaffenburg and Würzburg. He later became a chancellor of decidedly conservative views. He also studied under Trendelenburg in Berlin, and in 1871 published *Materie und Form und die Definition der Seele bei Aristoteles* (Matter and Form in Aristotle’s Definition of Soul) a work very similar to Brentano’s *Aristotle’s Psychology*.

47. Stumpf 1976, 16.
we know from a shorthand notebook in Stumpf’s possession that Brentano considered Aristotle, not Aquinas and the scholastics, to be the paramount authority in metaphysics. All his first lectures on metaphysics, in fact, were nothing but commentaries on Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*.

At Würzburg Brentano devoted his energies to the preparation of his lectures while also struggling to resolve the aporias of knowledge. He also developed the themes of inner perception and the axioms that provide the basis for evident knowledge, and proofs for the existence of God from a logical point of view.

Deriving from Brentano’s Aristotelian studies – still connected to Trendelenburg’s thought but viewed within this new framework - were his various writings of this period: besides *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*, also *The Psychology of Aristotle*. In 1872 Brentano travelled to England, where he met various outstanding intellectual figures of the time: Herbert Spencer, Cardinal Newman, whom he visited in Edgbaston, Mivart, Darwin’s opponent, and the theologian William Robertson Smith. However, he was unable to meet John Stuart Mill, with whom he had been corresponding for some time. Nor was he able to do so subsequently when a planned meeting between them in Avignon was aborted by Mill’s sudden death. Brentano’s reading of Anglo-Saxon philosophy and British empiricism (besides Aristotelianism and medieval philosophy) provided a constant underpinning for his thought.

As evinced by a letter written by Brentano on his return to Germany, during his conversations with Spencer in London, he had also talked about political issues, in particular the political and cultural consequences of Germany’s victories of 1866 and 1871, and reiterated once again his opposition to wars of conquest. Brentano was especially worried about the ideology of the Prussian military state, which he viewed as a German version of *Franzosen-tum* founded on the concepts of the ‘great nation’, militarism, and the myth of the strong personality.

He also acutely observed that the vaunting of the great German nation and bombastic expressions of Germanism destroyed precisely what had made the German character distinctive.

49. See Brentano 1975.
50. See Brentano 1977a.
51. Some of Brentano’s observations on logic were taken up by Mill: See Mill 1972, 1934ff. Even in the last years of his life, Brentano was reading Thomas Reid and Clarke: see Kraus 1919, 8. Stumpf reports the similarity between Stuart Mill’s method and the one adopted by Brentano during his lectures. On this see Chisholm, Haller 1978.
52. See also Albertazzi, Poli 1993, 306ff.
Moreover, Brentano was fully aware that the weakening of France would breed rancour and suspicion among the nations of Europe, with a resurgence of militarism and the threat of further wars. For that matter, throughout his lifetime he was a staunch anti-militarist, and more generally a pacifist.

In the meantime Brentano’s religious doubts increased, and he withdrew for a period of reflection to the monastery of St. Bonifaz in Munich, under the spiritual guidance of the abbot Haneberg, the future Bishop of Speyer. His reflections proved fruitless, however, and in the conviction that the contradictions of religious dogmas were not only apparent, Brentano began seriously to consider the possibility of leaving the Catholic Church, a crisis provoked in 1870 by the proclamation of the dogma of papal infallibility and which lasted for five long years.53

Brentano continued to teach at Würzburg as a Privatdozent until March 1873.54 Once again under attack from the most reactionary members of the faculty, and in full religious crisis, on 11 April 1873 he abandoned the priesthood. In 1880 he officially left the Catholic Church and thereafter simply professed a rationalist theism, even though his religious fervour never diminished.

Brentano then undertook a journey that took him first to Paris, then to Luxembourg, and finally to Leipzig, where he met Fechner, Drobisch, Stern, Heinrich Weber, Strümpell and Windelband. With these he discussed mainly questions of philosophy: in fact, he was writing his first great work at the time, and he thought that the Leipzig university library might serve his purposes. On his return to Aschaffenburg, where he remained in seclusion for some months following his definitive abandonment of the Church, he completed Psychologie vom Empirischen Standpunkte (Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint). He published the book in 1874 with the intent of continuing his university career.55

53. As Stumpf reports, Brentano’s doubts mainly concerned the trinitarian question and the concepts of substance, nature, person and hypostasis in Catholic doctrine. See Stumpf 1976, 54ff.
54. Stumpf recalls that Brentano taught Metaphysics in the summer semester of 1867, History of Philosophy in the winter of 1867, Metaphysics again in the summer of 1868, History of Philosophy and Metaphysics I (Transcendental Philosophy and Ontology) in the winter of 1868, and Metaphysics II (Theology and Cosmology), French Positivism (Comte in particular) in the summer of 1869. He taught Deductive and Inductive Logic, History of Philosophy I (ancient) in the winter semester of 1869, and in the summer of 1870 Metaphysics, History of Philosophy II (modern and contemporary). It was during this period that he developed the concept of ‘content of judgement’ (Urteilsinhalt), which Stumpf translated as ‘state of affairs’ (Sachverhalt). In the winter of 1870 Brentano taught Deductive and Inductive Logic; in the summer of 1871 Psychology; in the winter of 1871 History of Philosophy from antiquity to the contemporary age, and the Doctrine of Society; in the winter of 1872 Psychology, On the Being of God, and again Doctrine of Society; in the summer of 1872 Metaphysics, and in the summer of 1873 again Deductive and Inductive Logic with particular regard to the natural sciences and the sciences of the spirit. This period saw the birth of his theory of modalities, his theory of probability, and especially of his psychology.
55. See Brentano 1995a.
Indeed, on 22 January 1874, following a summons by the education minister Stremayer, to whom he had been recommended by Lotze, Brentano was appointed full professor at Vienna, to which city he then moved and where he remained in his professorial capacity until 1880.

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On 22 April 1874 Brentano delivered his inaugural lecture, entitled “Über die Gründe der Entmutigung auf philosophischem Gebiete” (On the Motivations of Discouragement in Philosophy) at the University of Vienna. He was unaware, though, of the extent to which reverberations from the controversies at Würzburg had preceded his arrival in Vienna. In a letter to Hermann Schell he described the climate in which he gave his lecture. His opponents had used a series of articles published in the *Wiener Blätter* on his ‘Jesuitism’ and his behaviour towards the Church to foment fierce resentment among the students, who were supposed to explode in uproar as soon as Brentano began to speak. This did not happen, however, and Brentano’s lecture instead ended amid great applause from the audience. From that moment onwards, attendance at Brentano’s lectures constantly and greatly increased.

Brentano’s first lectures at Vienna dealt with the history of philosophy, psychology, logic, practical philosophy and metaphysics. At the Austrian universities of the time, philosophy served on the curriculum as general preparation also for the faculties of law, medicine and theology as well (attendance at lectures on practical philosophy was compulsory for law students). Around one hundred students regularly attended Brentano’s lectures, although an even larger number (approximately 360) were enrolled on the course.

Like Clemens before him, Brentano spent a great deal of time with his students, going on long walks with them while they discussed philosophy, and he often invited them into his home. This period saw the formation of a ‘school of Brentano’ composed of a group of outstanding pupils which Kraus subsequently distinguished into a right and a left. Brentano’s Viennese pupils were many, but especial mention should be made of Edmund Husserl, Alexius Meinong, Kazimierz Twardowski, Thomas Masaryk, Alois Höfler, Christian von Ehrenfels, Josef Clemens Kreibig, and subsequently Oskar Kraus himself, Alfred Kastil, Josef Eisenmeyer, Emil Utitz, Hugo Bergmann, Benno Urbach, and Oscar Engländer.  

56. On Brentano’s ‘school’ see Albertazzi, Libardi, Poli 1996a.
57. On Brentano’s most exceptional pupils see below.
Other members of this circle of students and auditors tied to Brentano by close friendship were Berger, the future director of the Vienna civic theatre, Miklosich, whose linguistic researches were influenced by Brentano, and a number of politicians, including the elderly Blener, the parliamentary deputy Beez, von Pidoll, and also several gentlewomen from Viennese high society, notably the Werthemsteins mother and daughter, who were Brentano’s affectionate friends.58

Brentano’s circle of friends and acquaintances at the time also comprised Viennese intellectuals from diverse disciplinary backgrounds: philologists (the already-mentioned Miklosich, von Hartel, Heinzel, Schipper) archaeologists (Hirschfeld), jurists (Erner), zoologists (Claus), artists (Zumbusch), and others besides. It was also during this period that Brentano began his correspondence with Ernst Mach.59

The group of intellectuals surrounding Brentano soon acquired the characteristics of a full-fledged school. Its distinctive feature was a descriptive investigation of the phenomena of consciousness, and this set it in opposition against the schools of positivist psychology, which were mainly interested in genetic and physiological aspects.60

What Brentano was like as a teacher can be deduced from the recollections of his pupils. Husserl, for instance, recalled him as follows:

At the beginning I went [to his lectures] out of simple curiosity, to hear at least once the man then so widely talked about in Vienna, the man who was honoured and admired by some, while others (not a few of them) accused him of being a Jesuit in disguise, a prattler, a pharisee, a sophist and a scholastic. My first impression of him was striking. His lean physique, his imposing head framed by undulating waves of hair, his strong nose held aloft, the expressiveness of his face, which spoke not only of spiritual labour but also profound emotional turmoil, went entirely beyond the bounds of the normal. Expressed in every feature, in every movement, in the upward gaze of his soulful eyes, in all his comportment was awareness of a great mission […] He spoke in persuasive, low, veiled tones, accompanying his words with priestly gestures and standing before the students like a prophet of eternal truths and a herald of a celestial world.

I could not long resist, despite all my prejudice, the power of his personality. Very soon his arguments overwhelmed me, very soon I was conquered by the unique clarity and acuity of his expositions, by the somehow catalectic force with which he developed problems and theories. It was his lessons alone that bred the conviction which gave me the courage to choose philosophy as my profession – namely the conviction that philosophy too is a serious occupation, and that it can and consequently must be

58. See Stumpf 1922, 75.
59. See Brentano 1988b.
60. See Brentano 1895, 34. On Brentano and Austrian philosophy see Morscher 1978.
treated with the spirit of the most rigorous science. The pure practicality with which
he addressed all problems, the way in which he treated them by aporias, the fine
dialectic balancing of the various arguments possible, the sifting out of equivocations,
the reducing of every philosophical concept to its origins in the intuition – all this
filled me with admiration and unshakeable faith.
His tone of the high moral seriousness and his pure devotion to the subject banished
all banal vices and professorial levity from his speech […]\textsuperscript{61}

Freud, who in 1874 attended Brentano’s courses (one of which on the
existence of God), wrote a letter to Silberstein in which, as already mentioned,
he described him as “a marvellous intellect”, adding that “as a scientist and a
philosopher, he believes it necessary to prove the existence of God by logical
means”.\textsuperscript{62} It was Brentano himself, indeed, who advised Freud to translate the
twelfth volume of Mill’s collected works.

In another letter to Silberstein Freud wrote:

Let me tell you more about this exceptional personality, who in certain respects seems
the ideal man. He believes in God, he believes in theology, he is a follower of Darwin,
and he is also intelligent and dammably good company – a genius, in fact. For the
moment I shall tell you only this: under Brentano’s influence I have decided to take a
doctorate in philosophy and zoology.\textsuperscript{63}

These words of Freud corroborate the view that, although Brentano had
only just left holy orders, he continued to work on constructing a scientific
foundation for theology.

Puglisi, moreover, although he was not a pupil of Brentano’s, recalls in his
introduction to the Italian translation of The Classification of Psychic Phenomena
that:

The vividness of his speech, the varied expression of his arguments, had an immediate
forcefulness that his writings lacked. Hence it has been said, and rightly so, that the
main characteristic of Franz Brentano’s teaching lay in his use of words. Perhaps he
preferred, like Socrates, to teach by conversing, for in that way one teaches not only
philosophy but also how to philosophise, spurring the mind to inquiry.\textsuperscript{64}

Brentano’s charm, his vivacity, his acuteness of thought, and the moral
influence that he exerted over all his pupils did not diminish, however, the

\textsuperscript{61} See Husserl 1919, 154. My translation.
\textsuperscript{62} See Boehlich 1989, 82. On Brentano and Freud see also Merlan 1949; Heaton 1981; Poli 1989.
\textsuperscript{63} See Boehlich 1989, 82, 109.
\textsuperscript{64} See Puglisi 1912, 8. The article to which Puglisi refers appeared in the Neue Freie Presse on 16 June.
firmness with which he defended his theories against any development that he
deemed heterodox. It was this severity, despite the indubitable admiration in
which his pupils held him, that caused the conflicts that sometimes broke out
between them and Brentano.  

A good example is provided by Meinong, who, although he acknowledged
his enormous intellectual debt to Brentano, wrote that he felt oppressed by his
personality, which he saw as threatening his theoretical independence. He
writes:

However, if we never agreed with each other in the unconditional manner that,
according to C. Stumpf’s reverent commemorative pages, others were able to achieve,
it was the fault solely of me, the younger and still living of the two, although in this
my direct recollection is only barely of assistance. I have since had frequent occasion
to notice the tenacity with which pupils who have only just achieved their indepen-
dence protect it against their mentor, even though it was precisely for this
independence that he worked so tirelessly. Such preoccupations arose with particular
facility in my relationship with Brentano and his domineering personality, and they
gave rise to misunderstandings whose profound consequences accompanied me even
until my later activity. But what life was perhaps unable to heal, death has done so,
and before the eyes of my memory stands imperishably the luminous figure of my
revered master, in spiritualized beauty and gilded by the sunlight of his and my
youth.

In truth, with the passage of time, theoretical disputes arose between Bren-
tano and his pupils and gave rise to the peculiar situation where the pupils
showed a mixture of devotion, admiration and affection towards Brentano,
which he reciprocated with fierce irritation whenever they developed notions
at variance with his original theories.

Several especially unpleasant episodes occurred: for instance, the dispute
that erupted between Marty and Meinong (which Marty had provoked) over
what was considered to be Höfler’s betrayal of ‘true doctrine’ (Brentano’s,
obviously). For his part, throughout his lifetime Marty sought never to devi-
ate from Brentanian orthodoxy and remained in such close contact with his
master that he would declare:

History will judge whether in my published works, and during the many years of cor-
respondence on scientific questions between Professor Brentano and myself, I was

65. See Husserl 1976, 53; Meinong 1988; Höfler 1921, 4ff. On this see below.
66. See Meinong 1965, 1-17.
68. See Höfler 1921, 14ff.
ready only to accept and verify, and to what extent I myself carried the inquiry forward. 69

No less problematic were the relationships among Brentano’s pupils themselves. Consider for example the coolness of relations between Husserl and Meinong, the rift between Husserl and Meinong, and obviously the breach between Meinong and Brentano. 70

The fact remains, however, that Brentano trained at least two generations of philosophers that would subsequently refer to him as their formative influence and thereafter continue his teaching throughout Europe. 71 Stumpf obtained a professorship at Würzburg, and then at Prague, Halle, Munich and finally Berlin; Meinong obtained a chair and was its incumbent until his retirement at Graz, where he was joined by Höfler and Ehrenfels; Twardowski was professor at Lvov; Masarik was professor at the Czech university of Prague, and after him Marty, Kraus and Utitz, while Arleth, Hillebrand, Kastil and Franziska Mayer-Hillebrand were appointed to chairs at Innsbruck.

The years spent in Vienna brought further changes to Brentano’s life. Having left the Church and having forgone a glittering ecclesiastical career (it was widely believed that he could have become cardinal), Brentano’s intention was to devote himself entirely to what he considered to be his true mission: philosophical research. But then, in Vienna, he met Ida von Lieben, a woman who Alfred Kastil 72 has described as blessed with artistic talent and a blithe personality. Chroust tells us, indeed, that the youthful “Ida von Lieben enriched his [Brentano’s life] with grace, goodness and devotion”. 73

The literature abounds with information on the difficulties provoked by the meeting between Brentano and Ida, for the Catholic Church in Austria then considered ordination as a priest to be character indelebilis (indelible character). Despite the fame due to his enormous success in Vienna, as both a teacher and a man of culture, Brentano was forced to renounce his Austrian

69. See Kraus 1919, 8. Marty objected to Brentano’s theories only in relation to the correlates of ‘true’ states of affairs. On Marty and Brentano see Chisholm 1986; Albertazzi 1996a.
70. See Meinong 1965, letter from Meinong to Husserl dated 20 May 1891, 96.
71. See Kraus 1919, 11-17. Brentano’s relations with his pupils, with the exception of Höfler and Meinong, were invariably cordial. Sometimes he attacked Meinong’s theory, albeit without naming him, while Meinong himself mocked some of Brentano’s theories in a review of a book by Kries published in the Göttingische Gelehrten Anzeigen of 1890.
72. See Kastil 1951, 14; Kraus 1919, 15. Husserl later recalled the artistic skill of Ida Brentano, who, as mentioned, painted his portrait together with Brentano: see Husserl 1976, 52.
73. Stumpf 1922, 75.
citizenship in order to marry Ida. Moreover, despite the contrary opinion expressed by celebrated jurists like Glaser and Unger, he found himself subject to section 63 of the Austrian civil code, which stated that ‘men of the Church who have taken holy orders cannot enter into a valid marriage’. Consequently, in order to take Ida von Lieben as his bride, Brentano resigned his university chair and applied for and obtained Saxon citizenship in Leipzig, where on 16 September 1880 he was finally able to marry. On his return to Vienna, he qualified again as a Privatdozent – thereby starting from scratch, so to speak. The Ministry had in fact promised to renew his appointment as professor; but the promise was never kept, despite repeated appeals by the Faculty between 1884 and 1893, and his chair was successively occupied by Mach, and then by Boltzmann.

Notwithstanding his fame and the respect that he commanded, this was understandably a difficult period for Brentano. Although he had numerous friends and admirers, he once again found himself subject to violent attacks by enemies who dubbed him, variously, a ‘damned Jesuit’, a ‘mystic’, a ‘scholastic’, a mere ‘belletrist’, and even a ‘golden Christ’, the reference being to his wife’s conspicuous wealth.

Although he was beset by personal and academic difficulties, the years spent by Brentano in Vienna (from 1874 to 1880 as professor, and then until 1895 as Privatdozent) were certainly years of success. Loved by his students, a recognized member of Viennese academia, a correspondent abroad for the Berlin Academy, Brentano was a celebrity in the city and lionized by cultivated society, where he read his poetry and circulated the riddles for which he was famous.

Active in Vienna at the time was the Philosophische Sozietät (Philosophical Society) directed by Alois Höfler. This society organized lectures, published a newsletter and miscellaneous works, and set itself the task of promoting philosophy in the city. Brentano took part in the society’s activities between 1888 and 1893: in fact, on 27 April 1888, it was he who delivered its opening lecture on the methods of historical analysis in the philosophical

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74. See Kraus 1926, 7ff. Section 63 of Austrian law on confessional matters stated: “Ecclesiastics who have entered the highest orders may not contract a valid marriage”. On this question see “Priesterlehren und Mönchsehen”, Sonderabdruck aus der Festschrift zum 100jährigen Jubiläum des ABGB, 1911. The Brentano affair also damaged the career of Kraus himself because he had spoken out in Brentano’s favour: in fact, when the chair in philosophy of law fell vacant at Prague, he was passed over in favour of Krasnopolski.

75. On Boltzmann and Brentano see Blackmore 1995, especially vol. 1, ch. 6, and vol. 2, ch. 6.

76. See Brentano 1879, a riddle book dedicated to ‘a highly talented friend, the Baroness Dora von Giagern’.

77. See Brentano 1879. On the importance of the Viennese philosophical society see Blackmore 1995, 301-4.
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field. Among speakers to the Society during this period were von Ehrenfels, Twardowski, Zimmermann, Schmidkunz, Meynert, Breuer, and of course Höfler.

As a Privatdozent in Vienna Brentano may have gathered around himself a smaller group of students, but he devoted just as much attention to them as he had previously done to his ‘school’. Among his new pupils were the biologist Fleisch, the already-mentioned Freud, and the future psychiatrist Meynert. They were frequent guests at Brentano’s home in Oppolzergasse, or they stayed with him during the holidays – first at St. Gilgen in upper Austria, where Brentano indulged his fondness for swimming and sailing, and then at Schönbehüll on the Danube, close to Melk in the Wachau district. During the summertime, Brentano’s guests were Lutoslawski, Petroniewicz, Révész, Rolfes and Schneider.

Brentano’s lectures in those years dealt with possible reform of elementary logic, descriptive psychology and a psychology of the affects, and with various topics that comprised in nuce his theory of moral knowledge. Several articles based on these lectures were published: Was für ein Philosoph manchmal Epoche macht (What is of Importance for the Philosopher) (1876), Vom Ursprung sittlicher Erkenntnis (The Origin of Knowledge of Right and Wrong) (1889), Das Genie (The Genius) (1892), Vom Schlechten als Gegenstand dichterischer Darstellung (The Negative as the Object of Poetic Representation) (1892), Über die Zukunft der Philosophie (On the Future of Philosophy) (1893), Die vier Phasen der Philosophie und ihr augenblicklicher Stand (1895) (The Four Phases of Philosophy and its Current State).

In these writings Brentano set out his views on the decadent state of philosophy of his time, which he believed was due to the influence of German idealism. More generally, he saw the history of Western philosophy as natu-
rally dividing into three broad periods (Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Modern Age), each of which characterized by alternating phases of progress and decadence determined by the use or otherwise of a scientific method of analysis.87

Brentano also envisioned the establishment of a psychology laboratory at the University of Vienna – convinced as he was that only the experimental method of the exact sciences could prevent philosophical misunderstandings. While awaiting official permission to open the laboratory, he studied and wrote on the theory of colours and the tonal qualities. He also interested himself in optical illusions, conducting a number of experiments and indeed devising a variant on the Müller-Lyer illusion.88

Several years later, following the request first submitted by Brentano in 1888, the Education Ministry issued a order for the creation of a psychology laboratory; however, the provision carried the stipulation that the laboratory’s director was to be Brentano’s pupil, Hillebrand. The Ministry had rejected the candidatures of both Brentano and Marty on the ground that, notwithstanding their recommendation by the Faculty, they were unsuitable for the post because they had abandoned the Church.

Some years after the birth of a son – Johannes Christian Michael (Giò) in 1888 – to the couple, Brentano’s young wife died following a sudden illness. Brentano nevertheless continued to press for recognition of his marriage under Austrian law in the years that followed, but to no avail. As a consequence of these further difficulties, and having for some time been worried about the circumstances of his sister Claudine, he tried to persuade her to leave her convent and take care of him and his young son. He even petitioned the Bishop of Vienna to that end, but without success. Embittered for this and the other reasons that we have seen, Brentano now decided to leave Vienna for ever, bidding his farewells to the city and to Austria in Meine letzten Wünsche für Österreich (My Last Wishes for Austria) which first appeared in Neue Freie Presse in December 1983. The article provoked violent reactions, among which those of Krasnopolski in Prague.89

In the years that followed Brentano resided in various European countries: first in Switzerland, at Lausanne, and then in Italy, where he took out citizenship, amongst other things in order to protect his young son against the danger of war. He spent more than twenty years in Italy, first living briefly in Rome and Palermo and then settling in Florence.90

87. See also Brentano 1893; 1963, and Chapter 10.
88. See Brentano 1979, and Chapter 4.
89. See Brentano 1895; Kraus 1926, cit in En.tr. 1976, 8.
90. See Albertazzi 1997b; Albertazzi, Poli 1993.
Chapter 1: A life, a novel

5 BRENTANO IN ITALY

Brentano decided to settle in Italy in 1895, and thus returned to the land of his forefathers. Two years later he took the difficult decision to marry Emilie Ruprecht, a young woman whom he had met at Schönbühl and whose parents owned a house in the town’s surroundings. Brentano had frequently spent holidays in Schönbühl, which he now came to regard as his new Aschaffenburg, and he set about repairing the roof of the house, clearing out the cellars, planting trees in the garden and rebuilding the fountain.

Brentano’s decision to marry again was taken, it seems, in order to ensure motherly guidance for his young son. It was to his wife Emilie that he dictated his last writings, when he succumbed to the degenerative eye disease that an operation performed in 1903 could not prevent. Emilie was an excellent companion for Brentano: she ran his household efficiently, and above all she enabled him to work in the last years of his life – for which purpose she even studied Greek, so that she could read aloud to Brentano passages that he wished to recall. Emilie’s attachment to Brentano was made dramatically evident in a note written after her husband’s death, which shows her nervous collapse on the death of her husband.

Brentano lived the life of an intellectual in exile, spending his winters in Florence and his summers at the seaside – frequently at Viareggio – or in the Wachau.

As said, Brentano’s first stopping place in Italy was Palermo, where he made the acquaintance of the singular figure of Dottor Amato Pojero, a banker who for reasons of health had retired to private life and devoted himself to the patronage of ethics and theosophy. It was Pojero who was responsible for the founding of the Società per gli Studi Filosofici (Society for Philosophical Studies) which later became the Biblioteca Filosofica (Philosophical Library) of Palermo. Pojero was a close associate of Brentano’s during the first years of his sojourn in Italy; and it was Pojero who introduced him to Vailati on one of his visits to Palermo. The letters from Pojero to Vailati in the latter’s collected correspondence testify to almost daily meetings between Brentano and Pojero in

91. On Brentano’s son see Mayer-Hillebrand 1969.
92. L. Brentano 1931, 331.
93. See Albertazzi, Poli 1993, 333.
94. On Pojero see Fatta 1946.
95. The society’s members included Giovanni Seneria, Gaetano Salvemini, Cosmo Gaastella, Giovanni Gentile, and Gaetano Mosca.
96. Giovanni Vailati (1863-1909) was an exponent of Italian pragmatism whose main referent was C. S. Peirce. Vailati should have edited the works of Evangelista Torricelli for the Academia dei Lincei, but the project foundered. On Vailati see below.
Palermo, and they also chronicle their endless discussions on philosophical questions – theological ones in particular.97

On his arrival in Florence Brentano first set up residence in the San Nicolò district. He then moved to a villa at via Bellosguardo 10, on a hill overlooking the city and in an area whose residents – to mention only the most recent of them – have included Nathaniel Hawthorne, Aldous Huxley, the Brownings, D. H. Lawrence, and Adolf Hildebrand. During Brentano’s time, another resident in the neighbourhood was the German-American philosopher John Bernard Stallo, a friend of Mach and also of Brentano.

The years that Brentano spent in Florence were among the happiest of his life. He wrote about them as follows to Schell:

Bulwer-Lytton wrote The Last Days of Pompeii on my terrace, and close by is the villa where Foscolo composed his Inno alle grazie, and the one where Galileo spent thirteen years of enviable incarceration. Relations at home are most happy. And should I close my eyes for ever, I already know that Emilie will lead my son faithfully and firmly along the road that I have chosen for him. He is already attending lectures at the Istituto Superiore (equivalent to a university), without ever having known a gymnasium with its stupefying monotony. His contacts with Italian, English, German and Russian families, and his living half in Italy, half in Austria, have expanded his heart and mind. He will never be afflicted by a strictly national Ipsissimus (overly inflated Ego).98

In Florence, Brentano conducted correspondence with Mach, Enriques, Lutowlaski, Schneider, and received visits from philosophers and scientists. Cosmo Guastella, an exponent of Italian phenomenism, went to visit him; and in 1905 Boltzmann decided to spend a period of time in Florence, both to escape Vienna’s inclement weather and to discuss scientific questions with Brentano.99 He was a guest at Brentano’s home for several weeks, during which time they discussed what Boltzmann called his ‘arithmosophy’, as well as perceptive continua and the theory of probability.100 It seems that Brentano played a major role in Boltzmann’s philosophical development: for from an aggressive denigrator of philosophy he now turned into an attentive student of philosophical issues, going so far as to propound his own ‘vision of the world’ which he couched in realist terms. As to Brentano’s theories, these Boltzmann described as a kind of ‘naïve

97. See Albertazzi, Poli 1993.
98. See Hasenfup 1978, 78.
99. All that remains of their discussions are two undated pages entitled ‘Conversations with Brentano’, and a further two entitled ‘Cause and effect’ in which several of Brentano’s theories are discussed. For further information on the relationship between Boltzmann and Brentano see Blackmore 1995, especially vol. 1, ch. 6. See also Brentano 1988b, 214.
criticism’ like that of Petroniewicz, whose theories were of interest to both thinkers. In Florence at the time, idealism’s monopoly over Italian philosophy (it also held sway at the nearby University of Pisa) was being countered by other movements, notably pragmatism, which spread for the most part externally to the universities in cultural societies and the pages of learned journals. The proponents of pragmatism did not belong to the university establishment – and they often did not do so out of personal choice.101 Brentano rapidly made a signal impression on the Florentine cultural milieu, so much so that Vailati wrote to Vacca that also to be counted as a Florentine was “Professor Brentano, perhaps the most brilliant professor of philosophy that Germany currently boasts”.102

In Florence, philosophical inquiry was conducted more in cultural associations, in the cafes, and in the journals, than in the university lecture halls. But it is not easy to define exactly what type of philosophy this was. Generally speaking, at least in its principal features, it could be called pragmatism; however, apart from the simple observation that the Americans themselves managed to come up with at least thirteen different definitions of pragmatism, given that even its founders (James and Peirce) displayed significant differences, in Florence the pragmatists soon became a markedly heterogeneous group, with on the one hand the literati, most notably Papini and Prezzolini, the defenders of a ‘magical’ pragmatism, and on the other, the scientists, Vailati and Calderoni, the proponents of a ‘logical’ pragmatism.103 For the former, pragmatism was a method for acting upon spirits and upon things, for remaking the world; for the latter, it was the analysis of the meanings of propositions and theories.104 Florence’s intellectual café society apart, a generally little-known aspect of the city’s cultural life at the time was the meetings held by the Biblioteca Filosofica. In truth, this institution already had a precedent in Palermo: the already-mentioned library created by the endeavours of Amato Pojero.

In Florence, too, Brentano’s philosophical referent was the city’s Biblioteca Filosofica. Founded as a non-profit corporation in 1908 as the Biblioteca Circolante, Scienza, Filosofia, Religioni (Circulating Library of Science, Philosophy and Religion), the library provided a forum for the most outstanding intellectuals of the period; and it included Giovanni Amendola, one of the La Voce (The Voice) moralists, among its directors.105 The Biblioteca Filosofica was a meeting place for Florentine intellectuals of every doctrinal persuasion:

101. See Albertazzi 1997b.
104. See below.
105. Giovanni Amendola (1882-1926), writer and politician, wrote on La Voce. His essays deal with Maine de Biran, theory of categories and ethics.
members of the Florentine Pragmatist Club, idealists, neo-Kantians, psychologists, spiritualists. At the Florence Biblioteca Filosofica Brentano made the acquaintance of Calderoni, De Sarlo, and once again Vailati, who had moved to Florence in the meantime.\textsuperscript{106} Moreover, as well as Papini, Vailati, Calderoni and Calò\textsuperscript{107}, an occasional participant at the meetings of the Biblioteca Filosofica was Gentile himself: the group of intellectuals that frequented the library therefore stood close to theosophy and to pragmatism, but also contained elements of idealism.\textsuperscript{108} When presented to the group, Brentano’s classification of psychic activities as set out in 1874 in *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*\textsuperscript{109} was generally accepted by the psychologists – with the exception of Calò\textsuperscript{110} – and well received by the philosophers, and initially by Croce.\textsuperscript{111} The debate was conducted in the Italian journals, in correspondence, in Brentano’s texts, and in his own additions to the Italian edition of *The Classification of Psychic Phenomena* edited by Mario Puglisi and published by Carabba in 1913 as part of Papini’s *Cultura dell’Anima* series.\textsuperscript{112} These years also saw publication of *Aristoteles und seine Weltanschauung* (Aristotle and his Worldview) (1911), and *Aristoteles Lehre vom Ursprung des menschlichen Geistes* (Aristotle’s Doctrine on the Origin of the Human Soul) (1911).

Brentano soon became a centre of attraction for the exponents of philosophical debate in Florence, and his house on the hill was much frequented by the city’s intellectuals. But then again, as Brentano wrote to Mach:

> Were you to live in my stead on the hill of Bellosguardo, I think that the path would be thronged with pilgrims, and Papini and the other young intellectuals of the city would regard you with enormous respect.\textsuperscript{113}

\textsuperscript{106} On the Biblioteca Filosofica see Garin 1962, 89ff.

\textsuperscript{107} Giovanni Calò (1882-?) taught Pedagogy at Florence University from 1911 onwards. His interests were mainly in ethics.

\textsuperscript{108} See the publications by the Biblioteca Filosofica of Florence, Florence 1908.

\textsuperscript{109} Brentano 1995a.

\textsuperscript{110} See the note by Puglisi to the Italian translation of F. Brentano’s *The Classification of Psychic Phenomena*, 1913, 111. According to Calò, there is already a weak recognition of being in the representation, as well as in the judgement. In Puglisi’s view, however, Calò was confusing primary representation with secondary judgement. On this see Brentano’s theory of the dual judgement, Chapter 5, and Calò 1908.


\textsuperscript{112} *Psychologie* II includes chapters 5-9 of the 1874 *Psychologie* I and a number of appendices. See also Puglisi 1921. Puglisi was also responsible for the diffusion of Brentano’s thought in general: see Puglisi 1912, 333-85. See Chapter 4.

\textsuperscript{113} Letter from Brentano to Mach dated 16 February 1908, in Brentano 1988b, 216-17.
Chapter 1: A life, a novel

Brentano attended a number of meetings of the Biblioteca Filosofica. Still extant are records of the meeting of 22 February 1910 convened to discuss Amendola’s lecture delivered two days before on “Etica e Religione” (Ethics and Religion) and the problem of grace, and of Brentano’s lecture of 30 March on the same topic.\textsuperscript{114} The minutes for the meeting also report the questions put by Calderoni and Papini and the remarks by “Professor Brentano”. Brentano’s paper argued against Amendola by maintaining that the essence of Christianity lay in faith, not in the extraordinary event of grace.\textsuperscript{115} The meeting had a sequel on 30 March, when the relationship between will and morality (another theme dear to the pragmatists), as well as beliefs, were discussed. Amendola denied that individual will prevailed; Calderoni insisted on emphasising the rules which govern human actions in every society – rules which require no justification; Brentano recommended a search for these regulatory principles through psychological inquiry. But then the discussion petered out inconclusively, as it so often did at those meetings.

De Sarlo delivered his inaugural lecture for the Circolo di studi filosofici (Philosophy Club) at the Biblioteca Filosofica, in whose building the society had its premises. Among the society’s members were Calderoni, Calò, Fanciulli\textsuperscript{116} and Assagioli.\textsuperscript{117} It was during the society’s meetings that Morselli, Levi and Ferrari met; and thereafter it became an Associazione per gli studi di psicologia (Association for psychological studies) and published a bulletin. The members of the Association met every month, with the purpose of “showing that psychology occupies a distinctive place between philosophy and psychiatry”.

The influence exerted by Brentano on the Florentine intellectuals is evidenced in particular by De Sarlo. The nature of this influence is controversial, and still today the documentary evidence – letters, diaries and citations – that would settle the matter is insufficient. However, there do exist two indirect sources of great significance: De Sarlo’s writings, and the type of analysis conducted at his laboratory.\textsuperscript{118}

That the relations between De Sarlo and Brentano were enduring and fruitful seems beyond doubt. De Sarlo dedicated one of his last works, Introduzione alla filosofia (Introduction to Philosophy) to “his master Bren-

\textsuperscript{114}. Bollettino della Biblioteca filosofica, February-March 1910, 196-9.
\textsuperscript{115}. Bollettino della Biblioteca filosofica, February-March 1910, 220-5.
\textsuperscript{116}. Giuseppe Fanciulli (1881-1951), pedagogist and writer. His interests were mainly in child psychology and pedagogy.
\textsuperscript{117}. Roberto Assagioli (1888-1974), Psychologist and founder of psychosynthesis. His interests were mainly in spirituality and in holistic approach to the human psyche.
\textsuperscript{118}. For detailed discussion see Albertazzi, Poli 1993; Albertazzi, Poli 1999; Albertazzi, Cimino, Gori-Savellini 1999. On Brentano’s Italian correspondents see Baumgartner 1993.
tano”. His previous writings, moreover, especially *I dati dell’esperienza psichica* (*The Data of Psychic Experience*) (1903) and the studies and researches collected in *Psicologia e filosofia* (*Psychology and Philosophy*) (1913), are essentially Brentanian works.

De Sarlo was also editor of a journal, *Cultura filosofica* (*Philosophical Culture*), which published numerous articles on the psychic functions and concerned itself in particular with research relative to the theory of judgement. From the first years of the new century onwards, De Sarlo’s theories were closely similar to those which Brentano had developed during his Florentine period, and which circulated at the time only in the form of dictations or through conversations with friends. In 1913, moreover, De Sarlo published an article entitled “*La classificazione dei fatti psichici*” (*The Classification of Psychic Facts*) which he had presented to the second Convention of the Italian Psychology Society held in that year in Rome, and which drew, even in its title, on Brentano’s *Classification of Psychic Phenomena*.

After the anti-academic journals of the first years of the century, *Cultura filosofica* was created in the intent that it should be an academic journal. It was distinguished by its criticism and rejection of idealism and positivism, and by its defence of a lay spiritualism. Unlike Leonardo and La Voce, the manifestos of the Florentine avant-garde, De Sarlo’s journal set itself the task of reviewing and disseminating the most significant works, Italian and foreign, produced by the various philosophical movements of the time. The journal continued in publication for eleven years until 1917, passing through three phases: in the first, it waged a polemic against positivism in its various versions; in the second it developed a lay spiritualism; in the third, after the Great War, it entrenched its positions. Distinguishing *Cultura filosofica* from the other journals of the time was the cultural unity of its collaborators and its rational division of tasks – features which testify to the existence of a genuine school of philosophy.

Obviously, given the intellectual interests of its editor, *Cultura filosofica* published numerous articles on the psychic functions, with particular empha-

119. See De Sarlo 1928.

120. Warranting mention among De Sarlo’s other publications are De Sarlo 1903; 1907; 1914; 1924; 1927; 1928; 1930. For further information see Luccio and Primi 1993 and the bibliography provided therein. On De Sarlo see also Albertazzi 1992-3; Garin 1999.

121. See De Sarlo 1913. In the view of some critics (Bonaventura, Garin), this is the text in which Brentano’s influence on De Sarlo is most evident. According to Luccio and Primi, the essential ideas of the essay were already present in De Sarlo 1903: see Luccio and Primi 1993, 112-3. A reading of Brentano’s *Nachlaß* and of certain appendices to *Psychologie* II and III confirms that the theories and arguments of De Sarlo 1903 closely resemble Brentano’s at the time. Still to be established is the form taken by the mutual influence between the two authors.
sis on empirical investigations grounded on the theory of judgements. But it also published several articles on Brentano’s logic, perhaps most notably Calò’s essay, “Concezione tetica e concezione sintetica del giudizio” (Thetic and Synthetic Conception of Judgment),\textsuperscript{122} some of whose arguments were subsequently taken up by Bonaventura in “Il giudizio particolare. Sua natura e sua funzione nel ragionamento” (The Particular Judgment. Its Nature and Function in Reasoning),\textsuperscript{123} and also a series of six articles by Guido Rossi entitled “Una nuova teoria del giudizio e del raziocinio” (A New Theory of Judgment and Reasoning),\textsuperscript{124} which also carefully examined the theories of Marty and Hillebrand.

One of the last issues of the journal printed an announcement – an extremely rare occurrence – of Brentano’s death and informed its readers that an article on Brentano’s logic would be published in a later issue. However, the journal closed before this article could appear.

As for the role played by Brentano in De Sarlo’s decision to open a psychology laboratory at the Istituto di Studi Superiori (Institute of Higher Studies), although one cannot speak of a strictly causal relationship, one should not forget that Brentano considered experimental research to be a necessary complement to descriptive psychology.\textsuperscript{125} After De Sarlo’s conversion to descriptive psychology, the establishment of a psychology laboratory seemed the natural next step, regardless of his positivist origins and his previous traineeship in Reggio Emilia. A number of excellent experimentalists received their training in the laboratory and then worked there, like Aliotta and especially Bonaventura and Calabresi. Aliotta wrote a book in 1905 in which he concluded that the purpose of measurement in psychology is to determine \textit{qualitative variations} in phenomena.\textsuperscript{126}

Bonaventura, who in 1923 took over from De Sarlo as director of the psychology laboratory, created a work group which included, amongst others, Calabresi and Guinsburg.\textsuperscript{127} Under his supervision, Calabresi wrote a monograph on the psychic present, thus continuing research previously begun by

\begin{itemize}
\item[122.] Calò 1908, 337-68.
\item[123.] See Bonaventura 1914. Enzo Bonaventura (1891-1948) wrote on perceptual space and time. See below.
\item[124.] Rossi 1926.
\item[125.] See Aliotta 1905. On the situation of Italian psychology at the beginning of the century see Benussi 1906b.
\item[126.] Antonio Aliotta (1881-1964) worked in psychology from 1903 to 1905, on short memory and the different types of imagination. His main work is on the problem of measurement in experimental psychology. See Poli 1999a, and Chapter 4.
\item[127.] R.L. Guinsburg was a collaborator of Bonaventura. He wrote on simultaneity of etherogeneous sensations.
\end{itemize}
Aliotta and which constituted one of the main strands of Bonaventura’s research.128

Generally speaking, Bonaventura examined, from the point of view of psychology and with experimental support, the notions that formed the core of Brentano’s metaphysics developed during his Florentine period, namely the problem of the *nature of the presentation* starting from the *perceptive continuum* – in particular the temporal continuum.129

Renata Calabresi worked in the laboratory at the end of the 1920s. By that time Brentano had been dead for some years, but the teachings of De Sarlo, whose pupil she had been, and her training under Bonaventura, made her into a full-fledged experimentalist in descriptive psychology. Her research on the nature, duration and components of the act of presentation in the psychic present once again subjected the tenets of Brentano’s psychology to experimental verification. This becomes even more evident when one reads Brentano’s writings on the continuum; but the Appendices to *Psychologie II* (*The Classification of Psychic Phenomena*) already show that the later Brentano was turning towards a metaphysics of the moment-now, after his recasting of the indirect modes of consciousness – and in particular of the temporal modes of presentation.130

The other group of intellectuals with whom Brentano associated in Florence consisted of the so-called ‘scientific pragmatists’ – the already-mentioned Vailati and Calderoni. Vailati, at that time a lecturer at Siracusa, met Brentano in Palermo in the early 1900s: from their meeting blossomed a friendship and intellectual collaboration which continued without interruption until Vailati’s death in 1909.

The relationship between the two intellectuals is documented by a large body of correspondence in which they discuss inter alia problems of classical geometry, Euclid’s postulate of parallels, and Brentano’s concept of evidence-based deduction. What united them in particular was a shared anti-Kantianism.131

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128. See Calabresi 1930. Aliotta’s work was well known among European experimental psychologists at the time, as shown by the high regard in which it was held by Katz, who later extended his esteem to Bonaventura’s work. Katz, in fact, proposed Bonaventura for an appointment at the University of Jerusalem when he was forced to leave his post in Florence by the racial laws. On this see Gori-Savellini 1993.

129. See in particular Albertazzi 1993a. See also Chapter 7.

130. See Albertazzi 1995/6, and Chapters 6, 7.

131. See Vailati’s review of Orestano’s work, where, intervening in the nativism-empiricism debate, Vailati described Kantianism as “that tendency … to mistake for universal and permanent conditions of mental activity conditions which are nothing but limitations, or constructions, or artifices of representations specific to a particular stage of the culture”. See Vailati 1987, vol. I, 334-8, 335. On the question of the contribution of Kantianism to Brentanism see Albertazzi 1996c.
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Vailati was interested in Brentano’s reform of logic, about which he intended to write; and Brentano himself was ready to collaborate on the project, thinking that he could thus remedy the inaccuracies perpetrated by Hillebrand, who had previously written on the subject.\footnote{Letter from Brentano to Vailati dated 24 March 1900, in Vailati 1971, 268-74. Cf. Hillebrand 1891; Poli 1993b, 1998a. See also Chapter 5.}

Vailati’s interest in Brentano’s logic was part of his more general interest in language, towards which he adopted a perspective which resembled the nominalist theory developed by Brentano in those years. The intention of both thinkers was to restore verbal expressions with their authentic meanings, eliminating the ambiguity of linguistic expressions. They both believed that defining the exact meaning of terms constituted \textit{per se} progress in science, given that it eliminated a series of errors due to the analogies and flaws of ordinary language.

Still to be established is the nature of the reciprocal influence between the two philosophers, and with specific regard to Brentano’s shift to reist theses, which was connected with critical studies of language. To be borne in mind is that one of Brentano’s associates in Florence was Marty, so that one cannot attribute Brentano’s switch to reism \textit{in toto} to his meeting with Vailati. It should also be pointed out that Vailati himself met Marty during the third Psychology Conference of Munich, and that he was aware of his writings: it was Brentano, in fact, who sent him Marty’s \textit{Ursprung der Sprache} (\textit{On the Origin of Language}) and Vailati for his part obtained and read the series of articles published by Marty in \textit{Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche Philosophie} (A Quarterly Journal for Scientific Philosophy). Vailati, moreover, maintained constant epistolary contact with Marty, of whom he appreciated in particular his distinction between semantics and synsemantics.\footnote{Letter from Vailati to Brentano dated 27 March 1901, in Vailati 1971, 285; and letter from Vailati to Brentano dated 21 August 1908, in Vailati 1971, 312.}


The closeness of view between Brentano and Vailati, however, cannot be taken to imply that they agreed upon everything. For instance, Brentano criticised Vailati’s review published in \textit{Rivista di biologia generale} of Mach’s \textit{Analyse der Empfindungen} (The Analysis of Sensations). Moreover Vailati’s Paris paper gave an interpretation \textit{ad usum Vailati} of Brentano’s doctrine of the psychic activities where Brentano’s psychological distinctions were made
to correspond to distinctions employed in logic among different kinds of propositions. In short, Vailati ignored the ‘intentionality’ so characteristic of Brentano’s descriptive psychology, and which was instead central to De Sarlo’s reading of Brentano in his works.

On Brentano’s part, his correspondence and meeting with Vailati seem to have had a number of consequences, given that there are several logic-based clarifications in the Italian edition of his *Classification of Psychic Phenomena* which apparently reflect conversations between the two philosophers. Moreover, in Florence, Vailati acted as the link between Brentano and the wider group of pragmatists. Indeed, on advising Papini to contact Calderoni, he suggested that he should also visit Brentano, who was then about to take up permanent residence in Florence. Even before, he had arranged a meeting between Brentano and Calderoni – a young man with “a singular aptitude and passion for philosophical studies”, as he described him in a letter. Brentano immediately expressed great admiration for Calderoni, who thereafter was his guest at Schönübühl, together with Vailati, on several occasions during the summer holidays.

In the case of Calderoni, too, the encounter between the logical pragmatists and Brentano came about on the basis of linguistic analysis. Calderoni was engaged in a thorough critique of language in an endeavour to free it from analogies and fictitious concepts. His analyses of natural language convinced him that the ‘voluntary impulses’ (instincts and passions) were preceded or accompanied by a ‘clear and lucid consciousness’ of the act – the reference being to *beliefs* as described in Brentano’s *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, and to his ethics as set out in *Vom Ursprung sittlicher Erkenntnis* (On the Origin of Moral Knowledge) in particular.

Calderoni’s theories – with an evident over-stretching of Brentano’s views – identified the ‘clear and lucid’ consciousness of the judgment that preceded the impulses, turning them into voluntary acts, in the *recollection* of the consequences of an instinctive act. Finally, in Calderoni’s subsequent works, for instance his *Disarmonie economiche e disamonie sociali* (Economic and Social Imbalances) of utilitarian stamp, Brentano’s influence is entirely marginal.

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135. For a distinction between presentation and representation see the experimental studies of Benussi, in particular Benussi 1922-3. On this see Albertazzi 2001b.


137. See Vailati 1971, 284.

138. See Brentano 1902, especially § 26 and § 27.

139. See Modenato 1979, 63-4.

140. See Calderoni 1906, in Calderoni 1924, 284-344.
This outline of Brentano’s influence in Italy should also mention the transfer to that country of Benussi, a pupil of Meinong’s who had been director of the psychology laboratory at the University of Graz for many years. Benussi moved to Italy in the 1920s, a few years after Brentano’s death, but besides the fact that Bonaventura’s researches in Florence since the first decade of the 1900s had been closely connected with those of Meinong and Benussi, the latter’s return to Italy was significant in itself. In fact, by importing Meinong’s theory of production into Italy, Benussi gave it a development that had extremely fruitful outcomes: one of Benussi’s pupils in Padua was Cesare Musatti, and after him Fabio Metelli and Gaetano Kanizsa, the founder of Italian gestaltism.141

Thus, following the dispersion of De Sarlo’s school at Florence for various reasons, some of them political, Brentano’s descriptive psychology did not lapse into oblivion; instead, it acquired a specifically Italian character within the mainstream of Gestalt psychology. Today, the second and third generations of Benussi’s heirs still continue that tradition.142

6 THE LAST YEARS AND BEYOND

The years that Brentano spent in Florence were also fruitful from a philosophical point of view. Despite his increasing blindness, he developed a variation on his thought which took the name of reism and was not uninfluenced by his association with the Italian pragmatists.143 Moreover, he undoubtedly found the Florence of the time congenial.144

Brentano’s house on the hill of Bellosguardo became a meeting place for the Florentine intellectuals, but also for writers and thinkers from every part of Europe, as we have seen in the case of Boltzmann. And he also maintained lively and constant epistolary exchanges with his former pupils as well as with new correspondents.

Yet he lacked students, for which reason he long endeavoured to obtain permission from the Austrian Ministry of Education to open a private college, but without success. However, he maintained a number of students at his own expense in his own home, for example by having them work for him as secretaries. He was thus able to enjoy the company of new pupils, while his old ones continued to travel to his home in pilgrimage.

141. On Musatti during this period see Poli 1999b.
142. See Albertazzi 2001c.
143. This conception, according to which only things are real, was developed in Psychologie II and III.
144. See Albertazzi 1997c.
This period also saw publication of further works by Brentano, including *Untersuchungen zur Sinnespsychologie* (Researches in Sense Psychology), and the already mentioned *Aristotle and his Worldview*, and *Aristotle’s Doctrine on the Origin of the Human Soul*. Despite an operation on both eyes in 1903, Brentano planned to put together a definitive edition of his Aristotelian studies – although all that remains of this work are the preliminary dictations for it.

However, the most important developments in Brentano’s thought during his Florentine period are to be found in his *Nachlaß*, and they concern his classification of psychic phenomena and his metaphysical doctrine of the continua. While in Florence, in fact, Brentano reflected long on the nature of the psychic present and worked on the relationship between presentation and judgement – taking what was a dangerously Kantian line for an avowed anti-Kantian like himself – and came to envision a metaphysics based on the perceptive continua which once again drew on Aristotelian theses. *Psychologie III, i.e. Vom sinnlichen und noetischen Bewußtseins* (On Sensory and Noetic Consciousness) conceived by Brentano as an introduction to metaphysics, was certainly also a product of the years spent in Italy.

As to the last years of Brentano’s life, Stumpf’s recollection as follows:

Anyone who saw Brentano in these later years can only think with great emotion of the calm, mildness and goodness of his spirit, and of the uncomplaining patience with which he bore the onset of the twilight and then the dark night in which his blindness enveloped him. The only things that called forth his indignation and sharp condemnation, now as before, were moral wickedness, especially large-scale injustice in the relations of peoples toward one another […].

When Italy joined the First World War in May 1915, Brentano moved to Zurich – this being the only option available to him, given that as an Italian citizen he was forbidden to enter German territory. Once again, as so many times during his lifetime, he was spiritually torn between a German world that he loved, and which he identified with Austria, and the Prussian ideals that he had always rejected.

Brentano died peacefully in Zurich on 17 March 1917. His ashes were transported to Aschaffenburg and placed in the family vault, where they remain until this day.

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146. Brentano 1911b.
147. Brentano 1911c.
148. See Albertazzi 1996c.
149. Stumpf 1919a; Eng. tr. in Stumpf 1976, 42.
Chapter 1: A life, a novel

After Brentano’s death, the bulk of his unpublished writings – in large part dictated to his wife Emilie – went through various vicissitudes, fortunately with a happy outcome. His son Johannes (1888-1969), a scientist who conducted research on infra-red rays, took the initiative to print Brentano’s unpublished writings with the help of Kraus and Kastil. At the same time, in Prague, Masaryk was able to assemble sufficient funds to open a Brentano Gesellschaft with the relative Archive, and between 1921 and 1934 the first eleven volumes of the opera omnia were published. Felix Meiner Verlag of Leipzig undertook to publish all Brentano’s works, and between 1922 and 1936 brought out eleven volumes of them. When the German invasion of 1938 threatened, Johannes Brentano managed to save all the material by flying it out on the last plane bound for Britain, to which country he emigrated owing to his Jewish origins on his mother’s side, and where he subsequently obtained a professorship. Later, fearing a German invasion of Britain as well, Johannes Brentano and his wife moved to the United States, taking with them two suitcases containing Brentano’s manuscripts. Once again Brentano’s writings had an adventurous destiny. Today, we still await a critical edition of his posthumously published works purged of the interpolations that have so profoundly distorted them.

**Essential chronology of the life and works of Franz Brentano**

1838 16 January: Franz Clemens Honoratius Hermann Brentano was born at Marienberg am Rhein, near Boppard, into a family of ancient lineage whose members included Clemens Brentano and Bettina von Arnim.

1851 Brought up by his mother at Aschaffenburg in accordance with strict Catholic principles, together with four siblings: Maria Ludovica, Sophie, Claudia and Ludwig Joseph (Lujo), future economist, Nobel prize winner and a precursor of German social policy.

1855 Graduated from lycée and in the following year matriculated at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Munich, where he studied philosophy and theology for three semesters.

1858 Spent the summer semester at Würzburg, where idealism still predominated in the aftermath of Schelling and Baader, and also attended courses on theology. Then transferred for a semester to Berlin, where Trendelenburg taught, and subsequently for two semesters to Münster, where Clemens introduced him to scholastic philosophy.

1862 Obtained his teaching qualification at Tübingen with a thesis on the multiple meanings of being according to Aristotle.

1864 6 August: joined the priesthood after a brief retreat for reflection to a Dominican monastery in Graz.
1866 Qualified as a university teacher at Würzburg on discussion of twenty-five Habilitationstheses, one of which, entitled \textit{Vera philosophiae methodus nulla alia nisi scientia naturalis}, contained his entire philosophy in nuce.

1867 Published \textit{Die Psychologie des Aristoteles, insbesondere seine Lehre vom nous poietikos. Nebst einer Beilage über das Wirken des Aristotelischen Gottes}.

1872 Obtained an interim professorship of philosophy at Würzburg, where he formed his first group of pupils, among them Stumpf, Marty, Schell, Commer and von Hertling.


1873 Resigned his interim professorship for no apparent reason and continued to teach in Würzburg as a Privatdozent until the March of that year.

11 April: under attack by the more reactionary members of the faculty and in profound religious crisis, definitively left the Catholic Church.

Undertook a journey to Paris, then to Luxembourg, and finally to Leipzig, where he became acquainted with the works of Fechner, Drobisch, Stern, Heinrich Weber, Strümpell and Windelband.

1874 Published \textit{Psychologie vom Empirischen Standpunkte} with the intention of continuing his university career.

22 January: following a summons by the Education Minister Stremayr, on recommendation by Lotze, appointed full professor at the University of Vienna.

22 April: delivered his inaugural lecture, \textit{Über die Gründe der Entmutigung auf philosophischem Gebiete}, at the University of Vienna. Formed a second group of pupils including Husserl, Meinong, Twardowski, Masaryk, Höfler, von Ehrenfels, Kreibig, and subsequently Kastil, Einsenmeyer, Utitz, H. Bergmann, Urbach and Engländer.

Wrote essays on the theory of colour, the musical qualities and optical illusions.

1876 Published \textit{Was für ein Philosoph manchmal Epoche macht}?

1880 16 September: resigned his professorship and married Ida von Lieben in Leipzig. Returned to Vienna and re-qualified as a Privatdozent with Fleisch, Freud and Meynert now among his pupils. Published \textit{Vom Ursprung sittlicher Erkenntnis} (1889), \textit{Das Genie} (1892), \textit{Vom Schlechten als Gegenstand dichterischer Darstellung} (1892), \textit{Über die Zukunft der Philosophie} (1893), \textit{Die vier Phasen der Philosophie und ihr augenblicklicher Stand} (1895).

1882-83 Published further writings on Aristotle: \textit{Über den Creatianismus des Aristoteles} (1882) and \textit{Offener Brief an Herrn Prof. Dr. Zeller} (1883).

1888-93 Took part in the activities of the \textit{Philosophische Sozietät} directed by Höfler and, on 27 April 1888, gave its opening lecture on methods of historical analysis in philosophy. Other speakers to the society were von Ehrenfels, Twardowski, Zimmermann, Schmidkunz, Meynert, Breuer and Höfler himself.
1894 On the death of his wife, left Vienna and Austria forever, bidding his farewells in *Meine letzten Wünsche für Österreich*.

1895 Travelled first to Switzerland (Lausanne) and then to Italy, where he took Italian citizenship. He remained in Italy for twenty years, first living briefly in Rome and Palermo and then settling in Florence. Made the acquaintance of Enriques, Vailati, Calderoni, Papini, Stallo, Pojero, De Sarlo, Faggi, Orestano and Puglisi.

1897 Married Emilie Ruprecht.

1903 Underwent an operation on both eyes. Planned a definitive edition of his Aristotelian studies, although only his preparatory dictations survive.

1913 Puglisi translated *Die Klassification der Psychische Phänomene* for publication by Carabba. Also published in this period: *Untersuchungen zur Sinnespsychologie* (1907), *Aristoteles und seine Weltanschauung* (1911) e *Aristoteles Lehre vom Ursprung des menschlichen Geistes* (1911).

1915 May: moved to Zurich when Italy joined the First World War.

1917 17 May: Franz Brentano died in Zurich. His ashes were removed to Aschaffenburg and placed in the family vault, where they remain until this day.
Chapter 2

Brentano and Aristotle

1 "METAPHYSICS WAS THE BEGINNING AND END OF HIS THOUGHT"  

The nineteenth century saw an Aristotelian ‘renaissance’. A movement of mainly German origin, its protagonists produced a series of critical editions of Aristotle’s works accompanied by commentaries and philological and conceptual analyses.2 A leading role in the revival was played by the Academy of Berlin, which supported publication of the critical edition of Aristotle’s works, the first two volumes of which were edited by Bekker (1831), while 1870 saw publication of Index Aristotelicus edited by Bonitz. In two years, from 1847 to 1849, two editions of Aristotle’s Metaphysics were also published, one edited by Schwegler (1847-48), the other by Bonitz (1848-49).

The critical edition of Aristotle’s works was accompanied, as said, by a series of analyses and commentaries, the most significant of them being Über die Kategorienlehre des Aristoteles (On Aristotle’s Theory of Categories) by Bonitz (1853), Die Aristotelischen Kategorienlehre (Aristotle’s Theory of Categories) by Schuppe (1866), and Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung (The Philosophy of the Greeks in Its Historical Development) by Zeller (1859-68).3

One of the protagonists of this Aristotelian renaissance was Adolf Trendelenburg, whose fame, as we have seen, prompted Brentano to move to Berlin to study under his supervision. In 1833 Trendelenburg had brought out his critical edition of Aristotle’s De Anima; in the same year, following his appointment in Berlin, he delivered a celebrated inaugural lecture entitled De Aristotelis categoriis. Subsequently, in 1837, he edited an anthology, Elementa logices Aristotelae and then, in 1846, published his most important work, Aristoteles Kategorienlehre.

Brentano, too, was a leading proponent of the Aristotelian revival. He put forward an original interpretation of Aristotle in his book On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle4 and was himself an Aristotelian. As we shall see,

2. On this see in particular Trendelenburg 1846; Bonitz 1853.
he developed his theory of intentional reference on specifically Aristotelian bases. In this regard, the writings of particular interest to Brentano were Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* and *De Anima*, texts that provided him with linkage to his further studies on empirical psychology.\(^5\)

Brentano’s studies on Aristotle are of a complexity such that they must be analysed along various dimensions:

1. **Historical-philological** (specifically, the relationship between Brentano and the exponents of the Aristotelian revival, in particular Zeller, Prantl, Trendelenburg and Bonitz).
2. **Psychological** (the connections between psychology and physiology, the problem of the intensity of the sensations and their measurement, the relationship between intensive and extensive magnitudes, etc.).
3. **Metaphysical** (in particular, the theme of being, its relation to the categories and the relationship between potential being and actual being, between accident and substance, and the problem of the continuum\(^6\)).
4. **Logico-ontological** (the theme of being with regard to true or false, etc.).

These various dimensions are interconnected, so that analysis of Brentano’s writings furnishes what can be described as a ‘diorama’ on the Aristotelian themes addressed by the last century’s Aristotelian Renaissance.\(^7\)

Specifically, Brentano’s book *The Psychology of Aristotle*\(^8\) marks his shift of interest from metaphysical questions to problems of a gnoseological and psychological nature, although these latter are still presented in the form of commentary on, and interpretation of, Aristotle’s theories. The book acts as a prelude to *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*,\(^9\) Brentano’s best-known work, and it also marks the point at which, as we shall see, Brentano’s interest turned to psychophysics.\(^10\)

Brentano’s transition from Aristotelian studies to psychology can be reconstructed if we examine his early works and single out a number of problems of concern to a theory of knowledge. Indeed, although Brentano’s first

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5. Brentano 1995a. Aristotle was central to Brentano’s thought throughout his lifetime, as testified by both his published works and his Nachlaß.
6. Also pertaining to this area of inquiry is the problem of the extensive and intensive magnitudes. See Chapter 3.
7. I have examined these themes in other publications. See, for example, Albertazzi 2004a.
10. See Albertazzi 1999a, 23 ff.
two works were apparently straightforward analytical commentaries on Aristotle with original interpretations of his thought, more careful examination reveals theoretical issues that were later addressed more thoroughly in his *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*.

Brentano himself was aware of the interest aroused by his book on the multiple meanings of being in Aristotle. It was an interest that was destined to endure, influencing a number of future readers, among them Heidegger, who would return to it on several occasions in his lifetime. The book is dedicated to Trendelenburg, "my most revered teacher, the scholar so highly distinguished in the advancement of our understanding of Aristotle". Brentano writes thus in the preface:

Humbly and with reluctance I put this small essay before the public; yet I feel that I deserve rather to be criticized for being too bold than too timid. For if one does what is too daring he must appear overly bold, even if he undertakes it with apprehension.\(^{11}\)

In the introduction to *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*, Brentano immediately states his point of attack on the problem in question by declaring that his intention is to demonstrate that Aristotle considered being not as synonymous but as homonymous.\(^{12}\) He writes:

But we have not yet established the fact that, according to Aristotle, being is asserted with several significations, not only with one (*Categories* 1.1 a 1.6). To begin with we shall establish this through several passages of the *Metaphysics* and show, at the same time, how the various distinctions of the several senses of being can be initially subordinated to four senses of this name; subsequently we shall proceed to a special discussion of each of them.\(^{13}\)

Brentano divides the various meanings given to ‘being’ by Aristotle into groups. The first of them was evinced in the fourth, sixth and seventh Books of the *Metaphysics*, where Brentano identifies four senses attributed to being:

1. Being as *privation* or *negation* (stereseis, apophaseis): being which has no existence externally to the intellect.

2. Being as *movement, generation* and *corruption* (hodos eis ousian, phthora): being external to the intellect but without particular or complete existence, as in *Physics* III.1.201a9.

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3. Being as affection of substance, product, generation (pathe ousias, poietika, genetika): being which has particular and complete existence but is not self-sufficient.

4. Being as substance (ousia).

A number of passages in the sixth Book of the Metaphysics furnish, however, a different classification of the meanings of being:

1. Being per accidens (on kata symbebekos).
2. Being tamquam verum (on hos alethes) and, obviously, non-being as false (me on hos pseudos).
3. Being according to the categories.
4. Potential being and actual being (dynamai kai energheian).

At the beginning of the seventh Book one finds a further classification:

1. Being as essence.
2. Being as something determined (ti esti).
3. Being as quality (poion).
4. Being as quantity (poson).

This third classification of the meanings of being provided by the Metaphysics is internal to the third item of the second group, namely being divided into the categories. This was the aspect of greatest interest to Aristotle, and according to Brentano, it was “the first and most comprehensive classification of being”.14

Brentano writes:

For, as we shall shortly show, of the four senses of being [on] to which we initially reduced the senses given in Book IV, the first corresponds to the second member of the classification of Book VI, the second to part of the fourth, while the third and the fourth are united in the third. Similar considerations also hold of the kinds of being mentioned in Met. ix.10, and in other places.15

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Chapter 2: Brentano and Aristotle

Brentano’s analysis concentrates in particular on the meanings comprised in the second classification, with the last two reversed:

1. Being per accidens.
2. Being as true and non-being as false.
3. Potential being and actual being.
4. Being of the categories.

We shall see that only the last two of these meanings of being pertain to metaphysics.

Brentano then discusses being per accidens (on kata symbebekos) a term which he translates, contrary to Brandis and close to the use later made of it by Schwegler, as ‘accidental being’ or ‘the accidental’. Being per se (on kath’hauto), in fact, is counterposed not by a ‘being in relative manner’ but by a being which is such only by virtue of the being of that to which it is accidentally joined. The meaning of this variant of being, Brentano points out, is clarified in the eleventh Book of Metaphysics, where Aristotle gives a definition of what is accidental. Aristotle writes:

Of some things we say that they are so always and of necessity (necessity having the sense not of compulsion, but that which we use in logical demonstration), and of others that they are so usually, but of others that they are so nor always and by necessity, but fortuitously. E.g., there might be a frost at midsummer, although this comes about neither always and of necessity nor usually; but it might happen sometimes. The accidental, then, is that which comes about, but not always nor of necessity nor usually. Thus we have now stated what the accidental is; and it is obvious why there can be no science of such a thing, because every science has its object that which is so always or usually, and the accidental falls under neither of these descriptions.

The features of being per accidens are as follows:

1. It is posterior to being per se.
2. It has neither generation nor corruption.
3. It is only being in name.

This last point is of particular importance because it reflects Aristotle’s distinction, drawn in Categories 5, 2 to 27, between being according to the definition and being according to the name and which relates to the impossi-

16. In German, “das Zufällige Sein”, or “das Zufällige”.
17. Aristotle, Metaphysics XI.viii.4-5.
Immanent Realism

ability of obtaining any knowledge about the nature of the subject from the predicate. To say that something is *per accidens* means that it is so only by name. There are substantially three types of being *per accidens*:

1. Something which has being insofar as another being accidentally inheres in it.
2. Something which has being insofar as it inheres accidentally in another being.
3. The on kata symbebekos which has being insofar as another being accidentally co-exists with it in the same subject.18

Brentano next analyses the concepts of being as true and non-being as false. He points out that, for Aristotle, truth and falsehood relate to affirmative and negative statements. Certain passages in *Metaphysics*, *De Anima* and the *Categories* seemingly suggest other interpretations in that they attribute falsehood and truth to things, not to judgements. But according to Brentano this is merely a matter of the polysemous use of the terms ‘true’ and ‘false’. In fact:

Like the name of being, with whose various senses this essay makes us familiar, the word “true” has many senses and can be applied to different things in the manner of an homonym. The sense of truth differs, depending on whether we speak of understanding and judgments, or of the truth of simple representations and definitions, or whether we call things themselves true. It is not the case that the same holds in all three cases, even if all of them stand in a relation to one and the same thing; they are called true not in the same, but in an analogous manner (not kath’hen [univocally], though perhaps pros hen kai mian physin [in reference to a particular unity and reality], *Met*. IV. 2, 1003a 33; not kata mian idean [by a single idea], though kat’analogian [by analogy], *Nichomachean Ethics*, I. 4. 1096 b 25).19

The theoretical core of the question is Aristotle’s conception of truth as consisting in the *concordance of knowledge with the thing* to which it applies, which is a relation of a particular kind because it involves a *cognitive operation* performed by the intellect. Consequently, being as truth and non-being as falsehood *reside only in the judgement* and in the relative *concepts*, because they give rise to affirmative or negative propositions. Brentano writes:

In this manner, even non-being, since it is a non-being, “is a non-being”, hence an on hos alethes [a being that is true], and similarly every mental construct, i.e., everything which in our mind can objectively become the subject of a true affirmative assertion,

Chapter 2: Brentano and Aristotle

will belong to it. Nothing we can form in our mind is so denuded of all reality that is altogether excluded from the domain of the on hos alethes [being as true]. Aristotle attest to this when he says, in Met. V. 12. 1019b6, “in a manner of speaking, privation (steresis) too is a possession20 (hexis). If this is so, then everything will be something by virtue of the fact that something positive belongs to it. But ‘being’ is used equivocally”. He wants to say that in a certain respect privation, too, can be envisaged as a state (hexis), hence a positive state, from which it follows that being deprived is also a kind of having, namely of privation.21

A point to be firmly borne in mind when dealing with true and false judgements, Brentano stresses, is that the being of the copula does not involve an actualization of being, or a real attribute. We affirm or deny something of every type of object, even fictitious ones, of negations, and of entirely arbitrary relations. This ‘secondary’ use of the copula in predicative judgements was to become a constant in Brentano’s subsequent development of his logical theories, and also in his theory of intentional reference, where, as we shall see, he also distinguished a ‘primary’, ontological use of the copula from a ‘secondary’, linguistic one.22

As to the relationship between metaphysics and logic (which was the central concern of Trendelenburg) and the predication of being in judgements, Brentano concludes as follows:

The reason for this lies in the operations of the human understanding, which combines and separates, affirms and negates, and not in the highest principles of reality [Realprinzipien] from which metaphysics attempts to gain an understanding of being as being (on he on).

Hence, together with accidental being (on kata symbebekos), it is to be excluded from metaphysical enquiry. But this does not mean that, like the latter, it is incapable of scientific treatment; on the contrary, says Aristotle, it should be the subject of enquiry, but it does not belong to metaphysics. Unless we are mistaken, all of logic has no other subject, regardless of whether it deals with genus, species and difference, definition, judgment, or argument. In any case, none of these has any sort of being outside the mind; thus they can only have being in the sense of being true (on hos alethes); hence logic as a purely formal science is distinguished from the other, real, parts of philosophy.23

Brentano then examines potential being and actual being. Together with being according to the categories, these forms relate to being as such, or being...
externally to the mind. In other words, here Brentano addresses the central topic of metaphysics, from which, as we have seen, being *per accidens* and being *tamquam verum* are to be excluded.

As Brentano points out at the beginning of the fourth chapter, the definition of potential being and actual being concerns:

The kind of being which is divided into actual [on energeia] and potential [on dunamei] is being in the sense in which this name is applied not only to that which is realized, that which exists, the really-being, but also to the mere possibility of being.24

And secondly:

Potential being [on dunamei] plays a large role in the philosophy of Aristotle, as does the concept of matter [hyle]. Indeed, these two concepts are coextensive, while actual being [on energeia] is either pure form, or is actualized by form.25

Potential being should not be confused with the possible being treated by Aristotle in *De Interpretatione*, which is a purely conceptual being and as such does not concern metaphysics. The definition of potential being, in particular, presupposes that of actual being.

Given that (i) this latter concept is central to Aristotle’s metaphysics, and also in consideration of the fact that (ii) Brentano’s theories have been consigned to history as a psychology of the act, it is important to examine the genesis of this definition in an entirely different context, that of Aristotelian metaphysics, also because (iii) as will be evidenced by further works by Brentano, *Sensory and Noetic Consciousness* (Psychology III) and *Kategorienlehre* (*The Theory of Categories*), the concept of act as actualization in relation to the dynamic between substance and accident was a constant focus of Brentano’s reflections throughout his lifetime.26

In Aristotle, Brentano observes, the concept of act is tied to that of action and the verbs of movement, which seem best able to express the concept of actual reality proper to metaphysics.

Examples of actual being are both a person actually knowing and a statue carved and finished in its details. Moreover, actual being is not only fully realized reality but also the process of its realization (entelecheia) in the teleological sense.

Conversely, examples of *potential being* in Aristotle’s metaphysics are the following:

1. The principle of movement or change.
2. The passive capacity to be moved by another.
3. Immovability or resistance to change.
4. Realization according to the good and according to desire.

This classification comprises the various meanings of the principle of *change* into something else, or into the same thing in different form, which is the principle of becoming.

Given that, according to Aristotle, potential being is to be found in all the categories and that in every category some things are said to be in-act and others in-potency, Brentano concludes:

If this is so, then it is clear that potential [dynaimei on] and as well as actual being [energeian], is said in many ways and can be called one only by analogy. This is necessarily the case with everything that reaches beyond the extension of any one, as Aristotle clearly indicates in *Eth. Ni.* I. 4. 1096a19, and other places.27

One of the problems concerning the difference between potential being and actual being is the *when*, or the temporal realization of the various modes of being. Corresponding to *potential being* is its realization as a *process*, while corresponding to *actual being* is actuality or the *completion of the actual being*. However, Brentano observes, this correspondence does not arise if one considers the respective *states* of potential being and actual being, because in this case the former precedes the latter, even though the completion may be brought about by a single process of becoming.

*Wherein lies the difference?*

The complication concerns not individual instances of potential being or actual being (for example, being white in potency and being white in act), but the *simultaneous union of different states*. Brentano writes:

This is a union no[t] different from those occurring between something that has actual being with a second and a third thing which has actual being, as when one and the same subject is actually a body, actually large, actually green, etc. In this case, the actuality of that which actually is does not belong to the potential object as such; for example, the actuality of the ore belongs to the ore as ore but not as a potential statue.28

27. Brentano 1975, 32.

Brentano would preserve this aspect of Aristotle’s metaphysics in his later development of a theory of continuum.  

However, there is a second kind of simultaneous union of states. This is the case of movement, of becoming being (on kinesei) or, as Aristotle puts it, the act (energeian) of what is in potency in so far as it is in potency (on dynamei).

Brentano’s interpretation of this passage in Aristotle is important not only because of its originality but also because it contains in nuce another central component of his subsequent theory: the temporal mode of the occurrence of events in both the physical and perceptual/mental worlds.  

Although, he points out, a potential being becomes an actual being through a single operation, according to the Aristotelian definition, this does not mean that such becoming must also be instantaneous. In fact, perception shows us that if a black body becomes a white one through a single change, it does not do so with a sudden change, so that in this case becoming and completion do not coincide. The intermediate state between potential being and actual being, or better the actuality of the potential, is movement (kinesis).

There are, moreover, various states of potentiality with reference to the act. Brentano pursues his argument by showing that:

1. There exist potentialities constituted as such by an actuality.
2. However, this does not apply to all potential states.
3. But when the case does arise, the constituting actuality is a movement.

The examples cited by Brentano to illustrate his argument all relate to the fact that movement constitutes as act something that is in a state of potentiality and as such is incomplete. The actualization due to movement therefore concerns a state of non-completion or a state prior to actuality. This aspect, too, was subjected to repeated analysis in Brentano’s work.

There exist, moreover, potentialities with no corresponding actualities, or for which, should a corresponding actuality exist conceptually, to this actuality there corresponds nothing in the realm of things: this is the case of a line, which is thought as one in act, but in potency is thought in respect to its possible divisions into two, three, infinite parts in potency. The same applies to surfaces and solid bodies, which exist only in potentiality.

Having defined being per accidens, being-as-true, and being-as-potential and in-act, Brentano examines the meaning of being according to the categories, which is the conceptual focus of his inquiry.

29. See Chapter 7.
30. See Chapter 8.
Chapter 2: Brentano and Aristotle

The crucial theoretical issue is whether the number and classification of the categories provided by Aristotle have mere heuristic value and can therefore be extended, or whether they correspond to a real division of being.

2 A FIRST REVISION OF THE TABLE OF CATEGORIES

Brentano begins his treatment with a brief analysis of the various interpretations of the categories put forward during the Aristotelian renaissance. He begins with Trendelenburg’s History of the Theory of the Categories.

As regards the number of the Aristotelian categories, both Prantl and Trendelenburg drastically reduced them; an operation vehemently criticised by Brandis and Zeller. On frequent occasions, in fact, Aristotle seemed to assume that his list of ten categories was complete. Debate on this problem substantially divided among three different positions.

1. The position taken up by Brandis, Zeller and Strümpell that the categories merely furnish the predicative framework within which to locate certain predicates, a sort of location for the species of the predication. In other words, the categories are points of view with which to classify the concepts that distinguish among the objects of thought, corresponding to which are various kinds of statement.31

2. Trendelenburg’s view, expressed in his work of 1833, that analysis of the grammatical differences among the categories shows that they are concepts, and not forms of statements or manners of predicing concepts. However, they are concepts not in the sense of mere mental representations but instead in their relation to the judgement, insofar as they are part of the judgment, that is, the predicate. They express logical relationships. In other words, the categories are predicates, the most universal of predicates, and they thus express compound thoughts (being + predicate). This position was shared by those who translated ‘kategorai’ as predicamenta, and it was also embraced by Biese and Waitz.32

3. The position represented by Bonitz and by Ritter, who indeed viewed the categories as real concepts, but denied more decisively than Trendelenburg that they are merely predicates or that the table of catego-

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ries was designed with merely logical and grammatical relations in mind. Categories, then, are not definable either in relation to mental representations or on the basis of logical-grammatical relationships as mere predicates. This point of view, put forward in particular by Bonitz, affirms that the categories are therefore the summa genera denoted by the term being (on), and they provide us with orientation in the sphere of experiential data by expressing simple concepts.

Brentano’s view on the matter lay midway between those of Trendelenburg and Bonitz. However, he declares that the third opinion struck him as preferable to the other two. He writes:

We hasten to add that we cannot agree with every detail of its articulation, with all the additional determinations (which are admittedly not altogether independent on the solution of the problem) as they were advanced, especially in Bonitz’s meritorious essay. We find legitimate elements in the other opinions as well, which seems to us quite compatible with the third opinion […] Thus when Brandis does not allow the categories to be more than points of view in the division of the species, and Zeller takes them to be only locations for certain predicates, it is likely that they merely express themselves in a figurative way.33

Consequently, he adds:

The assertion that the categories differ from each other according to the various modes of predication, and were discovered with a view to the predicates of judgments and propositions, can easily co-exist with the other view, viz. that they are to indicate the differences between concepts taken absolutely, as we shall see in detail.34

The theoretical core of the question is once again the relationship between logic and metaphysics. Consequently demonstration is required of the fact that in the first place the categories are ontological in nature, and that only in the second place do they acquire a linguistic-grammatical significance, although analysis of the categories often starts precisely from linguistic analysis.

The complexity and the subtlety of the difference between a conception of the categories as types of predicates and of the categories as a classification of being prompted Brentano to expound his view in fourteen arguments. From time to time his treatment centred analytically on the following themes:

1. The categories are real concepts, beings per se which lie outside the mind.

34. Brentano 1975, 56.
2. The categories are meanings, predicated both by analogy of proportionality and by reference to the same term.

3. The categories are supreme synonymous universal concepts, and as such summa genera of being.

4. The categories are supreme predicates of the first substance.

5. The categories differ from each other in their diverse relationships with the first substance.

6. The categories differ from each other in their diverse modes of predication.

7. The categories are not the Aristotelian five universals predicable of something.

8. The categories are conceptually different from each other.

9. The diversity of the categories is not necessarily a real diversity.

10. Not every real being belongs to one of the categories.

11. It is not impossible to deduce the categories.

12. Deduction of the categories begins with the distinction between substance and accident.

13. The syllogism.

14. There is a harmony between the Aristotelian categories and the grammatical differences of the nomen substantivum, nomen adjectivum, verbum and adverbium.

Brentano’s reinterpretation of Aristotle’s table of categories can be summarized as follows: the theme of the analogia entis, or of the diverse meanings of being, which in the strict sense departs from Aristotle’s theses; the deduction of the categories; and the relationship between ontological categories and logical-grammatical ones.

What is meant by an ontological distinction of the categories on an analogical basis? According to the critics, Aristotle envisaged substantially three types of analogy:

1. Analogy of proportionality. This is the classic case \(a:b = c:d\), also in the variant \(a:b = b:c\).

2. Qualitative analogy. This is analogy not based on quantitative relationships, for instance statements like ‘this red is as bright as that noise is loud’.

3. Attributive or paronymic analogy. This is a three-term relation, or better, one with two terms related to a third.
According to Brentano, the relationship between these three types of analogical predication consists in the fact that, in the first instance, and according to its prime meaning, an analogy has four terms and is proportional and quantitative (which was Trendelenburg’s view), but in the second instance it concerns the domain of qualities.

In keeping with the Plotinian, Arabic, and medieval interpretations of Aristotle, Brentano considered attributive or paronymic analogy to be the only type of analogy able to explain the unity among the various meanings of being; the one, according to Aristotle, is such because its meanings refer to one and to one principle alone. As Aristotle affirms in a celebrated passage:

The term ‘being’ is used in various senses, but with reference to one central idea and one definite characteristic, and not as merely a common epithet. Thus as the term ‘healthy’ always relates to health (either as preserving it or as producing it or as indicating it or as receptive of it), and as ‘medical’ relates to the art of medicine (either as possessing it or as naturally adapted for it or as being a function of medicine) – and shall find other terms used similarly to these – so ‘being’ is used in various senses, but always with reference to one principle. For some things are said to ‘be’ because they are substances; others because they are modifications of substance; others because they are a process towards substance, or destructions or privations or qualities of substance, or productive or generative of substance or of terms relating to substance, or negations of certain of these terms or of substance.35

Brentano then uses this concept of the unity of being by analogy to address the problem of the deduction of the categories, using for the purpose the diairetic procedure exemplified by tree diagrams.

He reinterprets Aristotle’s table of the categories by dividing being (on) between ousia, the first individual substance, on the one hand, and all the other accidental properties (symbebekos) on the other.

This initial division is essential and entirely different from those drawn subsequently. Brentano remarks:

This difference between substance [ousia] and accident [symbebekos] is greater than any difference that can occur between accidents. It is the most obvious and is therefore justly placed at the beginning.36

The accidental properties divide between absolute accidents (affections) (pathos) and relations (pros ti). The affections divide among the categories of inherence (en tode), movement (kinesis) and place (ta en tini).

In their turn, inherence comprises quantity (poson) and quality (poion), movement comprises activity (poiein) and passivity (paschein), while place (pou) comprises where (pou) and when (pote).\textsuperscript{37}

To be noted first is that Brentano reduces the number of Aristotelian categories from ten to eight by including possession (echin) and posture (cheistai) in movement. Secondly, he does not consider space and time to be relations but subsumes them under the category of absolute accidents. This point underwent further development in Brentano’s subsequent works, where he adopted an empirical-descriptive psychology which was partially consistent, as we shall see, with the theories of Lotze.\textsuperscript{38}

Another matter on which Brentano departed from Aristotle was the problem of homonymy or the equivocity of being. For Brentano, the ontological classification of being does not concern genus and species; it does not, that is to say, concern the categories understood as summa genera and ultimate predicates.

The most innovative aspect of Brentano’s re-reading of Aristotle is its subsumption under the concept of homonymy of the concept of paronymy, which concerns the meaning of a term or a root, not the meaning of other terms that

\textsuperscript{37} Brentano 1975, 115.
\textsuperscript{38} See Chapter 3.
Immanent Realism

derive from it etymologically or through inflection. This distinction Brentano classifies as the difference between casus rectus and casus obliquus. 39

Paronymic analogy introduces the theme of the semantic categories, which Brentano treats in his fourteenth argument. At issue here is the relationship between the substance (which is usually expressed by a noun in the nominative case) and the accidents, which are instead expressed by other linguistic parts of the statement, and by means of various forms of inflection. Brentano puts it as follows:

As a rule, the subject of a sentence is a noun. Now, since the subject for the categories as such, i.e., as predicates of first substance, is itself substance, the regular grammatical form of the subject, of the substantive noun, will be found in the predicate as a rule only if substances are predicated of this subject [hypokeimenon], and the noun will be the distinctive grammatical form for the first category. The accidents will have to divide the other forms among themselves substantive. 40

The fact that, linguistically, the accidents can only appear in substantive form is not a confutation of the theory. Worth noting instead is that determination of the categories only involves whatever can be predicated by the first substance. As a consequence, abstract nouns, conjunctions, interjections, and so on, are entirely excluded. This theme, too, would be subject to constant analysis in the subsequent development of Brentano’s thought, from the beginning of the 1900s onwards, and in Psychology II especially. 41

In short, the parts of speech which, according to Brentano, correspond to the categories are the following:

2. *Nomen adjectivum* (quantity, quality).
4. *Adverbium* (where, when).
5. *Adjectival, adverbial and verbal* forms (relation).

According to Brentano, the lack of a grammatical category for relation is due to the minimal degree of being of that category, to which pertains neither coming into existence nor ceasing, but whose role is to accompany substance externally or internally.

Brentano’s final conclusion on the problem of the relationship among

39. For the development of this point see Chapters 5, 6.
40. Brentano 1975, 124.
logic, language and metaphysics is that critical attention should be paid to lan-

guage – in that it often evinces the relationships between substance and 

accident – but above all that the categories cannot be reduced to grammatical 

forms. Like Aristotle, he concludes that:

It is true that both logic and metaphysics are interested in the division of the catego-

ries, but not as if they were in a contest for the right to govern, as if they were pushing 

their own differing claims, which are sometimes heard and sometimes ignored, and as 

if they neither found satisfaction for themselves nor gave justice to the demands of the 

other. The modes of predication naturally correspond to the modes of being in the 

subject [hypokeimenon] of the sentence. “‘To be’ signifies as many different things as 

there are different ways of using it” (Metaph. V. 7. 1017a23).42

After his dissertation On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle, Brentano 

continued his Aristotelian studies in a book on the theory of knowledge and 

with particular regard to the theses set out in De Anima. These studies were 

followed by others in the course of the years, most notably the already-men-

tioned analyses Über den Creationismus des Aristoteles (1882), Offener Brief 

an Herrn Professor Eduard Zeller aus Anlaß seiner Schrift über die Lehre des 

Aristoteles von den Ewigkeit des Geistes (1883), and especially Aristoteles 

und seine Weltanschauung and Aristoteles Lehre vom Ursprung des menschli-

chen Geistes (both published in 1911). A final study on Aristotle planned for 

the last year of Brentano’s life never came to publication. However, Aristotle 

was always one of the essential sources of Brentano’s thought in logic, meta-

physics and his analyses of cognition.

3 A PSYCHOLOGISTIC ROOT?

Brentano’s book The Psychology of Aristotle, first published in 1867, 

marks his passage from problems of a metaphysical nature to gnoseological 

and psychological ones, although they were still developed in the form of 

commentary on and interpretation of Aristotle’s theories.43

Manuals on the history of philosophy frequently classify Brentano as an 

exponent of psychologism, and although he himself explicitly rejected the 

label,44 this is nevertheless the impression that one gains from the introduc-

tion to his book on Aristotle’s De Anima. This was the second important work 

published by Brentano in which – as in his dissertation discussed above – he

42. Brentano 1975, 131.


44. Brentano 1995a, Appendix XI. See Chapter 5.
emphasised the close connection between logic and metaphysics and stressed in particular the role of cognitive processes. He writes as follows:

Aristotle was the inquirer who before all others cultivated the field of logic with great success. Here, more than in any other domain, his propositions have remained unshaken, and posterity gratefully honours him as the creator and father of this science. But what disciplines could be more related than logic and that part of psychology of which we speak? Any profound logic must penetrate to the foundation of its domain; and there is no other reason why logic has at times been infertile and has decayed than that its roots did not extend into the soil of psychology and drawn vital nourishment from there.

But just as logic takes its principles from psychology, so psychology ends in logic.\textsuperscript{45}

Once again, in order to demonstrate the thematic continuity of Brentano’s thought and to evince its passage and connection between problems concerning metaphysics and ones concerning psychology, there follows analytical discussion of this text.

As its sub-title suggests, the central theme of the book is the doctrine of the \textit{nous poietikos}, a term which was given different definitions in Aristotle’s works and used in a variety of senses, viz.:

1. Separate (choristos).
2. Susceptible to separation (chorizesthai).
3. Impassive (apathes).
4. Susceptible to suffering or ‘undergoing’ (paschein).
5. Immaterial (topos eidos).
6. Endowed with matter (hyle).
7. Nous.

The seventh of these definitions is the most important, although, as Brentano points out, the Aristotelian texts do not fully concur on its meaning, given that they use the term nous variously to denote:

1. An acquired disposition.
2. A natural knowledge-generating faculty.
3. Something substantial and/or a faculty of the substance.
4. Something impassive and/or something susceptible to undergoing and corruption.
5. Something sensible and/or physical sensation.

\textsuperscript{45} Brentano 1977a, 1.
Not unsurprisingly, this welter of conceptual variation produced a multiplicity of interpretations. After examining the most authoritative opinions and interpretations – by the Peripatetics (Strato, Theophrastus, Aristoxenus and Dicearcus, and later Alexander of Aphrodisia and Themistius) and the medievals (Avicenna and Averroes) – Brentano concentrated on the theories of Aquinas, whom he credited with ‘coming closest to the truth’.

Brentano also surveyed the modern interpretations of Aristotle that had given rise to the already-mentioned Aristotelian renaissance of the nineteenth century, examining in particular the works of Trendelenburg, Brandis, Raivaisson, Renan and Zeller.

Even in recent years, Brentano’s interpretation of Aristotle’s text has aroused heated debate, which can be summarized in the opposing positions of Sorabji and Burnyeat. According to Sorabji, Brentano’s interpretation was only the last in a long series of distortions of Aristotle’s thought consisting in the dephysiologization of his theory of perception that began with the first Aristotelian commentators: Alexander, Themistius and Philoponus. This dephysiologization was due to the over-emphasis given to passages in which Aristotle describes the process of perception as the assimilation of the form without the matter and therefore considers the perceptive process to be a form of merely cognitive (gnostikos) reaction to the stimulus. Vice versa, Burnyeat, although he has reservations on the plausibility of the outcomes of Brentano’s Aristotelian interpretation in his theory of intentional reference, emphasizes the correctness of his view that the perceptive process in Aristotle consists essentially in a conscious becoming, that is, a merely psychic state.

Although Brentano’s conception is nearer to Sorabji’s than to Burnyeat’s, the controversy between the two authors, which has also involved philosophers of mind, strikes me as reductive, or as partially veridical on both sides, as I shall seek to show. To this end I now examine the relevant passages in Aristotle, and Brentano’s commentary on them.

Aristotle states with regard to the soul that:

the soul is that whereby we live and perceive and think in the primary sense; so that the soul would be the notion or form, and not the matter or substrate. As we already said, substance is used in three senses, form, matter, and a compound of the two. Of these matter is potentiality, and form actuality; and since the compound is an animate thing, the body cannot be the actuality of a soul, but the soul is the actuality of some body. For this reason those are right in their views who maintain that the soul cannot

46. See Berti 1992, chapter I.
47. Sorabji 1995, 224.
49. See Chapter 3 and infra.
exist without the body, but is not itself in any sense a body. It is not a body, it is associated with a body, and in a body of particular kind; not at all as our predecessors supposed, who fitted it to any body, without adding any limitations as to what body or what kind of body, although it is unknown for any chance thing to admit any other chance thing. But our view explains the facts quite reasonably; for the actuality of each thing is naturally inherent in its potentiality, that is in its own proper matter. From all this it is clear that the soul is a kind of actuality or notion of that which has the capacity of having a soul. 50

And later:

The soul is the cause and the principle of the living body [...] Moreover, the soul is the prime origin of local movement, although this capacity does not pertain to all living things. Also alteration and growth are due to the soul. Indeed, sensation seems to be a sort of alteration, and no being without a soul is able to perceive.51

Again in De Anima, Aristotle defines sensation as an ‘undergoing’ or ‘being moved’ by the sensed object within a process of assimilation which makes perceiver and perceived similar. In Aristotle’s words:

Sensation consists, as has been said, in being moved and acted upon; for it is held to be a sort of change of state. Now some say that like is affected only by like. But the sense in which this is possible or impossible we have already stated in our general account of acting and being acted upon. The question arises as to why we have no sensation of the senses themselves; that is, why they give no sensation apart from external objects, although they contain fire and earth and the other elements which (either in themselves, or by their attributes) excite sensations. It is clear from this that the faculty of sensation has no actual but only potential existence [...] But since we speak of perceiving in two senses (for we say that which has the power of hearing and seeing hears and sees, even if it happens to be asleep, as well as when the faculty is actually operative), so the term sensation must be used in two senses, as potential and as actual. Similarly to perceive means both to possess the faculty and to exercise it [...] To begin with, let us assume that being acted upon and moved is the same as exercising the function; for movement is a form of activity, though incomplete, as has been said elsewhere. But everything is acted upon and moved by something which produces an effect and actually exists. Therefore, as we have said, a thing is acted upon in one sense by like, in another by unlike; for while it is being acted upon it is unlike, but when the action is complete, it is like.52

Chapter 2: Brentano and Aristotle

According to Aristotle, therefore, sensation is dynamically realized in a process of growth/diminution and alteration\(^\text{53}\) where the soul receives the immaterial form of the external object, realizing the actuality of something initially present within it in potential. From the following passage it seems that the being affected is already some sort of cognitive state, in the sense that it is the conscious becoming of a colour, sound, and so on. In fact, when distinguishing \textit{in nuce} between the physical-physiological and psychic aspect of the perceptive process, Aristotle declares:

We must understand as true generally of every sense, that sense is that which is receptive of the form of sensible objects without the matter, just as the wax receives the impression of the signet ring without the iron or the gold, and receives the impression of the gold or bronze, but not as gold or bronze; so in every case sense is affected by that which has colour or flavour, or sound, but by it, not \textit{qua} having a particular identity, but \textit{qua} having a certain quality, and in virtue of its formula; the sense organ in its primary meaning is that in which this potentiality lies. The organ and the potentiality are identified, but their essential nature is not the same. The sentient subject must be extended, but sensitivity and sense cannot be extended; they are a kind of \textit{ratio} and potentiality of the said subject.\(^\text{54}\)

As to the object of sensation, Aristotle distinguishes three ways in which something can be called sensible.

With regard to each sense, one must talk first and foremost of sensibles. The sensible may denote three types of object: two are said to be sensibles in themselves and one is said to be so by accident. Of these two, moreover, one is proper to each sense, while the other is common to all of them.\(^\text{55}\)

Specifically, Aristotle distinguishes among:

1. \textit{Proper sensibles} or proper objects of sensation, \textit{accidental qualities} perceived by individual senses: i.e. colour, sound, taste, degree of resistance, etc. These are always \textit{true} in the time of presentness. A misperception in this case can only concern the extension and the place of the perceived.\(^\text{56}\)

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\(^{53}\) Aristotle defines movement as “the realisation of that which exists potentially insofar as it exists potentially”. See Aristotle, \textit{Metaphysics}, XII. He also distinguishes among movement in the metaphysical sense (generation), movement in the quantitative sense (growth and diminution), and qualitative change (alteration) relative to the category of quality.

\(^{54}\) Aristotle, \textit{De Anima} II (B), 11-12, 424a-b, 20-. This passage is interpreted differently by Burnyeat and Sorabji, in a cognitive sense and a physiological sense respectively.

\(^{55}\) Aristotle, \textit{De Anima} II, 6, 418a, 10.
2. **Common sensibles** or objects common to more than one sense (koina). These are cross-modality sensed and constituted by the relations among objects: i.e. movement, stillness, unity, number, figure, magnitude. Common sensibles can be true or false.\(^5^7\)

3. **Sensibles per accidens** instead concerns the perception of substances (for example Diare’s son) through his accident (this white thing), i.e. coincidental sense objects (kata symbebekos).\(^5^8\)

Of the three modes mentioned, only the first and the second concern the sensed as such: specifically, the first because it is the proper and first object of every sense; the second because it is a secondary object of the senses common to several of them.\(^5^9\)

As regards the *proper sensibles* in particular, Aristotle assumes that external objects are at the origin of perceptive acts, in the sense that the perceptive faculty comprises potential objects which are brought into being by the encounter with the external environment. Of external objects, moreover, the senses perceive qualities specific to each sense.

Brentano remarks in this regard:

By the *proper* object of sense Aristotle means that property of the perceived object which is the principle [origin] of the alteration of the sense, and which we have to use in order to determine the nature of the sense, since it is the natural correlate of the affected capacity, as already noted. Thus it is obvious that this object cannot be in common to several senses. As its special characteristics, Aristotle puts forth that it cannot be perceived by another sense, and that sense cannot be subject to any illusion regarding it. He illustrates this through the example of colour, sound, and taste, the first of which is the proper object of sight, the second of hearing, and the third of the sense of taste.

By contrast, he uses the name *common* objects of sense for those properties of an object which indeed modify sensory perception, but only through the truly active property that we have just discussed. It is clear that with such secondary objects of sense there is no reason why the properly sensible should be restricted to the affection of one sense. Hence they are perceptible by many, even by all senses, though by more than others, as is already indicated in their name.\(^6^0\)

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57. Aristotle, *De Anima* II, 6, 418 a, 17; III, 1, 425 a, 13.
58. Aristotle, *De Anima* II, 6, 418 a, 23.
60. Brentano 1977a, 56. According to Sorabji, Brentano maintains that in Aristotle sense-objects, colour and temperature, for example, are not or not only physically present in the observer. See Sorabji 1995, 220.
Chapter 2: Brentano and Aristotle

As for the common sensibles, this aspect concerns the unitariness and simultaneity of the assimilative process. Based on the perception of movement (both physical and internal), in that a given movement is perceived by different senses, it accounts for the individuation and conceptualization of objects by connecting the qualities of the diverse senses.

Aristotle writes:

But, again, it is impossible that there should be a special sense organ to perceive common sensibles, which we perceive incidentally by each sense, such, I mean, as motion, rest, shape, magnitude, number and unity; for we perceive all these things [sensibles] by movement; for example we perceive magnitude by movement, and shape also; for shape is a form of magnitude. What is at rest is perceived by absence of movement; number by the negation of continuity, and by the special sensibles; for each sense perceives one kind of object. Thus it is clearly impossible for there to be a special sense of any of these common sensibles, e.g. movement; if there were, we should perceive them in the same way as we now perceive what is sweet by sight.61

Sensibles per accidens pertain to what we may call perceptive experiences in the broad sense, like tables, houses, people, etc., or in other words individual substances whose accidents or qualities are given by the proper sensibles, and whose relations are given by the common sensibles.

The definition of sensed per accidens is also important from the point of view of the perception of a sensation, and it prevents the indefinite multiplication of the senses; it forestalls, for example, the need to postulate a sense of 'seeing the seeing', of 'feeling the feeling', and so on, as well as the difficulty of multiplying the sensory faculties in the case of the perception of the diversity of several objects.

These aspects are of great importance in the development of Brentano’s thought, for in his commentary on Aristotle he now highlights and addresses a number of issues crucial to the theory of knowledge: the multiple unity of the objects of perception; the extent of the moment-now; the simultaneity of two successive perceptions; and the perception of their difference given in the actual duration. Brentano would work for his entire lifetime on these themes, which centre on the differences among classes of psychic phenomena; and they were of central interest to his most outstanding pupils, from Stumpf to Husserl to Meinong. As we shall see, the decisive turning point came when Brentano encountered the theses of then nascent experimental psychology.62

62. See Chapter 3.
Aristotle also emphasises the presence of an *inner sense* directed towards the internal movements of the sensitive part of the soul which yields both the *perception* of sensations and *self-awareness*. 63

As to Brentano, his procedure, typically Aristotelian, serves not only to clarify his disagreement with the principal commentators on Aristotle but also to show the difficulty of the argument and to furnish a correct interpretation of the *nous*.

After observing that only in *De Anima* did Aristotle deal specifically with the *nous poietikos*, and after stressing the pointlessness of drawing parallels with the generic sense of ‘*nous*’ in other works, Brentano states his intention: to demonstrate that the *Prior Analytics* was the source of the problem that induced Aristotle to conceive the doctrine of the *nous poietikos*. In other words, Brentano’s intention is to shed light on the origin of our prime intellectual cognitions, and to address this aspect of Aristotle’s conception of the soul from the point of view of the *whole* of its various parts. Once again, therefore, Brentano concerns himself with the relationship among logic, metaphysics and psychology, but he now introduces the theme of *mereology* (the theory of the whole and the parts) which subsequently characterize the bulk of his conceptions from his writings published posthumously as *Deskriptive Psychologie* (Descriptive Psychology) onwards.

After preliminary consideration of Aristotle’s distinction between living and non-living, and after concurring with his definition of ‘soul’ as the *inner principle of animate substance*, Brentano also defines the soul as the first *entelechy of a natural body which has life potentially within it*, and in particular as the first entelechy of a *physical, organic body*. From this point of view, the soul: “is not a separate substance but it belongs essentially to the body and is posited as something separate only through the abstracting intellect”. 64

Secondly, the soul is the *actuality of the living*, or a constitutive part of the living, and as such only a part. Brentano’s analysis of Aristotle’s first definitions prompts him to conclude thus:

Let us briefly summarize the result of the investigation up to this point. It is as follows: The soul is the substantial entelech of a living being; since the living substances as they are found on earth are all at least in part corruptible, hence composed of matter and form, the soul of every terrestrial being is a substantial form that is either wholly or in part the actuality of a potentially living organic body. 65

63. Aristotle, *De Anima* II, 6, 418 a, 16. On this point see also Brentano 1977a, Part III, b, c.
64. Brentano 1977a, 33. Translation slightly modified.
65. Brentano 1977a, 35.
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As well known, a central component of Aristotle’s psychology concerns the nature and the number of the parts of the soul. Accordingly, Brentano devotes the latter part of his text on Aristotle’s psychology to the vegetative part of the soul, whose characteristics consist in the capacities for nutrition, growth and generation. Following Aristotle, Brentano argues that the living substance in its vegetative aspect only introduces the substantial form of an extraneous matter whose object – if we may use the term – is of identical genus with it.

Part Three of Brentano’s book is devoted to analysis of the sensitive soul, which has three vital capacities:

1. Sensation
2. Imagination (phantasia)\(^{66}\)
3. Intellect.

These capacities ensure that every part comprises that which is necessary for the activity of a particular substance. Because the three souls depend upon each other, the human soul is \textit{virtually} three souls. Brentano then discusses Aristotle’s conception of sensation in general, and of the number of senses, and particularly of the subject of sensation itself.

It is well known that Aristotle believed that having sensations is to undergo, or to be moved, by the sensed object in a process of assimilation between perceiver and perceived that renders them similar. This process takes various forms, from the \textit{alteration} to the \textit{bringing-into-actuality} of what was only potentially existent, with no corruption or loss of form by the subject. The point is of utmost importance. Brentano writes:

We sense by being moved by the sensed object, hence by being affected. Hence, if we ask whether the sensing entity is similar to the sensed, the answer follows from the general law that before the affection, the affected is dissimilar to the agent, but after the affection, it is similar. Before sensation, the sensing entity is potentially like that

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\(^{66}\) The English translation uses ‘imagination’ for phantasia, and so I keep it, but the meaning is not to be conflated into that of ‘imagery’ in contemporary research. The term derives from phainesthai (\textit{to appear}) and it is obviously connected to the phenomenal (not phenomenalistic!) concept of appearances (phantasmata), principally in the visual field. But by phantasia is generally meant a capacity to visualize and/or to present. For a detailed discussion of the topic see Schofield 1995, who interprets phantasia as the faculty in virtue of which any phenomenon (phainomenon) is experienced, referring to the mental disposition or act involved, in contrast to perception (p. 257). The topic anticipates some aspects of the concept of presentation (\textit{Vorstellung}) in Brentano, and specifically that of originary association (see Chapter 4ff.). In modern terms, it concerns the question of subjective integrations at primary level (see Albertazzi 2003b). From this point of view, the active intellect brings the passive one to completion. In fact, for Brentano, the active intellect pertains to the human soul. See Brentano 1977a, 4-24, 182-97. See also Chapters 4, 10.
which its object is in actuality. Hence, it is affected while dissimilar, but after being affected it has become similar to that which affects it and is like the latter.

But there is a great difference between one kind of affection and another. We can mean by affection alteration in the proper sense which always includes the corruption of an actual thing by something opposed to it, or one can mean by it an affection that takes place without any corruption whatever, without any loss of form on the part of the affected subject; this affection merely makes actual what lay in the subject potentially, it brings to a state of completion what was unfinished. Affection in the first sense occurs, for example, when a red body becomes yellow, or a warm one cold, etc.; for the first of these is the corruption of the red, the other the corruption of the warm as such; one of them leads to the loss of the red colour in the subject, the other of the warmth. But sensation is not that kind of affection. It may indeed be connected with an alteration in that, for example, a warm hand touching something cold becomes colder during the sensation and through the influence of the sensed object. But we do not sense the cold insofar as we become cold; otherwise plants and inorganic bodies would also sense. Rather, we sense the cold insofar as the cold exists objectively, i.e., as a cognized object within us, hence insofar as we take in the cold without being ourselves its physical subject; the latter can receive this or any other form only by being altered. Hence, Aristotle says in his chapter 12 of De Anima 2 that the sense receives the sensible forms without matter, and he illustrates this with the metaphor of the wax which takes on the form of the seal without receiving any gold or iron itself. Of course this metaphor is not absolutely perfect in that the formed wax does not individually bear the same form as the seal, but only one like it, while the sense which takes in the form of the sensible bears the same form. And for this reason the wax takes on the form of the seal as a physical subject and through a kind of corruption, for it loses the shape it had up to this point; but sense does not receive the sensible form through actual alteration, even if such an alteration may accompany the reception of the form, as we have pointed out. For example, the sensing body, when it touches the warm thing, turns from a non-sensing body into one that feels warmth and at the same time from a cold body into one that is warm. It feels something warm, i.e., it has warmth objectively within itself; it is warm, i.e., it has warmth physically, materially within itself. Reception of the second kind was an actual alteration, a loss of cold, becoming of the opposite from the opposite; reception of the first kind was only a simple actualization of what was potentially present in the subject; hence, it certainly was not affection [\textit{paschein}] in the proper sense, yet broadly speaking included in \textit{paschein}, the category of affection.\footnote{Brentano 1977, 54-55.}

Moreover, just as there are diverse sensory capacities, so there are diverse sensory objects. An object of sensation may be called \textit{sensible} in various ways: Aristotle distinguished between a sensible object \textit{as such} (the object of a single sense) and a sensible object \textit{per accidens} (the object of more than one sense).
Chapter 2: Brentano and Aristotle

Of particular importance is the distinction *per accidens*, in that it concerns what of each sense’s proper object can be perceived by the other senses and therefore cannot be sensed in the *proper sense*.

Proceeding with his analysis and commentary on Aristotle’s theories, Brentano identifies the object of the *proper sensible* – which differs from the object of each of the individual senses – in the *sensation* itself. And he also clarifies a further theoretical point: that the object of the proper sensible is *not an external object*. He writes:

If we now ask what the proper object of this sense [proper sensible] is, it is plain that we must identify this object with our sensation. Its object is not the external thing. But since the differences between sensations are analogous to the differences between objects, it follows that the differences between the one must necessarily be recognizable between the others. Hence, it follows that the distinction between heterogeneous objects can be traced back to the power of this sense.

And herein lies the solution of the stated objection. Our assumption does not lead to any of the contradictions to which it allegedly gives rise; from it follows neither that the sense that distinguishes the heterogeneous objects has a proper object in common with other senses, nor that it has more than one proper object. Its proper object is sensations and nothing else, as colours are the proper object of sight; by perceiving that we see the white and taste the sweet and by distinguishing these sensations it teaches us at the same time the analogous difference between the white and the sweet themselves. 68

The proper sensible is therefore an *inner sense* different from all the other senses, which are external. Specifically, it is a *particular sense directed at the inner movements of the sensitive part*. It is also the most important of all the senses, because, as Brentano further specifies:

It must be this sense that perceives not only what we sense, but also the remaining sensitive operations, for example, sensual desire, and that gives us self-consciousness to the extent to which it belongs to the sensory part. Without question, therefore, it is pre-eminent among all senses. 69

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69. Brentano 1977, 64.
The functions of the inner sense can thus be summarized as follows:

1. It enables the *distinction* and the *perception* of differences among the objects of *diverse* senses.
2. It enables the distinction and the perception of differences among the objects of *several* senses, though each of these is grasped only by *one single* external sense (for example, when seeing something as angled and round).
3. It enables *perception of the identity* of the objects of different senses.
4. It makes *self-consciousness* possible.
5. It is the *active* principle of sensation (it is an inner *movement*).

Inner sense is thus defined as the *active corporeal quality* which acts as the medium for every other sensation. Moreover, it is responsible for the fact that perceived objects are *conscious*: a thesis that would come later to play a major role in Brentano’s development of his psychological theories. Like the other senses, the inner sense resides not in the soul but in the *animate body*, of which it is the *subject*.

The sensitive faculty, moreover, comes into contact with extraneous forms which it *assimilates through the inner movements* not only by means of sensations but also by means of images.

Images are *represented sensible forms*. The difference between depiction relative to sensation and an image lies neither in their content nor in their distinction by kind relative to the various sense organs. In fact, there also exists an image relative to the inner sense, as when we remember having seen or heard something.

The difference between sensation and image is not one of kind. Rather, it has to do with the temporal *presence* or *absence* of sensible objects. The objects of the imagination, in fact, *continue* after the cause of the sensation has disappeared from the stimulation, as in the case of a sound which reverberates. Brentano observes thus:

We had to acknowledge a difference between imagination and sensation; in what does it consist? Both are movements of the same senses, affections of the same kind. However, they differ in that sensation is the result of the action of the present sensible object (every affection being at the same time an action), while imagination has its ground in earlier sensations.

For it is the case that the movement caused by the sensible object often continues in further similar movements even when the sensible object no longer exercises its influence. If air continues to sound even after the ringing bell is quiet then in the sensory instruments (the secondary and the primary) the tone can continue to resound and can
be persistently heard in the final sensory organ. It is true that the movement of the imagination often does not follow immediately after sensory perception; but even in this case it is an agitation resulting from a sensory movement that has made a continuing impression upon the organ of sense and has left in it a certain quality, a certain persistent disposition, by virtue of which under certain circumstances, especially when other sensory representations act as stimuli, the earlier sensible form recurs within the sense. Whatever occurs in imagination was previously received in sensory perception, even if in different combinations. As an after effect of sensory perception, imagination is weaker than the former and Aristotle therefore calls it a weak sensation. Also, deception is more frequent and more variegated in the case of imagination.70

These topics, too, most notably the formation of dispositions and the different temporal positions of the sensory presentations and the imaginative presentations, would subsequently be given further development by Brentano. And, as we shall see, they formed one of the most important parts of his theory of intentional reference.

4 THE NOUS

Part Four of Aristotle’s Psychology deals with the third knowledge-creating faculty, the intellectual soul. Brentano starts his analysis by drawing distinctions among the various types of cognitive act (sensible, imaginative and intellectual) and their relative objects. The question is as follows.

There are objects which do not derive from our sensible perceptions. Consequently, if we find within us an act of consciousness in which none of the proper objects of our senses is represented, then this must belong, besides the senses, also to another faculty of the soul which receives forms.

Concepts like a colour or a sound in general are not immediately given by the sensory capacity, which only furnishes sensations of a particular red of a certain kind, or of a particular sound produced by a particular musical instrument. This applies likewise to mathematical and geometrical concepts like point, line, surface, square, circle, etc. None of these concepts is given as such in the sensation of sensible objects; and above all certain concepts, like number and substance, do not possess even a semblance of extension. Evidently, observes Brentano, active in our consciousness are two different types of faculty which, though different, cooperate with each other. Brentano asks:

Is there in man a cognizing faculty that differs from the already discussed faculties of sensory cognition, if not in subject, then at least in being?

We know the procedure we have to use to solve this problem and we have applied it repeatedly when we had to decide on the unity or multiplicity of cognizing faculties. We must begin with the acts and objects, and if we find within us an act of cognition that does not represent any of the proper objects of our senses, then it follows that in addition to our senses we must possess another power of the soul which apprehends forms. Such is obviously the case. We have in us the concept of colour and the concept of a tone in general, and these representations cannot possibly be counted among the sensory images of sight and hearing. For sight does indeed cognize white and black and each particular colour, but colour as such it does not cognize. For that is neither white nor black; if it were the one, then it would be opposed to the other and could not be asserted of it. Similarly, tone in general is neither a nor b, neither the tone of a flute nor that of an harp, nor anything else that ear can perceive. But if not even these senses, whose proper objects are colours and tones, can apprehend the concepts of colour and tone, then much less can the remaining sensitive faculties we have mentioned. Furthermore, let us consider mathematical concepts, the concept of surface and of line, of square and of circle; it is obvious that they contain no representation of red or warm or sweet, or of any of the other proper sense objects. Finally, the concept of number, of substance, and others do not even contain the representation of extension, which forms the necessary basis of all sensory qualities. Hence there can be no doubt that aside from the discussed sensory powers we must have another cognizing faculty within us, and this we call intellect.71

Aristotle had summarized the characteristics of the intellective faculty as follows:

1. It is a faculty in potency: in other words, before thought there is nothing in act.
2. It is accidental.
3. Its subject is the intellective soul.
4. Its objects are not the sensible qualities but ideas, and these are equally in potency.
5. It grasps the essence of external things.
6. It is spiritual.
7. It grasps itself in secondary mode.

As we shall see, even during the last years of his life, in the writings published as Psychology III,72 Brentano frequently returned to the relationship

72. See Chapter 6.
between the sensible faculty and the intellectual faculty and their objects. In his commentary on Aristotle he analysed this relationship as follows.

The concepts of the intellectual faculty are not entirely extraneous to the objects of the sensible qualities. Indeed, they are often the same objects but given in abstract and simpler manner. A particular straight line given in visual perception and the concept of ‘straight line’ grasped by the intellect are essentially identical but they are given in different ways. From this point of view, the nous poietikos is not as much a form of thought as what makes thinking possible. On this crucial aspect of Aristotle’s conception, which attracted the interest of many critics and commentators, Wilkes writes:

Is the body a necessary condition for thinking in general, and the active intellect in particular? From the rest of De Anima it would appear so. But in that case the active intellect becomes an ‘epiphomenon’, which is ‘supervenient’ on the human organism. I myself think that talk of ‘epiphomena’ and of ‘supervenience’, are no more than high sounding terms for carpets under which issues get swept.\(^73\)

Another serious problem is the concept of ‘intellect’, because the question arises of its mode of givenness. According to Brentano, contrary to the case of concepts of sensible objects, in that of the intellect we have immediate and individual (not just general) evidence of its existence. He writes:

Hence the intellect is completely and with the highest intelligibility intelligible, while corporeal things permit, as already noted, only an indeterminate general knowledge, and are not equally knowable in all their determinations. Our knowledge of them is more certain and clear, and we have them within us in a more intelligible state, the more they have been alienated from their natural mode of existence by abstraction. This is the reason why mathematics is more intelligible than physics and metaphysics is more intelligible than mathematics; also, the more general physical concept is more intelligible than the more special, the genus more than the species, and the higher genus more than the lower; the more incomplete the knowledge of the object the more intelligible is its thought within us. Certainly, all this shows in the clearest way that the corporeal is intelligible in the intellect not in consequence of a natural attribute, but through a change that alienates it from its proper state. We must say that by nature it is only potentially intelligible. Therefore, from the fact that the intellect is immaterial and free of all corporeal attributes it follows neither that the corporeal things must have intellect, nor that the intellect cannot be intelligible.\(^74\)

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\(^73\) Wilkes 1995, 125.
\(^74\) Brentano 1977, 90-91.
Definition of the characteristics of the intellectual faculty, Brentano continues, affects certain of the aspects of the sensory faculty which Aristotle had carefully avoided discussing. The problem is as follows.

The subject of the sensitive faculty is the corporeal organ, which possesses the same sensible qualities as constitute its objects, like cold, heat, softness, hardness, whiteness, and so on. Why, therefore, is the presence of an external object necessary to have sensations of some type? It could be the sensitive capacity itself that presents objects, by means of some sort of self-objectivity. The fact of the matter is that the sensitive capacity is only in potency, so that it consequently requires an agent which acts on the sensory organ. Obviously, this neither contradicts nor excludes the fact that what is sensed in any case resides in what senses, or in other words, in what feels sensations.

Brentano’s detailed analysis of Book IV of Aristotle’s *De Anima* thus has a threefold purpose:

1. To show the passages in Aristotle that can be used to elaborate a theory of the nous poietikos.
2. To demonstrate that nowhere in Aristotle is it possible to find direct reference to this doctrine.
3. To identify the distinctive features of the nous poietikos.

With regard to the last point, Brentano summarizes the features of the nous poietikos as follows:

1. The intellect is a passive faculty that grasps forms.
2. The intellect is the simple potentiality of ideas, concepts, thoughts (nous dynamic).
3. The intellect is a faculty of the soul.
4. The intellect is spiritual and immortal.
5. The intellect is unique for every intelligible thing.
6. The intellect grasps ideas through images.

As already pointed out, this last aspect is of great importance for understanding the relationship between sensory knowledge and intellectual or noetic knowledge. It is a theme that, as discussion of Psychology III will show, was a constant concern of Brentano throughout his lifetime.

As we have seen, the object of the sensitive capacity is both the sensations aroused by the stimulation of the various sense organs and the images that, to use more modern terminology, are given in the short, medium or long term.
memory. Images are ‘faded’ sensations and they are characterized by a different temporal position.

The abstraction distinctive of the intellectual faculty is performed by the imagination, which presents it with things that are also temporally and spatially distant. Brentano summarizes the Aristotelian dynamic between sensitive capacity and intellectual capacity thus:

In the sensory representation of the snub-nosed is contained the concept of being snub-nosed as well as the concept of curvature. Outside the intellect the mathematical concepts do not exist separate from the sensible bodies but are in them just as the physical concepts are and enter our sensory representations together with them. Hence as the intellect grasps them it does not cognize something that is separate from sensible matter; it merely cognizes in a separate way something that is not separate from it. Only if the intellect were to grasp the concept of a super sensible being, if it could cognize an intellectual substance, then this knowledge could not come to it in images. But this is neither the case with mathematical concepts nor with any other, if we except self-knowledge and the more general concepts that are abstracted from one’s self. The reason is that it cannot come to immediate contact with other intellectual beings, at least as long as it is connected with the body. But since it can know itself only after it has become, through the influence of the sensitive part, it is obvious that this knowledge, too, even if it is not derived from images, nonetheless comes to it by means of the images. And so for this life the Aristotelian proposition holds quite generally: “The soul is not aware of anything without sensory representation”. 75

There are two mains difficulties with Aristotle’s theory, observes Brentano: firstly, it does not explain purely methodical deduction and conceptual definition; secondly, if the sensitive faculty acts on the intellectual faculty, one must suppose that the latter has a tendency or an impulse to influence the former. In order to deal with these difficulties, Brentano addresses the problem of the conscious motor faculty of the intellectual soul.

In Book III of De Anima, Aristotle observes that a living being moves itself because it is able to desire, but desire is closely connected with the imagination in its sensitive and rational forms, whilst the intellectual capacity is closely dependent on images. Brentano remarks in this regard, before commenting on the fourth chapter of Book III of De Anima, and before dealing directly with the origin of our concepts, thus:

Hence in order to understand the influence of the sensitive upon the intellectual part we must assume in the latter a further active power. For obviously it is not the activity of the will from which this influence upon the sensitive part proceeds, for this influence is not subject to our will and takes places unconsciously, as it is presupposed in

75. Brentano 1977, 98.
all intellectual cognition. This power will have to be called the poietikon [productive agent] for the intellect, as similarly Aristotle called the sensible quality the poietikon for the senses; this power is the so-called nous poietikos; it forms the fourth of the intellectual powers of the soul, or, if one considered the will and the consciously moving faculty of the intellect to be one, it would form the third.76

Because the nous poietikos is connected with the nous dynamic, which is affected by it and receives thoughts, they must share coincident spiritual qualities and opposite qualities of actuality and potentiality. In fact, the nous poietikos is an actual property of the intellectual soul; it is an act of our intellect which functions as the agent principle with respect to the nous dynamic. The fact that Aristotle calls this an accidental form is taken by Brentano as proof that it is an actual property of our soul, not a divine substance.

The key parts of the argument are that, firstly, the active intellect immediately acts on something corporeal, namely images, and that these are intelligible in the sensitive intellect only in potency, and secondly that it is the sensitive part that transmits the effect of the nous poietikos to the intellectual faculty. The multiplicity of senses in which Aristotle defines the nous has already been pointed out. At this stage in his discussion Brentano emphasises that, of the four predicates attributed to the nous poietikos (choristos, apathes, amigos, energeian), the first three are shared by the receptive intellect.

The true difference between the active and passive intellect is therefore that the former is not mixed (amigos), since by its nature not only is it actual but by its essence it is act (te ousia on energies), whereas the receptive intellect is by its essence potential.

A second important point is that the nous poietikos is thus identified with the imagination, so that Brentano is able finally to draw his conclusions on the origin of our concepts. He states:

It has been said that Aristotle does not always remain faithful to his doctrine of the active intellect as he gives it in De Anima. Renan in particular asserts that the last chapter of the Posterior Analytics stands in evident and complete contradiction to the theory of knowledge developed here. Given his interpretative position, he was correct; but, as we have seen, this position was merely an obfuscation of the true sense. The doctrine [of the Analytics] that conceives of thought only as mediated by the senses, and that sees it all as an affection, and the intellect as a mere capacity for receiving thought, nowhere contradicts the theory of the active intellect; rather, it is self evidence for this theory and becomes a means for its understanding.77

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77. Brentano 1977, 143.
However, the nature of the imagination is not described in detail in the *Posterior Analytics*, even less so in *De Anima*. For example, as Brentano points out, almost no mention is made of the memory, although this constitutes the first stage and the preliminary condition of intellectual knowledge. He observes:

Thus, we must relate the passage in the *Analytics* to this ascension from the individual perception to the concept, and from the lower concepts to the higher, and not to the generation of one concept from another. This is the reason why Aristotle had to demand here more than one sensory perception, while for the generation of the concept of a species his doctrine merely requires a single image. This is also the reason why, in this connection, he did not simply refer to the assistance of the imagination generally speaking, but in particular to that of memory; for the generation of a concept, on the other hand, one image, as such, suffices. For it would be impossible to make an inductive summation of many perceptions if their temporal separation were not recognized. To be sure, concepts also come about by means of sensory perception, but not by means of induction in this narrower sense.78

Brentano’s analytical re-reading of *De Anima* has therefore led him to identify in the problem of the relation between sensory knowledge and noetic knowledge, and in that of the imagination and the temporal structure of the presentation, the core of a logical reconciliation between theory of perception and theory of knowledge. And it has also enabled him to verify the hypothesis with which he began. His investigations of the phantasma and of the temporal structure of presentations, which are intimately bound up with each other, would henceforth constitute one of the essential components of his psychological theory.

The various characteristics of Aristotle’s theory of the soul, mediated by Lotze’s theories,79 and notably the relationship among:

1. Sensation and psychophysical activity,
2. Psychophysical activity and the conscious psychic phenomenon,
3. The quantitative and qualitative difference among phenomena,
4. The perception of stimuli and the perception of difference,

78. Brentano 1977, 146.
79. Lotze’s theory of local signs was influenced by Weber’s physiology, and in particular by his analyses of the ‘sensory circles’ of nerve fibres as physiological spaces comprising a set of similar stimuli, the spatial representation of which was consequently a map of corporeal sensitivity in relation to the nerve fibres. See Lotze 1852, 331-3. The theory of local signs and the mental states connected with them through kinaesthetic movements was a major point of transition for Brentano’s theory of psychic space. On this see Lotze 1852, 335. See Chapter 3.
5. The relationship and difference between increase/diminution and alteration,

converged in Brentano’s *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, one of whose points of departure was a critique not so much of Weber’s law as of Fechner’s psychophysics.

Aristotle’s theory of knowledge, in fact, considers diverse aspects of the sensing process. These aspects concern phenomena relating to external *stimuli* as well as to *sensation* and *perception*. Moreover, his analysis highlights the difference between perceiving an object and perceiving the perception of that object, and the complexity of simultaneously perceiving different objects like, for instance, sound and sweetness (different senses) or sweetness and bitterness (contrasting experiences of the same sense).

More in general, the subsequent debate on Aristotle’s *De Anima* in the following centuries shows the complexity of the problem in itself. Even a brief survey of the interpretations given to the relation between the passive and the active intellect reveals a wide difference of opinions. The *direct* picking up – so to say – of information in the phantasms, expressed in *De Anima*, was variously accepted or rejected by mediaeval and renaissance Peripatetics. The core of the problem – whether the active intellect *reveals* the cognitive input (noeta) already present in the sensory content, or simply processes sensory images *imposing a constructivist frame* on it – is still a matter of contemporary debate. The Peripatetics generally endorsed the second point of view, and also Thomas’ conception of the role of active intellect in generating its own objects (*generare esse intellectuale*) was a variation of the second kind which introduced the problem of abstraction and influenced the development of Brentano’s thought. The further detachment from the sensory input by the active intellect, recognizable in authors like Godfrey of Fontaines and Ferrandus Hyspanus, was responsible for an internalist and essentialist interpretation of Aristotle’s *De Anima* in terms of pure presence with no contact with the external world.

However, the difficulty of understanding the complexity of the process of perceptive assimilation as *assimilation activa* was not resolved or completely clarified by Brentano either. There are three aspects that are still a matter of debate, as already mentioned:

Firstly, it is not clear whether the perceptive *act* is accompanied by a *physiological alteration* of the sense organ or whether some material process is involved – whether, that is to say, a *physics of the pure forms* is involved.81

80. An historical survey of the topic is given by Spruit 2004.

To be sure, in Aristotle the perceptive act does not coincide reductively with the sense organ that happens to be affected on a particular occasion. Aristotle simply says that the sensitive faculty is in potency that which the sensible already is in entelechy, in the sense that it undergoes an alteration on account of its diversity, and that the process undergone makes it similar to the sensible, a sort of isomorphism claim ante litteram. Aristotle writes:

Now the sensitive faculty is in potency what the sensible already is in entelechy, as has been said: it undergoes in that it is not similar, and when it has undergone, it is made similar to the sensible and is like it.82

The difficulty is therefore as follows: does the assimilation of the sensed to the sentient mean, for example, that the sense organ from time to time becomes sonorous, coloured, etc., according to the proper sensible concerned? This would be Sorabji’s interpretation of Aristotle’s thesis. As he writes:

Controversy has centred on an interconnected group of phrases. Aristotle says that in perception the sense-organ becomes like the thing perceived, is potentially such as the thing perceived is already, and receives the form of the thing perceived without matter. Some (myself included) have taken these phrases, despite their mention of form, to refer to the material cause of perception, its physiological process […] My present conviction is that at least two of the phrases, and probably all three, refer to the physiological process, although the case of the ‘reception of form’ is slightly less certain. Moreover, I shall take the physiological process to occur as follows. In vision, for example, the eye-jelly (kore) does not receive particles or other bits of matter from the scene observed. It simply takes on colour patches (perceptible forms) to match it. One advantage of understanding a literal taking on of colour is that it explains how shapes and sizes can be received: the coloured patches in the eye-jelly have shapes and (small scale) sizes corresponding to those of the scene. The reception of shape and size had previously been thought to constitute a difficulty for any such literal interpretation, and it had also been thought that the literal interpretation would be ‘open to devastatingly obviously attack’, since we do not find people’s eyes going coloured, or their ears noisy. But the relevant organ is deep within, as I argued. For it is the kore which takes on colour patches, and the kore is not the pupil, as all recent English translators of the psychological works suggest, but the eye-jelly within the eye. It would not be obvious, with the instruments then available, that the eye-jelly did not go coloured, or the inside of the ear noisy.83

The alternative to this interpretation has been to maintain that the sensation, through the perceptive act, recognizes only the immaterial forms of the

82. Aristotle, De Anima II (B), 417b-418a, 5.
sensible qualities, as one seems to deduce from some of Aristotle’s foregoing assertions, and from the fact that Aristotle speaks of assimilation in the strict sense only in relation to the distinction between potency and act. This, conversely, would be the interpretation given by Burnyeat, who writes:

I remain convinced, however, that whatever the meaning of the phrase ‘taking on form without matter’, it picks out the most basic level of interaction between a perceiver and the object perceived. Accordingly, if taking on form without matter is not the physiological process that Sorabji describes, then in Aristotle’s view there is no physiological process which stands to a perceiver’s awareness of colour or smell as matter to form. The most basic effect on the perceiver is identical with an awareness of colour or smell, as indeed Aristotle asserts at 425b26-426a19. This explains why the Sorabji interpretation of taking on form without matter is essential support for the Putnam-Nussbaum interpretation of Aristotle as a functionalist. Without Sorabji, the functionalist can point to no material process that serves for Aristotle as the realization of perception. Without Sorabji, therefore, the Aristotelian theory of perception is neither functionalist nor a theory that any of us could believe.84

Burnyeat’s conclusions are therefore negative in the extreme: according to him, no modern philosopher of mind, of whatever persuasion, could embrace Aristotle’s theory of perception. Very interestingly, however, the main reason for such criticism resides in a negative evaluation of Aristotle’s physics:

Aristotle’s solution to the mind-body problem […] becomes less attractive when we find out that it is worked out in terms of, and cannot be understood apart from, physical assumptions which we cannot longer share: assumptions indeed, of such kind that we can scarcely even imagine what it would be like to take them seriously. Aristotle’s philosophy of mind is no longer credible because Aristotelian physics is no longer credible, and the fact of that physics being incredible has quite a lot to do with there being such a thing as the mind-body problem as we face it today.85

As Brentano’s theory of space and time continua will show, however, the sublunary physics of Aristotle is not the classical Newtonian physics to which contemporary epistemology generally refers. Most of Brentano’s work in psychology and his discovery of a qualitative level of reality – emergent at the physical and also physiological level – would focus on this point.

Secondly, an aspect still unresolved – sometimes even not posed at all – concerns the direction of the assimilative process. That there is a direction in the process of perceiving has been outlined by Aristotle himself.86 Still undecided,
however, is the direction of the arrow: or in other words, does the assimilative process start from outside, in the sense of an affection of the soul by the stimuli, or does it operate in reverse, so that the sensitive activity starts from the inner formal articulations and moves towards exterior objects? Or both?

To my knowledge this ‘old fashioned’ problem, which concerns the entire psychophysical debate, has in recent times been clearly posed only by Köhler, and successively challenged by Gestalt psychology with its view of a functional correspondence between the spatio-temporal structure of events and their mode of behaviour in the field. A further development has been given to it by the analyses conducted by the exponents of the Ganzheitpsychologie, and nowadays a similar position is expressed by process theory.

Thirdly, still problematic is the question of the role performed by the transparent means (diaphanum) that permits vision, or in Theophrastus’ terminology, the trans-audible and the trans-odorous. Between the sensation and the senses, the potency and the act, there exists in fact an intermediate phase which is a correlate of the sensation itself given by the medium concerned, and which enables transmission of the form in the sense of the releasing of the quidditas (nature) embedded in it. In other words, we perceive the form and not directly the activity of the external stimulus, so that the object of the sensation is properly the ‘aspect-s’ given by the means and not the physical substrate of, for example, the physical colour, the physical sound, etc. In each occurrence of figure/ground segmentation, then, as a basic law of perceptual organization, we refer to very complex relations between a medium and a perceptual object (or form) that is carried by it.

This would gainsay the physiologically oriented interpretation of Aristotle, suggesting the presence of another specific level within the process of assimilation responsible for the presenting of appearances in the perceptual fields. The case of the development of colour perception, for example, from forms of light like brightness, lustre and changeability to colours of objects or colours as such might be evidence in support of this hypothesis.

In conclusion, this reading and interpretation of Aristotle’s De Anima highlights an issue still discussed in contemporary debate: namely, the prob-

87. This, for example, was Priscian’s neo-Platonic interpretation. See Lask 1992, 362. Supporting this thesis is the fact that, for example, stereokinetic movements show how we construct 3D from a 2D configuration in movement. See Albertazzi 2004b.
89. On this point see again Lask 1992, 364. Aristotle defines the diaphanous, the transparent medium, as that which is visible, not in itself but by virtue of an extraneous colour: examples are air, water and many solid bodies which are actualized by the light, otherwise they remain in potency (for example, the light is the colour of the diaphanous). See Aristotele, De Anima II (B), 7, 418 a-b, 5ff.
90. Mausfeld 2003, 394.
Immanent Realism

lem of the reductionism or otherwise of his analysis of the perceptive process. Aristotle in fact seems to permit three options with regard to the nature of the assimilative process:

1. A *physiologically* oriented interpretation (under the effect of colour the sight organ becomes coloured, given the clarification made by Sorabji on this point).

2. A symbolic or *representational* interpretation (the inner activity is directed towards external (!) objects) of neo-Platonic tenor (which is also Chisholm’s view on Brentano).  

3. An interpretation that I would call embryonically *phenomenological* (there is a medium between the stimulus and perception which enables its assimilation in terms of continuity, although it is not directly ‘affected’) of Theophrastian origin and which I believe may better coincide with Brentano’s interpretation, also in light of the development taken by his thought in the theory of continua.  

From this point of view, Aristotle’s theory covers a number of themes which link directly with nineteenth-century psychophysics, particularly as regards the distinction between stimulus and perception of forms, and also as regards the differences among the diverse formats of representation (sensation, correlate, perception, representation, memory, judgement, etc.). This, indeed, is the theme that unifies such apparently disparate works as Brentano’s early Aristotelian writings and *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint.*


Chapter 3

Psychology from an empirical standpoint

1 THE PSYCHOPHYSICS OF THE SOUL

At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, psychology and philosophy stood in a very close relationship, although it was not always an untroubled one. They did so especially in the German-speaking countries, as testified by the so-called controversy on the psychology of thought, which involved several schools.¹

Evincing this state of affairs is also the fact that increasing numbers of psychologists at work in the fields of psychophysics and neurophysiology were appointed to university chairs in philosophy. The boundaries between the two disciplines, however, had been unclear for a number of decades, as shown by the case of Wundt, who was appointed to the chair of psychology at Leipzig (where he founded the first laboratory of experimental psychology), a post that he held from 1875 to 1918.

Over the years the controversy sometimes grew heated. Windelband, for example, deplored the progressive ‘psychologization’ of philosophy on the ground it was thought in Germany that one was qualified for a philosophical chair as soon as one had learned to press electric switches methodologically, and as soon as one could statistically prove by means of well ordered and tabulated series of experiments that some people get ideas more quickly than others. Brentano, by contrast, held the diametrically opposed opinion that not only empirical but also experimental analysis was important for philosophy, and that the only remedy for the decline of philosophy was the founding of an institute of psychology directed by someone whose research used the method of the natural sciences. In effect, Brentano and Windelband never shared a common point of view.

The psychological emphasis – or the attention paid to thought processes – distinctive of late nineteenth-century philosophical theory (a feature also displayed by British associationism from Hume to Stuart Mill) and psychophysiology (from Lotze to Horwicz to Maudsley up until Weber and Fechner) also characterized logic, aesthetics, ethics, mathematics and theory

¹. See Kusch 2001.
of language. Historically, the situation has been given the label – usually with pejorative intent – of *psychologism*, by which is meant the doctrine that logical relations depend on what the individual thinks, imagines, believes or knows subjectively.

Such was the complexity of the theoretical statuses of psychology and philosophy at the end of the nineteenth century that when Franz Brentano’s *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* and Wilhelm Wundt’s *Prinzipien der Physiologischer Psychologie* (*Principles of Physiological Psychology*) were published in March 1874, both works were critically well received and enjoyed wide circulation.

Indeed, an experimental and physiologically-based *psychology of content* (historically and classically classified as pertaining to Wundt and Lotze) long coexisted with a *psychology of the act* (of Brentanian derivation) which proposed a phenomenological and generally nativist description of psychic phenomena in variants developed by Hering, Mach and Stumpf.2

The difference between the approaches to psychology adopted by Wundt and Brentano has been vividly described by Tichener:

The year 1874 saw the publication of two books which, as the event has shown, were of first rate importance for the development of modern psychology. Their authors, already in full maturity of life, were men of settled reputation, fired as investigators with the zeal of research, endowed as teachers with a quite exceptional power to influence the younger minds, ready as polemists to cross swords with a Zeller or a Helmholtz. Yet one would look in vain for any sign of closer intellectual kinship between them; hardly, indeed, one could find a greater divergence either of tendency or of training. Psychology, seeing how much their work and example have done to assure her place among the sciences, may gladly confess her debt to both. The student of psychology, though his personal indebtedness be also twofold, must still make his choice for the one or the other. There is no middle way between Brentano and Wundt.3

And yet, as Tichener himself acknowledges, despite their differences of opinion on specific aspects – from inner perception/observation to the immortality of the soul – Brentano and Wundt agreed on the subject matter of psychology. As regards the use made at the time of different denominations, like ‘physiological psychology’, ‘experimental psychology’ or ‘psychology from an empirical point of view’, Tichener remarks thus:


3. Tichener 1929, 80.
The adjectives do not greatly help us. For all experimental psychology is in the broad sense empirical, and a psychology which is in the narrow sense empirical may still have recourse to experiment. To show the real difference between the books, the difference that runs through their whole texture and composition, we need at this stage terms that are both familiar and clear; the time has not yet come for technicalities and definitions. We may say, as a first approximation, that Brentano’s psychology is essentially a matter of argument, and that Wundt’s is essentially a matter of description.4

That Brentano set much store by experimental research is demonstrated by his attempts to set up a psychology laboratory at the University of Vienna. He regarded experimentation as basic research for empirical psychology, and the latter as analysis preliminary to the constitution of a descriptive psychology. He regarded its specific task to be that of delineating the field of a descriptive psychology which lay, he believed, at a higher level than its precedents. Hence, his descriptive psychology can be considered the first outline of a phenomenological investigation of appearances in the various sensory fields at primary level and of the higher cognitive processes. In other words, it was to be a preliminary sketch of an inquiry into the constituents of consciousness and their modes of combination. The subtitle to the publication of his lectures at Würzburg in 1888-89, in fact, is beschreibende Phänomenologie (descriptive phenomenology). Only on the basis of a definition of the ‘elements’ of a descriptive psychology, according to Brentano, could a genetic investigation of Wundtian type be conducted.5

In the architecture of Brentano’s thought, descriptive psychology performs a distinctive philosophical role, because it constitutes the basis of his metaphysics as well as of his ethics, logic and aesthetics. This is the sense of his view of descriptive psychology as an exact science, and as such it has a specific meaning with respect to the natural sciences, if nothing else because the perceiver itself is one of its essential constituents.6

All these issues, with their relative specific weights, and psychophysics in general were intermingled in the psychological theories of the period.

In general, we may say that even before publication of Fechner’s Elemente der Psychophysik (Elements of Psychophysics) in 1860, the psychophysical and/or psychophysiological tendency in psychology had been developed and disseminated by Herbart, Bain, Stuart Mill, Lotze and Helmholtz: authors who addressed the problem of finding a basis for psychology which was scientific as well as philosophical.

4. Tichener 1929, 83.
5. Tichener is of the same opinion. See Tichener 1929, 89, note 42.
Contemporaneously with the Aristotelian revival, which mainly concerned the humanistic disciplines, Europe (and Germany in particular) also saw the birth of experimental psychology. As psychology emancipated itself from philosophy to develop into an autonomous discipline, psychophysics constituted one of its most striking advances. Two apparently distinct and distant areas of inquiry, psychophysics and Aristotelian studies, however, displayed close thematic correlations.

In fact, starting from Aristotle’s formulation within the theory of perception of the problem of the *inner alteration* and *assimilation* of external stimuli by the soul, there were substantially four psychophysical lines of research:

1. Analysis of the relationship between the external stimulus and the psychic phenomenon.
2. Analysis of the relationship between the external stimulus and the physiological reaction (the so-called inner stimulus).
3. Analysis of the relationship between the physiological reaction and the psychic phenomenon.
4. Analysis of the relations between the previous three cases (the programme of so-called external and inner psychophysics).

The names of Weber, Lotze, Fechner and Brentano are respectively associated with the emphasis given to each of these investigative options. Each of these authors, in fact, analysed a particular aspect or trait of the psychophysical relationship between body and soul.

The connections with the psycho-physiological theory of the soul developed by nineteenth-century psychophysics largely reflect the most important of the questions raised by Aristotle, complicated by the debate on the extensive and intensive qualities envisaged therein on whether or not the soul is a magnitude, and if so of what kind, and on its relationship with the body.\(^7\)

Comparison between Aristotle’s theory of perception and psychophysical analyses reveals a number of interesting connections, but principally that psychophysical analysis performed a sort of terminological and contextual conversion of Aristotle’s themes and terminology. For example, psychophysics:

1. Dealt with the process by which, according to Aristotle, external stimuli are modified by the *inner sense* as a *subjective sense* which records the muscular changes due to kinaesthetic sensations.\(^8\)

\(^7\) Stevens 1986. On methods and psychophysical research in general see also Purghé 1997. On the question of extensive and intensive magnitudes in this context see Albertazzi 2001f.

\(^8\) This point concerns in particular E. H. Weber’s conception of *Gemeingefühl*. See Weber 1835, 172.
2. Called the *proper sensibles*, those involved in the passage of external stimuli to the nervous system via excitation of stimuli internal to the sentient being, *pure sensations* (light, dark, colour, etc.).

3. Ascribed to the *common sensibles*, which more properly concern inner perception and in particular the perception of forms, a *presentative*, subjective element due to the insertion of sensations into a spatial and temporal framework which turns them into presentations of form.

Accordingly, classical psychophysics can be legitimately viewed as the development of a problem that Aristotle had left unsolved, and namely the problem of perceptual assimilation.9

2 THE BATTLEFIELD

As already mentioned, the scientific debate on psychophysics concerned philosophical and even metaphysical issues, a classic example being the ascription of an intensive or extensive character to psychic phenomena. An outstanding protagonist of the debate, with its mixture of attempts at the mathematization of psychology and experimental analyses of psychic phenomena, was Hermann Lotze, who succeeded Herbart in the chair at Göttingen in 1841.

Lotze studied at Leipzig under E.H. Weber, and he was a close friend of Fechner (and sometimes also his medical patient) whose theory of universal animation (*Allbeseelung*) he generally endorsed, albeit with some reservations.10 Lotze’s best-known work, *Medicinische Psychologie oder Physiologie der Seele* (Medical Psychology or Physiology of the Soul), was published in 1855: a text which exerted a widespread influence on a variety of disciplinary areas that persisted for several decades.11 Kuntz writes about Lotze as follows:

Hermann Lotze was the darling philosopher of religious liberals of the 1880’s and of the period throughout World War I [...] during the 1870’s Lotze was the academic philosopher who was best known to the outside world and who proved peculiarly attractive to young Anglo-Americans. For this reason, I call the period 1880-1920 ‘the Lotzean period’.12

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10. For the theory see Fechner 1848 and 1851.
The impact of Lotze’s book was variously reflected in the theories examined here, in particular Brentano’s, and it traversed the boundaries of Europe to influence the thought of Bradley, Stout, Moore, Russell, James and Santayana, amongst others, until Lotze became “the most pillaged source”.

He was also widely read in Great Britain, where his thought was generally treated in anti-idealist terms. Evidencing this interest are the works of Ward, Hicks, McKenzie, Stout, Moore, Bosanquet, Jones, Caird, and especially Green, who was much taken with Lotze and arranged for the translation of his texts into English. The majority of these translated writings were published in issues of the Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society and Mind during those years.

Paradoxically, Lotze’s ideas were also incorporated into British idealism, as developed by Bradley in particular, and traces of his thought are to be found in the early writings of Russell, who was greatly influenced by Bradley’s Logic. However, and notably, Russell held Lotze in no great esteem, although James by contrast was an enthusiast of his thought.

As Jones observes, Lotze’s philosophy “is a persistent defence of perception against reflection, of the concrete particular against pale and vacant general ideas”. And, as proof of the intrinsic dynamicity of his thought, he recalls that:

In the realm of the former [reality] he found ‘innumerable activities’, ‘unfailing movements’, an inexhaustible content; while the limit region of knowledge was a ‘solemn shadow-land of unchangeable ideas’, ‘the imperturbable repose of universal but empty relation of thought’.

This aspect of Lotze’s thought was subsequently taken up by Brentano. The main components of Lotze’s theory were the following notions:

1. The primacy of actuality of concrete things with change.
2. There are first direct sensations caused in us by the outer world, and then forms of grouping generated by the inner states.
3. The phenomenological level is new and different from physical excitations (antireductionist stance).
4. Psychic activity arranges the manifold of impressions in time and space (a notion inherited from Kant).
5. There are concrete universals of sense which arise from perception.

6. Feeling and thought are polar opposites.
7. Relations are internal (‘to be is to be related’) (contrary to Herbart’s position).
8. Processes of sensation, perception and association generate the conception of the cosmos.
9. A sort of panpsychism associated with a monadology.16

Lotze was equally influential on psychology. Indeed, elements of his theory are to be found in the Külpe school (Mayer, Orth, Ach), the Leipzig school (Cornelius, Stern) and the Graz school (Meinong, Ehrenfels, Witasek, Höfler and Benussi), and they thus linked with Brentanism.17

As regards the debate on the intensive and extensive qualities in particular, Lotze rejected Herbart’s idea of a mass of presentations (Vorstellungen) in constant change and of an intensive nature, arguing instead for the intensity of the content of presentations, an intensity, moreover, which was sensory in origin. He also emphasised the importance of a particular part of the process extending from the external stimulus to the representation: the so-called internal stimulus or the physiological modification in the external stimulus caused by the activity of the sense organs. Lotze’s psychology, in fact, as I have already pointed out, was a variation of psychophysics in psycho-physiological guise.18

Historically, the birth of psychophysics has been principally associated with the names of H. Weber and T. Fechner, and the theory is encapsulated by the Weber-Fechner law. To be stressed is the different metaphysical options on which the inquiries of those two authors were based: Weber opted for extensive magnitudes, while Fechner envisaged only intensive ones (see below). The debate, in which as we have seen also Herbart and Lotze took part, prefigured Brentano’s theory of the soul.

From a general point of view, psychophysics seeks to establish a quantitative relationship between the sensory input of the stimulus and the perceptive output, or the magnitude of the reaction. In other words, it seeks to determine the dependence between external stimulus and inner outcome: for example, between the amount of light reflected by a page (its luminance) and the sensation of brightness subjectively experienced.19

16. Lotze 1885, book. 5, ch. 4. See also his Logik 1843, § 20.
18. On Brentano and Lotze see also Chapter 6.
19. In experimental psychology a further distinction is drawn between brightness, which mainly concerns the luminosity of an area (for example when it is looked at through a perforated sheet of cardboard) and the lightness of a colour. See Chapter 4.
Weber’s psychophysical law for the measurement of psychic magnitudes states that if differences are to be perceived between stimuli applied to a sense organ at different intensities, the differences must reach a certain value (threshold) which is proportional to the intensity of the initial stimulus. Under Weber’s law:

1. Therefore a correlation is established between physical quantities and psychic quantities.
2. The difference in the intensity of the sensations is expressed as a function of the difference in the intensity of the stimuli.

A prominent role is played in psychophysical inquiry by differential discrimination, or in other words, by the discriminant of the difference between sensations perceived as greater or lesser. It is characterized by the following two features:

1. **Increment in a series** (the musical scale or the colour scale, for instance, and innerly to them by orders differing according to pitch, position, purity, brightness, etc.).
2. The assumption of uniform direction in the variation.

In other words, in differential discrimination we perceive a serial increment of differences in which the difference (distance as Stumpf called it, or interval) between any two given terms in a series is greater than that between any two of their intermediate terms. Moreover, each of these differences is perceived as a specific sensible quality, so that the second object compared is always sensed as ‘different from’ the former.

Consider, for example, what happens when 1 gramme is added to 10 grammes or 1 gramme to 10 kilos. The perception of the difference in increment will not be the same. Conversely, if we add 1 gramme to 10 grammes and 1 kilo to 10 kilos, the difference will be perceived as conceptually equivalent. Consequently, Weber claims that, in noticing the difference between the qualities that we are comparing, we do not perceive the absolute difference.

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20. For further details see Chapter 4.
21. Whenever we apprehend a certain number of sensations as belonging to a series, the impression of similarity obviously arises. Consequently, one sensation very dissimilar from another will stand at a greater distance from the initial point. See Stumpf 1883, I.
22. On this point see also James 1950, I, 489-90. James referred to the sensation of difference as the ‘shock of difference’.
between them, but rather the relation of difference with the absolute magnitude of the things compared.\textsuperscript{23}

On the basis of Weber’s analyses, Fechner set out his programme for a psychophysics conceived, as he put it, as an exact science of the soul—a project which, as we shall see, Brentano also joined.\textsuperscript{24} Fechner’s analysis concentrated on the characteristics of sensation, in an endeavour to arrive at a numerical quantification of sensory experience whereby every unit of sensation of whatever kind comes to coincide with that increment which, when the stimulus is increased, we are barely able to perceive. This amount is not achievable directly, but only indirectly via the physical stimulus.

Consequently, as already indirectly mentioned, Fechner distinguishes between:

1. \textit{External psychophysics} (which concerns the mediate relation between external stimuli and psychic phenomena).

2. \textit{Inner psychophysics} (which concerns the immediate relation between the nervous system and sensations, and therefore physiology amid psychic phenomena).\textsuperscript{25}

Fechner, however, was mainly concerned to analyse external psychophysics, where the measurement of psychic phenomena came about indirectly by measuring the stimuli on the basis of their functional relation. This relation, Fechner believed, could be identified and expressed exactly, although the magnitude of a sensation could not be determined or gauged directly.

What is known in the literature as the \textit{Weber-Fechner Law} is in effect the law formulated by Fechner which states that the intensity of sensations is expressed as a function of the intensity of the stimuli, establishing a (presumed) exact correlation between physical magnitudes and psychic ones consisting in a ‘psychophysical transformation’ of the increase in intensity of external stimuli into the increased intensity of the sensation.

\textsuperscript{23} According to this law, for example, the minimal noticeable difference between two weights stands in approximately constant ratio to the absolute magnitude of the reference weight. The constant differs according to the sensory field concerned. Weber talks of a \textit{Gemeingefühl} apropos this type of perception, referring to a term and topic typical of physiology at the time and which greatly influenced Wundtian psychology. In Wundt, in fact, the \textit{Gemeingefühl} concerns the (physiological) genesis of the organization of representative knowledge. See Wundt 1862. On this see Boring 1959, Chapter 6. As to Brentano, see infra.

\textsuperscript{24} Fechner 1860, I, 8.

\textsuperscript{25} ‘Mediate’ and ‘immediate’ refer to methods and possibilities of measurement. Inner psychophysics was mainly of interest to Wundt, for whom acts of comparison among sensation were not so much psychological as physiological in nature. See Wundt 1862, 1.
For these various reasons, the *sensory characteristics* studied by classical psychophysics are *thresholds* which are of two types:

1. **Absolute threshold.**
   
   This is the minimum intensity of the stimulus necessary for the specific sensory stimulus to be *sensed* (for example, the perception of a light with an extremely low intensity electromagnetic wave; or the chromatic colour of a light with a higher intensity electromagnetic wave).

   Measurement is by its nature statistical, and consequently the absolute threshold is defined as the intensity of stimulus necessary to arouse the corresponding sensation in 50% of presentations.26

2. **Differential threshold.**
   
   Also known as ‘just noticeable difference’ (*jnd*), this is the minimum increment or intensity that needs to be *added* to a stimulus for the subject to notice that the new stimulus is different. Weber found that the fraction (*jnd*)/(intensity of the stimulus) is largely constant for all types of sensation, although its value changes according to the type of sensitivity considered.27 Deviation from this law, in fact, arises when the stimulus is very weak or very intense.28

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26. A distinction is usually drawn between a lower and upper absolute threshold (for example the minimum and maximum frequencies that arouse the sensation of sound).

27. Note, therefore, that this second type of threshold concerns *operations of judgement*. For the difference between presentation and judgement see Brentano, infra, and Chapter 5. The problem of the objective and subjective conditions that act as *content modifiers* in differences of judgement was addressed, in Meinong’s school, particularly by Benussi. See Benussi 1913.

28. Formally: \((S_2 - S_1) / S_1 = k \) or \((jnd) / S_1 = k\). The law states that in the case of very weak stimuli only a minor increment is needed for the difference to be noticed, while for progressively more intense stimuli to be discriminated the stimulation must be gradually increased. This enables discrimination among an enormous range of stimuli.

   Because the concept of *jnd* means that there is no intermediate sensation between \(S_1\) and \(S_1 + jnd\) (either \(S_1\) or the immediately superior stimulus is perceived), Fechner assumed that all sensations are equidistant, and therefore that, according to Weber’s law, the intensity of stimuli progressively *discriminable* from the one before increases according to a logarithmic function. If the various sensations (represented by equal intervals) are set in order, the corresponding stimuli on the abscissa will increase gradually, displaying the characteristic logarithmic pattern. If the sensations are instead set on the logarithmic scale, the resulting function is linear. Obviously the *jnd* were considered to be all equal or constant.
The general assumptions underpinning early psychophysics, with some differences among its the individual exponents, are therefore the following:

1. There is a *causal relationship* between stimulus and perception.
2. The increase in the stimulus necessary to produce an increase in the sensation stands in a *constant ratio* to the total stimulus.
3. Our sensations are given *compositionally* by a *sum* of the units of sensation (jnd).
4. The correlation between the constant increase of the stimulus and the unity of sensations is determined by a law of *psychophysical causal connection between the sensory side of the soul and matter*.29

Despite their differences – Fechner was a physicist by training, Lotze a medical doctor – both of them, as Stumpf noted, opened up a new path of inquiry by claiming the neglect by German idealism of psychology.30

Brentano, as we shall see, was highly critical of Fechner but more benevolent towards Lotze, and even more so towards Weber, whom he continued to consider a “first rank physiologist”. What he objected to most in Fechner’s psychophysics was not the use of mathematics in experimental psychological analysis – if anything, Brentano deplored the *exclusive* use of mathematics regardless of the nature of the experiment, as happened in Herbartian psychology – but rather the *operational validity* of the logarithmic transformation of the stimulus, which he considered to be a mere mathematical construct. In his critique of Fechner Brentano had in mind the complexity of the perceptual organization of stimuli, which does not have quantitative dimensions alone. For example, in the case of the *perception of a difference* in brightness between two surfaces (which is not reducible to these, and cannot be investigated psychophysically), part of the definitive phenomenal outcome is due to *perception of a change* in brightness, which is a qualitative and subjective datum. In particular, as far as emotions are concerned:

Fechner’s psycho-physical law, even were it assured, whereas it awakens continually increasing doubt and opposition, could only be used as a means of measuring the intensity of the content of certain concrete perceptions, not, however, for measuring the strength of the emotions like joy and sorrow.31

29. A further fundamental assumption is that there exists a *single* inner scale on which all the sensations deriving from external stimuli can be arranged. See Stevens 1986; Purghé 1997, 23.
31. Brentano 1902, 89.
As already mentioned, Brentano wrote his *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* on his return from a period spent in Leipzig, one of the strongholds of Herbartism, where he gained first-hand acquaintance with some of the best known exponents of mid-nineteenth-century psychology, among them Weber, Fechner and Drobisch.

For that matter, Brentano was extraordinarily well versed in contemporary scientific debate in all of the so called exact sciences, in mathematics, physics, psychology, physiology and biology. This is apparent in his writings, from the three volumes of the *Psychologies*, through *Researches in Sense Psychology* and the Würzburg lectures *On the Existence of God*, to the dictations in the *Nachlaß* and his correspondence.

*Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* amply reflects Brentano’s readings in Leipzig. It is a first attempt to construct a psychological theory without having to accept reductionist hypotheses of any kind; or in other words, without having to relate psychic phenomena directly to physical, chemical or physiological ones. In this sense, Brentano represents a development of Aristotle’s theory of perception independent on psychophysics. But for precisely this reason, because Brentano’s book addresses the same problems on the basis of the same scientific literature, it can also be viewed as a contribution to the psychophysical debate of the time, which was also James’ opinion.32

It was Brentano’s Aristotelian studies, in fact, that prompted him to develop and differentiate exactly those aspects which Fechner had defined as pertaining to *inner psychophysics* (i.e., the *immediate relation* between the nervous system and psychic phenomena) and which dominated in scientific psychology as it sprang in the nineteenth century from the so-called ‘physiological psychology’ developed principally by Maudsley, Horwicz, Lange, and Lotze himself.

The focus of Brentano’s analysis, however, was precisely the psychic acts and the *phenomenal appearances that arise* on the basis of physiological products. What he did was to discover and describe the existence of *further modifications* of stimuli – rather than the physiological modifications already analysed by psychophysics – due to the specific *structure* of consciousness.33

The core of Brentano’s contribution – and subsequently that of his school – to the nineteenth-century debate on perception consisted in analysis of the *organization of the elementary sensations into temporal and spatial phenome-

32. See James 1950, I, 534, 548. See instead James’ appreciation of Brentano, ibid., 547.
33. Note that, according to Fechner, deviations from the psychophysical law – to which he attributed universal validity – arose from the fact that an inner stimulus does not always produce the same amount of psychophysical activity. See Fechner 1860, II, 429-30. However, this aspect of inner psychophysics was left obscure and unresolved by Fechner.
nal patterns imposed by the structure of the intentional reference of presentations (see below). As I have repeatedly pointed out, this innovative contribution to the psychophysical debate of the time – which laid the basis for the study of the perceptual laws organization – had Aristotelian origins.

3 THE EMPIRICAL STANDPOINT

The two books of Brentano’s Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint were published as a single volume by the Leipzig publishers Duncker & Humblot in 1874. The theme of the first book is psychology as a science, i.e., the question of the method in psychology; that of the second a general analysis of psychic phenomena, i.e., the question of the object of psychology.

These first two books should have been followed by a further four: as Brentano writes in the Introduction:

The way in which I conceive of psychological method will be presented in more detail in the first of the six books into which this work is divided. The first book discusses psychology as a science, the second considers psychic phenomena in general. A third book, to follow, will investigate the characteristics of, and the laws governing, presentations; the fourth will concern itself with the characteristics and laws of judgements; and the fifth with those of the emotions and, in particular, of acts of will. The final book will deal with the relationship between soul and body, and there we shall also pursue the question of whether it is conceivable that psychic life continues after the disintegration of the body.

His project never came to fruition, however, and today by ‘Psychology I’ is generally meant the 1924 version edited by Oscar Kraus, which comprises the first book and chapters one to four of the second book in the edition that Brentano originally sent to the printers in 1874.

In his Introduction to the 1874 edition Brentano also stresses that his work is not intended to be a compendium of psychology:

Thus the plan of this work embraces all the different and essential fields of psychology. It is not our purpose, however, to write a compendium of this science, although we shall nevertheless strive to make our presentation clear and comprehensible enough for anyone interested in philosophical investigations. We often dwell at great length upon certain specific problems, and we are more concerned that the foundations be firmly established than we are with comprehensiveness.  

34. It was this key aspect of Brentano’s theory of intentional reference that prompted the research by the Graz school into the structure of inner time. See Benussi 1913. As to Brentano’s theory see Chapter 5 ff.  
35. Brentano 1995a, xxvii.
Moreover, Brentano reprises Aristotle’s definition of psychology to express his conception of it as the science of the soul, while also pointing out that the linguistic use of the term soul had grown increasingly circumscribed over time. By the end of the nineteenth century, for example, in many of its formulations the concept of soul had lost the vegetative dimension given it by Aristotle. The term now more generally referred to:

The substantial bearer of the presentations and the other activities which are based upon presentations and which, like presentations, are only perceivable through inner perception. Thus we usually call soul the substance which has sensations such as fantasy images, acts of memory, acts of hope or fear, desire or aversion.37

The fact that the science of the soul concerns itself with inner presentations, moreover, does not mean that it is entirely separable from the natural sciences. According to Brentano, the natural sciences and the science of the soul share a boundary area in which phenomena with closely connected physical and psychic properties occur, in the sense that “physical states have psychic consequences and psychic states have physical consequences”.38 As we saw, Fechner had coined the term psychophysics to define this border area, while other authors, such as Lotze, Horwicz, Maudsley and Wundt, preferred the expression physiological psychology.

Brentano, as noted, was one of the first critics of Fechnerian psychophysics. Indeed, the detailed comments set out in the first book of Psychology on the order and qualitative nature of phenomenal experience won the plaudits of James,39 who wrote that:

No one has emphasized more sharply than Brentano himself the difference between the immediate feltness of a feeling and its perception by a subsequent reflective act.40

praising him in particular for having identified the weak point in Fechnerian psychophysics.

As specifically regards the relationship between psychic and physical causes and effects, Brentano maintained that psychophysical and physiological research should seek to establish “which relative differences in the intensity of physical stimuli correspond to the smallest noticeable differences in the intensity of psychic phenomena”, while psychology should “discover

the *relations* which these smallest noticeable differences bear to one another".41

As James wrote in this regard, and explicitly citing Brentano:

If we were to arrange the various possible degrees of the quality in a scale of serial increase, the *distance, interval, or difference* between the stronger and the weaker specimen before us would seem about as great as that between the weaker one and the beginning of the scale. *It is these RELATIONS, these DISTANCES, which we are measuring and not the composition of the qualities themselves*, as Fechner thinks. Whilst if we turn to objects which are divisible, surely a big object may be known in a little thought. Introspection shows moreover that in most sensations a *new kind* of feeling invariably accompanies our judgment of an increased impression; and this is a fact which Fechner's formula disregards.

But apart from these *a priori* difficulties, and even supposing that sensations did consist of added units, Fechner's assumptions that all *equally perceptible* additions are *equally great* additions is entirely arbitrary. Why may not a small addition to a small sensation be *as perceptible* as a large addition to a large one? In this case Weber's law would apply not to the additions themselves, but only to their perceptibility. Our *noticing* a difference of units in two sensations would depend on the latter being in a fixed ratio. But the *difference itself* would depend directly on that between their respective stimuli. So many units added to the stimulus, so many added to the sensation, and if the stimulus grew in a certain ratio, in exactly the same ratio would the sensation also grow, though its *perceptibility* grew according to the logarithmic law.42

After this anticipation by James, Brentano's critique of Fechner will be examined in detail in the pages that follow. For the moment suffice it to specify the positioning of the problem and the area of inquiry addressed by Brentano's psychology from an empirical point of view.

Brentano defined psychology as the *science of the soul* and merely adumbrated the concepts of *psychic phenomenon* and *psychological science*, postponing their more thorough analysis until later.

Brentano wrote as follows:

The word 'psychology' means "*science of the soul". In fact, Aristotle, who was the first to make a classification of science and to expound its separate branches in separate essays, entitled one of his works *peri psyches*. He meant by 'soul' the nature, or, as he preferred to express it, the form, the first activity, the first actuality of a living being. And he considers something a living being if it nourishes itself, grows and reproduces, and is endowed with the faculties of sensation and thought, or if it possesses at least one of these faculties. Even though he is far from ascribing

42. James 1950, 546-547 and note p. 547.
consciousness to plants, he nevertheless considered the vegetative realm as living and endowed with soul. And thus, after establishing the concept of the soul, the oldest work on psychology goes on to discuss the most general characteristics of beings endowed with vegetative as well as sensory or intellectual faculties [...] In modern terminology the word ‘soul’ refers to the substantial bearer of presentations (Vorstellungen) and other activities which are based upon presentations and which, like presentations, are only perceivable through inner perception. Thus we usually call soul the substance which has sensations such as fantasy images, acts of memory, acts of hope or fear, desire or aversion.

We, too, use the word ‘soul’ in this sense. In spite of the modification of the concept, then, there seems to be nothing to prevent us from defining psychology in the terms in which Aristotle once defined it, namely as the science of the soul. So it appears that just as the natural sciences study the properties and laws of physical bodies, which are the objects of our external perception, psychology is the science which studies the properties and laws of the soul, which we discover within ourselves directly by means of inner perception, and which we infer, by analogy, to exist in others.43

A first distinction between physical and psychic phenomena – which was subjected to detailed analysis in the second volume – centred on the following fact. The objects of our senses, like colours, sounds, warmth and taste, have a phenomenal character. Hence, although they relate to something existent, of which they are signs, they only possess reality within our sensations.

The objects of inner experience, or psychic states, like presentations, judgments or emotional states, are such that we immediately have “clear knowledge” and “complete certainty” in their regard, which makes them indubitably real and present.

However, while individual psychic phenomena are evident and indubitable, not so is the concept of soul as their substantial bearer. On this point Brentano endorses both the position taken up by Lange in favour of a psychology without a soul, and Stuart Mill’s contention that psychology should simply concern itself with analysis of the laws governing the succession and co-existence of psychic phenomena.44

In short, psychology should set itself the task of analysing the conditions and nature of the inner evidence for psychic phenomena, and of determining the laws that govern them. Beyond this, Brentano regards the immortality of the soul as a still open and pertinent question. On careful consideration, this was not an eccentric position for him to take up, from either a historical or theoretical point of view. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul, in fact, like the medieval doctrine of the actus purus (pure act) are conceptions or residues

43. Brentano 1995a, 3-5.
44. Brentano 1995a, 12. See below.
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of conceptions which traverse the entire history of psychology as a science. Traces of it are to be found not only in Lotze, Lange and Brentano but also, for example, in Wundt’s critique of Bühler.

For Brentano, definition of the status of the psychic object was of crucial importance because it characterizes psychology both as a theoretical science in the Aristotelian sense and as a possible empirical science.

According to Brentano, psychology and the natural sciences share a common basis in perception and experience, but they differ in terms of their objects and methods of analysis: in the case of psychology firstly because it deals with inner perception (innere Wahrnehmung), and secondly because the observation of psychic phenomena is impossible.

As Brentano puts it:

Psychology, like the natural sciences, has its basis in perception and experience. Above all, however, its source is to be found in the inner perception of our own psychic phenomena. We would never know what a thought is, or a judgment, pleasure or pain, desires or aversions, hope or fears, courage or despair, decisions and voluntary intentions if we did not learn what they are through inner perception of our own phenomena. Note, however, that we said that inner perception [Wahrnehmung] and not introspection, i.e inner observation [Beobachtung], constitutes this primary and essential source of Psychology. These two concepts must be distinguished from one another. One of the characteristics of inner perception is that it can never become inner observation. We can observe objects which, as they say, are perceived externally. In observation, we direct our full attention to a phenomenon in order to apprehend it accurately. But with objects of inner perception this is absolutely impossible. This is especially clear with regard to certain mental phenomena such as anger. If someone is in a state in which he wants to observe his own anger raging within him, the anger must already be somewhat diminished, and so his original object of observation would have disappeared. The same impossibility is also present in all other cases. It is a universally valid psychological law that we can never focus our attention upon the object of inner perception.45

The difference between the inner perception and the inner observation of psychic phenomena resides in the fact that whilst we are able to fix our attention upon and observe objects that are perceived from outside, we are not able to perform this operation on the objects of inner experience without immediately modifying them, as clearly shown by emotional phenomena. We are only able to observe our psychic states in the memory once their presence is no longer actual, with all the ‘objectual’ modifications to which this process gives rise.

Brentano conducted his analysis of the differences between outer and inner perception (the latter being partly a legacy of Trendelenburg’s teachings), and between inner perception and inner observation, by examining, on an Aristotelian basis, the various positions taken up by Lotze, Comte, Fortlage, Maudsley, Hamilton, Wundt and Lange. Besides setting out the theories of these authors, Brentano highlighted the categorical confusion that psychology had inherited from the failure to distinguish among its ambit of reference. It also explained how such odd proposals as those put forward by Comte (replace the analysis of inner perception with phrenology) or by Lange (restrict analysis to external perception, since only this can be observed) could have been possible.

From whatever point of view one decides to begin psychological inquiry, Brentano maintained, its point of departure and its point of arrival are the facts of inner perception, its nature, objects and laws.

Brentano also dealt with the following problems:

1. Whether it is possible to identify the ultimate psychic elements.
2. If this is indeed possible, whether a classification can be made of them and according to what criteria.
3. What method should be used to investigate them (deductive, inductive, or a mix of the two procedures).

Brentano writes:

Among the investigations having primary and universal importance we must include the investigation of the ultimate psychic elements out of which more complex phenomena arise […] The task is by no means an easy one. In fact, it is not enough merely to distinguish the various aspects presented by a phenomenon. Such a procedure would be equivalent to that of a chemist who chose to consider the colour and the taste of cinnabar as its constituent elements: a ridiculous mistake, even though many psychologists have actually fallen victim to it, a situation for which Locke is not entirely blameless. Just as the chemist separates the constituent elements of a compound, it seems that the psychologist, too, should try to separate out the elementary phenomena which make up the more complex phenomena. If only such an analysis could be done as perfectly and certainly here as in chemistry! Since, however, psychic life never ever reverts from a later to an earlier stage, it seems absolutely impossible for us to relive an elementary phenomenon in the purity and simplicity in which we originally experienced it. Under these circumstances, if the concrescence of presentations were a true fusion, if there were, as in the case of chemical compounds, a transformation into altogether different kinds of phenomena, and if this were universally the case, then the difficulty would obviously become insurmountable. Fortunately no psychologist goes so far in his assertions, and those who would like to do so could be easily refuted. In general, the theory of a mental chemistry of ideas has by no means met with consistent acceptance so far.
The investigation of the primary psychic elements is mainly concerned with sensations, since sensations are undoubtedly a source of other psychic phenomena, and more than a few scientists assert that sensations alone are the source of all phenomena. Sensations are effects of physical stimuli. Their origin is thus a psychophysical process. It is for this reason that physiology, especially the physiology of sense organs, provides appreciable help to psychology here. Nevertheless, the purely psychological means which are also available for the solution of the problem under discussion are often not sufficiently utilized. Otherwise no one would have come to ascribe separate origins to phenomena one of which includes the other. In this context, as we have already remarked, the observation of congenitally blind people who have undergone successful operations also become important, not only for the sense of sight, but also for the whole area of sense perception, because the investigation can be carried out more completely for sight, our highest sense, than it can for other senses.46

Thus, from this point of view, a “psychic chemistry of the presentations” or a close analogy between chemistry and psychology is inconceivable.47 However, there seems to be a closer relationship between physiology and psychology. In other words, although psychology must define its domain of inquiry with respect to the other sciences, like physiology it originates from analysis of the same psychophysical process.

The demarcation line between physiological and psychological processes as drawn by Stuart Mill consists, according to Brentano, in the pre-conditions or the most proximate and immediate concomitant physiological conditions, and this forestalls the need to assume reductionist hypotheses and methods.

Brentano directed his criticisms mainly against Horwicz and Maudsley. The former, in his Psychologische Analysen auf physiologischer Grundlage (Psychological Analyses on Physiological Base) of 1872, had tied the multiplicity and multiformity of sensations and movements to a single state of nervous excitation. Maudsley, in The Physiology and Pathology of the Soul of 1867, not only denied that psychology had any a priori foundation but argued that it was subsumed by physiology. On this ground he claimed that the soul was the vegetative basis for organic metabolism; that psychic life did not always and necessarily imply psychic activity; and that psychic activity in its turn did not always and necessarily imply consciousness. Maudsley’s theory, which followed from Leibniz’s doctrine of unconscious perceptions (which Hamilton also embraced), prompted Brentano to focus his most searching criticisms on precisely the question of the consciousness of psychic activity,

which he would systematically discuss in the second chapter of the second book.

Brentano, in fact, denied the existence of unconscious presentations of psychic phenomena, although he countenanced the existence of habitual dispositions formed on the basis of past experiences. He broadly agreed with Bain and Stuart Mill on the utility of physiological research in psychology, but he warned against confusing the two domains of inquiry. These conclusions were Brentano’s first step towards development of a descriptive psychology as an empirical science, and also towards his view of the laws of succession of psychic phenomena as general, empirical and inductive. However, only subsequently, at the end of the 1880s, did he give clear formulation to the distinction between a genetic and a descriptive psychology.48

In criticising Maudsley and Hamilton, Brentano writes:

The existence of unconscious presentations is also far from being a proven fact. Most psychologists deny it. As far as I am concerned, not only do the reasons which are advanced in its favour seem to me to be inconclusive, but I even hope to prove later on, beyond a shadow of doubt, that the opposite is true […] On the other hand, there are undoubtedly habitual dispositions resulting from previous actions. The fact that their existence cannot be denied is a sign that the psychological method is not as completely useless as Maudsley believes. In fact, as we said, these dispositions became known only by means of the psychological method. Of course it does indicate, on the other hand, that there definitively is a boundary which cannot be crossed by psychological means. For if we want to admit generally that it is certain that these acquired aptitudes and dispositions are tied up with real things (and I, at least, do not hesitate to do so, although there are other metaphysicians, John Stuart Mill for example, who would have reservations), we must also grant that they are not psychic phenomena, because otherwise, as we shall show, they would be conscious. Psychological reflections inform us only that there are causes, unknown in themselves, which influence the rise of subsequent psychic phenomena, as well as they are in themselves unknown effects of previous psychic phenomena. In either case psychological reflection can prove in isolated instances that they exist, but it can never in any way give us knowledge of what they are.49

This critique brought by Brentano against the concept of unconscious presentation at the physiological level parallels his critique of Fechnerian psychophysics.

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4 EMPIRICAL PSYCHOLOGY VS. PSYCHOPHYSICS

Brentano’s critique of Fechner is theoretically important because it highlights a series of essential steps in his elaboration of descriptive psychology as the development of a sui generis inner psychophysics.

Insight into the tangled complexity of the problems relative to a psychophysics of inner presentations is afforded, for example, by the correspondence between Brentano and Mach on the concepts of sensation and presentation. It is important to note, however, that the subsequent development of Brentano’s thought was already present in nuce in the first chapters of Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint.

As we have seen, the discovery of Weber’s psychophysical law – the discovery, that is, of a measurable and experimental verifiable interdependence between an increment in the physical stimulus and a variation in the corresponding sensations – confirmed that psychology could be constituted as an empirical science. Of particular significance was the attempt to identify a fundamental law for measurement of the intensity of psychic phenomena using a physical measure, specifically the intensity of sensations. Given that the increase of the physical stimulus to which there corresponds an increase in the intensity of the sensation is in constant ratio to the magnitude of the stimulus itself, Fechner had concluded that every barely noticeable increment in the sensation should be considered equal.

Although Fechner, unlike Weber, was well aware of the distinction between difference of sensation and sensation of difference, his treatment nevertheless, according to Brentano, contained a number of obscurities and problems.

A general question concerned the use of mathematical method in psychology, as introduced by Herbart, and in particular whether the intensities of psychic phenomena should be considered constant magnitudes, as Wundt for example argued.

On this point, Brentano affirms:

In the first place, it seems to me that it will always be possible to apply mathematics as long as there is something which can be counted. If there were absolutely no differences of intensity and degree, mathematics would still have to decide whether or not a presentation is evoked through association when three conditions operate in favour and two against it. Secondly, mathematics appears to me necessary for the exact treatment of sciences only because we now in fact find magnitudes in every scientific field. If there were a field in which we encountered nothing of the sort, exact description would be possible even without mathematics. If there were no intensity in the area of psychic phenomena, it would be as if all phenomena had an equal and invari-

50. See Brentano 1988b.
able intensity which we could quite properly ignore completely. It is obvious that then the description of psychology would be no less exact than they are now, only its task would be substantially simplified and facilitated. But differences of intensity do in fact exist in presentations and affects. This implies the necessity of mathematical measurement, if the laws of psychology are ever supposed to attain that precision and exactness which would belong to them if its phenomena had no intensity or at least no differences in intensity.\textsuperscript{51}

Brentano pointed out in this regard that the measurement of phenomena, and the perception of differences among them, involve \textit{qualitative} psychic factors which prevent their accomplishment in accordance with the \textit{Weber-Fechner} law. Thus, rather than the logarithmic relation between variation of the stimulus and variation of the sensation envisaged by Fechner, Brentano argued that what is constant is their \textit{ratio}.

Specifically, Brentano maintained that there were numerous weaknesses in Fechner’s psychophysical law. For example:

In the first place, the possibility of measuring intensities according to their method is restricted entirely to those phenomena which are produced by external stimulation of the sense organs. We still lack, therefore, a measure of intensity for all psychic phenomena which have their foundation in physical processes within the organism or which are caused by other psychic phenomena. But the majority of psychic phenomena including the most important ones belong in this category: the whole class of desires and actions of the will, as well as convictions and opinions of all kinds, and a wide range of presentations which have their origin in the imagination. Of all psychic phenomena, sensations alone, and not even all of them, remain measurable.\textsuperscript{52}

According to Brentano, the impossibility of applying Fechner’s method to measurement of the intensity of psychic phenomena also entailed that the laws which govern the on-going sequence of psychic phenomena are \textit{empirical laws}, entirely \textit{general} and at least partly \textit{dependent} on the still unfathomed complexity of physiological processes. The correct procedure with which to identify these laws was therefore a synthesis of deductions from general laws and attention to specific laws governing the phenomena under observation.

If Fechner’s intent was to discover a fundamental law on the measurement of the intensity of psychic phenomena, according to Brentano the fundamental flaw in his theory was that it treated as \textit{equal} what was only \textit{equally perceivable}. Brentano expounded his views on the matter as follows:

\textsuperscript{51} Brentano 1995a, 66.
\textsuperscript{52} Brentano 1995a, 69.
It has been found that the increase of the physical stimulus which produces a just barely noticeable increase in the strength of the sensation always bears a constant relation to the magnitude of the stimulus to which it is added. And since it was assumed to be self-evident that each barely noticeable increase of sensation is to be regarded as equal, the law was formulated that the intensity of sensation increases by equal amounts when the relative increase of the physical stimulus is the same. In reality, it is by no means self-evident that each barely noticeable increase in sensation is equal, but only that it is equally noticeable. In addition, the quantitative relationship between equally noticeable increases in sensation remains to be examined. This investigation leads to the conclusion that all increases in sensation which have the same relationship to the intensity of the sensations to which they are added, are equally noticeable. This law also holds for other changes in the phenomena. So, for example, the noticeability is unequal; it is more noticeable, when you increase an inch by a certain amount than when you increase a foot by the same amount, provided we do not superimpose the two lengths upon one another for comparison. For if we do that, the length of the line which is increased makes no difference, since only the two increases are noticed. In other cases, though, the comparison takes place by way of memory which confuses phenomena with one another more easily the more resemble one another. ‘More easily confused’, however, simply means ‘hard to distinguish’, i.e. that it is less easy to tell the difference between one thing and another. Now a foot which has been lengthened by a given line is obviously more original to the original foot than an inch which has been lengthened by the same line is to the original inch. Therefore, only with an addition to the foot which is proportionate to what was added to the inch would the later appearance be dissimilar from the earlier in the same degree, and only then would the difference between them be equally noticeable. But the very same thing must happen whenever we compare two successive phenomena which, alike in other respects, differ from one another in intensity. Memory certainly intervenes here too. Only if two phenomena differ from each other to the same degree will their difference strike us in the same way. In other words, their differences will only be equally noticeable if the relation of the increase to the previously given intensity is the same.53

Having distinguished psychic from physical phenomena, Brentano still had to deal with the central problem of psychophysics: are psychic phenomena extensive or intensive magnitudes? Are they, that is to say, measurable magnitudes? Moreover, given that both psychic and physical phenomena have inner character, when we measure the intensity of phenomena, what is it that we are measuring: the act or the content? Fechner’s position was extremely vulnerable to criticism because, as Brentano pointed out:

Furthermore, even sensations depend not only on the strength of the external stimulus, but also on psychological conditions, e.g. on the level of attention. It will be necessary, therefore, to eliminate this influence, let us say, by assuming complete attention.

Even this procedure causes no other inconvenience, it nevertheless imposes at the very least a new and very important restriction upon our investigations. Finally, it could be said that a clear understanding of what is actually measured by Fechner’s method would show us that the object of measurement is not so much a psychic as a physical phenomenon. What are physical phenomena if not the colours, sounds, heat and cold, etc., which manifest themselves in our sensations? – So, when we measure the intensities of colours, sounds, etc., as Fechner did, we are measuring the intensities of physical phenomena. Colour is not seeing, sound is not hearing, warmth is not feeling warmth. – The reply may be made that even if seeing is not colour, nevertheless its intensity corresponds to the intensity of the colour seen by the subject. In a similar way, the other sensations must correspond in their intensity to the physical phenomena which are presented in them. The strength of the psychic phenomenon, therefore, would be determined along with the strength of the physical phenomenon. I do not want to deny that this is the case, although, as we shall see later, there are psychologists who distinguish between the intensity of the object which is presented and the intensity of the presentation. For my part I admit that if, on the basis of Fechner’s method, a measurement could be found for the physical phenomenon, it could also be found for the psychic phenomenon in which the physical phenomenon is presented. Yet, it seems to me necessary to add the new restriction that only one aspect of the psychic phenomenon should be measured according to its intensity, namely its reference to its primary object, for we shall see that the psychic phenomenon has still other aspects and it is not exhausted by this one reference.54

The above passages also serve to introduce the best known and most widely cited of Brentano’s distinctions, namely that between physical phenomena and psychic phenomena, or in other words, the core of his theory of intentional reference. However, it is well to bear in mind the context – or the veritable battlefield – in which this theory originated and those to whom it was mainly directed: the exponents of psychophysics and physiological psychology. There is not the slightest hint of mentalism – or of representationalism, to use a modern term – at the origin of Brentano’s theory of intentional reference. Presentations present, exhibit the structure of what appears in the now; consequently they are not a representation of the external world. In other words, the proper concern of the Brentanian theory of appearances is not the detection of a stimulus array (the contemporary standard concept of information) and/or the transformation and integration of multiple primitive components in the sense of viewpoint invariants, to use modern terminology. The connection between the content of presentation and its triggers is not taken into account, and put in brackets are the stimuli, or what are nowadays called transphenomenal correlates of consciousness.

5 INTENTIONAL REFERENCE

Book Two of *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* contains one of the best-known descriptions of Brentano’s position. The paragraph in question specifies the distinction between psychic and physical phenomena drawn in the first chapter as follows.

Every presentation which we acquire either through sense perception or imagination is an example of a psychic phenomenon. By presentation I do not mean what is presented, but rather the *act* of presentation. Thus, hearing a sound, seeing a coloured object, feeling warm or cold, as well as similar states of imagination are examples of what I mean by this term. I also mean by it the thinking of a general concept, provided such a thing actually does occur. Furthermore, every judgement, every recollection, every expectation, every inference, every conviction or opinion, every doubt, is a psychic phenomenon. Also to be included under this term is every emotion: joy, sorrow, fear, hope, courage, despair, anger, love, hate, desire, act of will, intention, astonishment, admiration, contempt, etc.\(^{55}\)

Psychic phenomena are therefore:

1. *Acts* of a certain kind (primarily presentational, secondarily judgmental and emotional).
2. Expressible by *verbal* forms (seeing, hearing, imagining, etc.).
3. Originating in *both* sensations and fantasies.
4. Taking the form of *inner* presentations.

Again according to Brentano:

Examples of physical phenomena, on the other hand, are a colour, a figure, a landscape which I see, a chord which I hear, warmth, cold, odour which I sense; as well as similar images which appear in the imagination.\(^{56}\)

Physical phenomena, very distinctively, are therefore:

1. *Contents* of acts of presentation.
2. Expressed by nominal forms.
3. Originating in both sensible presentations and fantasies.

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The point is of utmost importance for Brentano’s theory of immanent realism as well as for its subsequent developments in the School of Brentano as well. As Husserl observed in this regard:

Brentano took no account of the separation on grounds of principle of the physical phenomena as material phases (sensory data) from ‘physical phenomena’ as the objective phases that appear in the noetic apprehension of the former (the colour of a thing, the shape of a thing, and the like); but as against this he marked off on the other side the concept of ‘psychic phenomenon’ through the unique feature of intentionality.57

On examining the opinions then current on the spatiality or otherwise of phenomena – a problem addressed amongst others by Berkeley, Platner, Herbert, Lotze, Spencer and the two Mills – Brentano seemingly concludes that the problem is not the spatiality of the sensible qualities but the fact that these are sensed as localized.

The problem of the localization of psychic phenomena had first been raised by Lotze in his Medicinische Psychologie oder Physiologie der Seele. Brentano returned to it in Researches in Sense Psychology (1907), and in a number of passages in Sensible and Noetic Consciousness (1928). It was also one of the general problems addressed by Brentano’s theory of perceptive continua later developed in his dictations posthumously published as Philosophische Untersuchungen zu Raum, Zeit und Kontinuum (Philosophical Lectures on Space, Time and the Continuum).58

A crucial quality of psychic phenomena not possessed by physical ones was, according to Brentano, their intentional character. Historically, the term had a twofold significance which reflected the medieval doctrine of inherence. For Aristotle, inherence concerned the way in which accidents inhere in substance. For Aquinas, to whom the doctrine was handed down by the Neo-Platonics, Augustine and Anselm, inherence related to the inner object of a particular psychic or emotional act: for example, the ‘thought’ that inheres in ‘thinking’, or the ‘love’ that inheres in ‘loving’.59

For Brentano, the doctrine of inherence concerned the way in which the object is present to consciousness: for example, the statement that ‘Socrates is seated’ or that ‘Socrates is white’ indicates the way in which Socrates is viewed in the actual presentation, or in other words the mode in which we have Socrates for object.

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58. See Chapter 2.
Brentano also followed Aristotle in his contention that the presentation of
the objects of the external world *assimilates only their form* after it has been
shorn of matter.

The Aristotelian doctrine of inherence and that of the assimilation of form,
mediated by Thomism, merged into Brentano’s conception of the *psychic in/
existence* (*psychische Inexistenz*) of the objects of presentation. According to
Brentano, thus, every ‘seeing’ has something ‘seen’, every ‘loving’ something
‘loved’, every ‘thinking’ something ‘thought’ as the *immanent object* of the
*act* of presentation.60

Brentano puts it thus:

> Every psychic phenomenon is characterized by what the scholastics of the Middle
> Ages called the intentional (and also psychic) in/existence of an object, and what we
> would call, though not in entirely unambiguous terms, the reference to a content, a
directedness to an object (*Objectum*) (which we should not necessarily take to be
real), or an immanent objectuality. Every psychic phenomenon contains something in
itself as an object, although not always in the same way. In presentation something is
presented, in judgement something is accepted or rejected, in love something is loved,
in hate something is hated, in desire something desired, etc.61

As Brentano specifies, “as we use the verb ‘to present’, ‘to be presented’
means the same as *to appear*” .62 In other words, the objects of the psychic
phenomena have only the *phenomenal existence of appearances*.

This first formulation of the concept of *intentional reference* was further
developed by Brentano in his *The Classification of Psychic Phenomena*
published in 1911, and particularly in Appendix I,63 but he would constantly
return to the notion and revise it and its implications in all his subsequent
work.

Moreover, as Brentano himself warns, the formulation is not without its
ambiguities. In fact, in 1874, as we saw, an act of presentation is defined
simultaneously as:

1. Reference to a *content*.
2. Directedness towards an *object* (which may not necessarily exist) or
an *immanent objectuality*.

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60. See in particular Brentano 1995a, 78-81.
63. See infra Chapter 4ff.
3. Something that pertains generally and exclusively to the consciousness.\textsuperscript{64}

Notwithstanding the complexity of the intentional reference given in inner perception, Brentano affirms:

Moreover inner perception is not merely the only kind of perception which is immediately evident; it is really the only perception in the strict sense of the word. As we have seen, the phenomena of the so called external perception cannot be proved true and real even by means of indirect demonstration. For this reason, anyone who in good faith has taken them for what they seem to be is being misled by the manner in which the phenomena are connected. Therefore, strictly speaking, so-called external perception is not perception. Psychic phenomena, therefore, may be described as the only phenomena of which perception in the strict sense of the word is possible.\textsuperscript{65}

The question of the existence of the \textit{inner object} of the act of presentation – which subsequently became one of the most controversial parts of Brentano’s theory – also gave rise to experimental work in the schools of psychology influenced by his descriptive psychology, especially those of Graz and Würzburg, the two branches of Gestalt psychology.

However, Brentano never altered his initial assumption that not only do acts of presentation – as psychic phenomena – have intentional existence, in that they are directed towards some sort of object or objectuality, but they also possess real, \textit{effective} existence; and it is this that distinguishes them from physical phenomena which in consciousness are given merely as appearances. Consequently, acts of presentation like knowing, rejoicing and desiring have existence endowed with evidence in inner perception, while colours, sounds and emotions, for example, have only mediated existence. The same applies to judgmental acts and contents.\textsuperscript{66}

One of the most controversial aspects of the theory concerned the concept of \textit{act}, which characterized Brentano’s approach to the history of psychology. The concept, comprising both the idea of ‘psychic act’ and of ‘passive psychic affection’, performs a double role, psychological and metaphysical. The latter was spelled out in Brentano’s last writings,\textsuperscript{67} the former refers to the act of thinking when we consider its intentional character. E. Gilson’s comment on this troublesome and important point is as follows:

\footnotesize{64. Brentano 1995a, 88.  
66. The terms used by Brentano to characterize the effective existence of the acts of presentations are, from time to time, \textit{wirklich}, \textit{dinglich}, \textit{wesenhaft}.  
67. See Chapter 8.}
In our opinion, this doctrine raises a certain number of problems. It would be particularly helpful if we could establish precisely the scope of the word ‘act’ in the expression ‘psychic act’. At first we will be tempted to emphasise that the thinking subject is directed towards things, in the broad sense in which Brentano uses the word ‘thing’ as a synonym for ‘a reality’ or ‘being’ in the strict sense. But if we look at the relation between the thought and the primary object in Brentano’s doctrine, we must remember that the real thing to which this thought refers cannot exist outside of the mind and that, on the other hand, the act of thinking never causes the occurrence of an ‘object as an object’ in the mind, because this would be a thought-of thing, and a thought-of thing is not a being in the strict sense. From the existential point of view, we can affirm only one thing definitely, according to Brentano, and this is the fact that thought always presupposes the existence of a subject which, when thinking, augments itself through an accidental determination; in other words, it enriches itself by means of a modality which takes place, moreover, within the subject in a passive form. Thus we can foresee certain difficulties in these conceptions. We might be surprised, at first, to discover that thought is treated in a very general way as passive modification, as a state suffered. And when we look at the very heart of this doctrine, are there not two tendencies which are very difficult to reconcile? On the one hand, we are led to regard the thinking subject as a ‘being open toward thing’, but on the other hand, is there not a danger of a simple modality of this subject pushing the object into the background?\(^68\)

Other features of psychic phenomena, besides the fact that they refer to something as their object, are the following:

1. They lack spatial extension (*Ausdehnung*) in the physical sense.
2. They are the exclusive object of inner perception.
3. They are always perceived as unitary, though not as simple units.

*Physical phenomena*, then, and likewise imagined ones, can only be considered to be contents of psychic phenomena. The authentic objects of psychology, Brentano maintains, are only psychic phenomena in the sense of actual states.

*Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* specifically addressed the problem of the unity of psychic phenomena in inner perception, and also dealt with the topic of consciousness.

A brief survey of the ways in which the concept of ‘consciousness’ had already been used by Bain and Horwicz, for example, enabled Brentano to show that the term was ambiguous. Then as today, it was sometimes employed in the sense of ‘memory’, on other occasions in the more general

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68. E. Gilson 1976, 75-76.
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sense of ‘every type of knowledge’, on yet others as simply ‘presenting’. For his part, Brentano used the term ‘consciousness’ as equivalent to psychic phenomenon or psychic act. However, attributing consciousness to the acts of presentation entails as its necessary consequence that there are no unconscious psychic acts.

As Brentano writes:

We have seen that no mental phenomenon exists which is not, in the sense indicated above, consciousness of an object. However, another question arises, namely, whether there are any psychic phenomena which are not objects of consciousness. All mental phenomena are states of consciousness; but are all mental phenomena conscious, or might there also be unconscious mental acts?69

The claim that, for Brentano, unconscious psychic phenomena do not exist, as well as his thesis of intentional existence, has been too hastily put forward and then discarded by the critical literature. Brentano’s position on these matters was much more articulated than appears at first sight, and once again was part of the debate on psychophysics.

As already pointed out, Brentano was not hostile to the assumption that there are unconscious perceptions in the sense of acquired dispositions to particular psychic acts, in the meaning given to that term by Kant, Hamilton, Lewes, Maudsley, and others. Rather, he stressed the impossibility of an unconscious consciousness, a position taken up previously by Bain, Spencer, Stuart Mill and Lotze. He believed that a number of confusions and disputes could be resolved by paying critical attention to language. Thus, for example, Fechner’s view on ‘unconscious sensations and presentations’ could be accepted, given that the expression referred not to psychic phenomena but to the underlying psychophysical activity. The point is obviously also of interest in view of its later development by Freud, who, as mentioned, studied under Brentano for two semesters.

According to Brentano, an essential feature of psychic phenomena is their evidence. What, though, does it mean to say that the psychic phenomena in perception are evident? The question has a close bearing on the relationship between act and object in psychic phenomena. The problem is as follows: according to Brentano, whenever there is a presentation in intentional reference, act and object are simultaneously united in a characteristic fusion.

The distinction between primary object (at which the act is directed) and secondary object (consciousness of the act), however, is an abstract distinction, because given in actual presentation is only a single psychic phenomenon: for example a ‘seeing’ which simultaneously contains an object

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(what is seen) and awareness of the ‘seeing’ itself. Also this key aspect of Brentano’s theory prompted experimental verification, with significant results, by the pupils of Meinong and those of De Sarlo.\(^70\)

According to Brentano, as we saw, inner perception comprises, besides the *act* of presentation itself, not the object of the presentation as such but the *object presented*.\(^71\) Nor is it possible, he maintains, for the consciousness of an actual presentation to be due to the sum of diverse acts in a whole: firstly because this would simply shift the problem elsewhere, and secondly because it would entail an infinite regress in the structure of intentional reference.

On the problem of the unity of consciousness, given that we have something as our primary object and at the same time ‘the psychically active’ (the ‘seer’, for example) has himself as object, as someone who is psychically active, Brentano writes:

Our investigation has shown that wherever there is a mental activity there is a certain multiplicity and complexity. Even in the simple mental state a double object is immanently present. At least one of these objects is conscious in more than one way: it is not simply the object of a presentation but of a judgment and [a feeling] as well. But this lack of simplicity was not a lack of unity. The consciousness of the primary object and the consciousness of the secondary object are not each a distinct phenomenon but two aspects of one and the same unitary phenomenon; nor did the fact that the secondary object enters into our consciousness in various ways eliminate the unity of consciousness. We interpret them, and had to interpret them, as parts of a unified real being.

In reality, such a simple state never occurs. It frequently happens, instead, that we have a rather large number of objects before our minds simultaneously, with which we enter into many diverse relations of consciousness. The question remains whether with such a large number of mental phenomena there is still a real unity which encompasses them all. Are these phenomena all parts of a really unitary whole, or are we confronted here with a multiplicity of things, so that the totality of mental states must be regarded as a collective reality, as a group of phenomena, each of which is a thing in its own right or belongs to a particular thing? […] Nevertheless, even though it is clear and obvious at the outset that one thing can never be a multiplicity of things, this does not mean that no multiplicity can be distinguished in it.\(^72\) Unity and simplicity – Aristotle again has already emphasized this point – are concepts which are not interchangeable. Even if one real thing cannot be a multiplicity of real things, it can nevertheless contain a multiplicity of parts. A clear example of this is found in those relatively uncomplicated psychic states discussed in the preceding chapter. That to

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\(^70\) See Albertazzi 1992/3, 1993c, 1997e.

\(^71\) However, ‘presented’ does not mean ‘thought’ or given a in reduplicative (*qua*) way. See infra Chapter 5.

\(^72\) Brentano subsequently changed his mind on this point. See Chapter 8.
which the primary and the diversified secondary consciousness belonged was one thing, but obviously not a utterly simple thing. Naturally, just as we can use one term to cover a number of things taken together, we can also consider each part of a thing as something in itself and call it by its own name. But just as in the mere collective, the object will not be a thing in this case either. So, for want of a commonly used univocal term (since the term “part” is also applied to real things when they are in collectives) we shall call this a divisive. […] Our investigations lead to the following conclusion: the totality of our psychic life, as complex as it may be, always forms a real unity. This is the well known fact of the unity of consciousness which is generally regarded as one of the most important tenets of psychology. 

Frequently, however, this tenet has been misunderstood both by its supporters and its opponents. In contrast with them, we intend to articulate once again, in clear and precise terms, what the unity of consciousness is, and what is not. The unity of consciousness, as we know with evidence through inner perception, consists in the fact that all psychic phenomena which occur within us simultaneously, such as seeing and hearing, thinking, judging and reasoning, loving and hating, desiring and shunning, etc., no matter how different they may be, all belong to one unitary reality only if they are inwardly perceived as existing together. They constitute phenomenal parts of a psychic phenomenon, the elements of which are neither distinct things nor parts of distinct things but belong to a real unity. This is the necessary condition for the unity of consciousness, and no further conditions are required.73

According to Brentano, rather than an endeavour to demonstrate the evidence of inner perception, which is an irrefutable fact, what was required was a theory of perception which simply illustrated the relationship between act and object of presentation, on the one hand, and the mode of its recognition on the other. Put otherwise, it was necessary to elaborate a systematic theory of judgement. Brentano’s theory of judgement underwent substantial refinement in his later works, notably the already cited Researches in Sense Psychology, and The Classification of Psychic Phenomena of 1911.74 The latter work also clarified the status of a third type of presentation, viz. emotional phenomena. In his first work, contrary to Wundt and in agreement with Stuart Mill, Brentano had maintained that emotional phenomena are always present in an act of presentation, although he subsequently changed his mind on the matter.

Like acts of judgement, also feelings have different types of intensity: an intensity shared with the object presented and which causes the feeling, and an intensity specific to sentiment. The difference lies in the fact that, whereas in the case of inner perception only the first type of intensity is a function of the

73. Brentano 1995a, 155-164, translation slightly modified.
74. See Chapters 5, 6.
intensity of the act perceived, but not of the intensity of the conviction, in the
case of moods the intensity depends both on the intensity of the phenomenon
that causes the mood and on the perceptive circumstances; and it varies in dif-
f erent ways. Brentano would further analyse feelings, and especially their
objects, when investigating the psychology of the senses – with particular ref-
erence to the *emotions concomitant* with the perception of sounds and colours
– and in Appendix II to The Classification of Psychic Phenomena.75

In sum, Brentano’s preliminary analysis of psychic phenomena in *Psy-
chology* led him to conclude that, from the point of view of an inner
psychophysics of phenomenal appearances:

Every psychic act is conscious; consciousness of it being given to its interior. Hence,
every psychic act, however simple, has a dual object, primary and secondary. The
extremely simple act with which we hear, for example, has the sound as its primary
object, and itself, i.e. the psychic phenomenon in which the sound is heard, as its sec-
ondary object. It is conscious of this latter object in threefold manner: it presents it,
recognizes it, and hears it [...]. The intensity of the presentation of the secondary
object is in any case equal to that of the presentation of the primary object, and the
same applies to the intensities of the judgement and the concomitant sentiment, to the
extent that a presentation lies at their basis.76

Psychic activity, therefore, is always manifest with a certain *complexity*,
with a *plurality of objects* (at least two, primary and secondary) and in *unitary
form*, in the sense that it always involves partial phenomena of a unitary
whole. Unification of the complexity comes about in substantially two ways:

1. When *different psychic activities* (presentations, judgments, feelings)
   are directed towards the *same* object.
2. When *different psychic acts* directed at *different objects* occur *simul-
taneously* (for example, when we see and hear the same thing).

Consequently, the same primary object can be conscious in several ways,
and a plurality of primary objects can be known in various ways but
simultaneously.

Moreover, the former type of unification is obviously possible only in the
case of an *immanent object* because the object presented is simultaneously
judged, or positively or negatively appraised. The second type of unification
occurs because although the objects are different – like a sound that we hear
and a colour that we see, and which we recognize as different – we apprehend

75. See Chapter 5.
76. Brentano 1995a, 153-54.
their simultaneity in a single act. The reciprocal detachability of seeing and hearing presented in a single unitary act of consciousness, and the fact that they can exist independently of each other, or one after the other, does not affect the unity of the whole in which they are perceived.

Brentano therefore derives from the complexity of the processes taking place in the unity of consciousness, as a first approximation, his conception of the psychic act as a whole endowed with non-separable parts (divisives) or partial phenomena dependent upon it. This mereological theory of psychic phenomena was given further development in his later works, particularly *Descriptive Psychology* and *The Theory of Categories*, and also by his pupils, most notably Husserl in his *Third Logical Investigation* and Meinong in his theory of relations.77

A second assumption deriving from Brentano’s analysis of the processes responsible for the unification of consciousness concerns the structure of the underlying temporal continuum. The ‘consciousness’ that Brentano envisages is, in fact, only the simultaneous consciousness of actual presentation, and he considers it entirely plausible that this consciousness may divide into two or more parts. He writes:

Furthermore, it is necessary to emphasize that the unity of consciousness does not exclude either a plurality of quantitative parts or spatial extension (or an analogue thereof). It is certain that inner perception does not show us any extension […] Of course it is certain that we cannot conceive of the psychic activities which belong to the unity of consciousness as quantitatively divided every which way. It is not possible for seeing to occur in one quantitative part of consciousness while the inner presentation, perception or pleasure which accompanies the act of seeing occurs in a quantitatively different part of consciousness. This would contradict all we have heard about the particularly intimate connection and close union of these phenomena. It is likewise clear that a presentation is never contained in one quantitative part of our consciousness, while the judgment or desire directed upon the object of this presentation are contained in another part. In this case, there would be no presentation as the basis of the judgment and the desire, as inner perceptions shows that there is.78

The unity of consciousness therefore does not entail its simplicity, as we previously saw. Consequently, Brentano does not rule out the presence of a multiplicity of parts, which was a topic which he would address in *Descriptive Psychology*.

A third assumption deriving from Brentano’s analysis of the processes of consciousness unification concerns the essentially qualitative nature of psy-

77. Husserl 1970; Meinong 1882. See Chapters 4, 8.
chic phenomena. In fact, without excluding that there may be a plurality of quantitative parts characterized by some sort of spatial pseudo-extensiveness, we cannot think of psychic activities as quantitatively subdivided. Brentano observes further:

It is not possible for the seeing to be found in one quantitative part while either the inner presentation that refers to it, or the perception, or the relative pleasure, are to be found in another [...] On the contrary, at least thus far we have no reason to contest the fact that perhaps one presentation may be extended, or that different presentations may subsist spatially one beside the other, etc.\footnote{Brentano 1995a, 166.}

The interweaving between the temporal simultaneity that seemingly characterizes the unification of the multiplicity of the parts and the unification of the multiformity of psychic phenomena (which are not, in fact, homogeneous parts), both given in actual presentation, and the spatial extendedness (\textit{Extensität}) that characterizes individual visual, auditory or tactile presentations, was one of the reasons that prompted Brentano to develop a theory of perceptive continua, in particular the primary continua of time and space.\footnote{See Chapter 7.}

Secondly, this analysis constitutes Brentano’s first approach to the problem of the memory as presentation of a temporal series of groups (i.e. of diverse simultaneous units of consciousness) displaying constant temporal variation. Also this aspect of his theory would later undergo experimental investigation, and it was one of the mainstays of his theory of intentional presentation, which concerned itself in particular with the nature, the extension and the indirect temporal modes of presentation itself.\footnote{See Chapters 5, 6. See also Albertazzi 1995/6.}

On completion of this preliminary exploration of the nature of consciousness, Brentano could only conclude that:

It remains an open question, then, for the moment, whether the continued existence of the self is the persistence of one and the same unitary reality or simply a succession of different realities linked together in such a way that, so to speak, each subsequent reality takes the place of the reality which preceded it. Consequently, the belief that the self is a corporeal organ which forms the substrate of continuous substantial changes would not contradict our previous statements, provided that whoever might hold such a belief admits that the impressions experienced by such an organ exert an influence upon the way in which it renews itself. Thus, just as a wound leaves a scar, the past psychic phenomenon would leave as an after-effect a trace of itself and with it the possibility of a recollection.\footnote{Brentano 1995a, 168-69.}

\footnote{Brentano 1995a, 166.} \footnote{See Chapter 7.} \footnote{See Chapters 5, 6. See also Albertazzi 1995/6.} \footnote{Brentano 1995a, 168-69.}
As Brentano himself admits, this is a description of consciousness of modest content. Yet it rests on a number of well-founded facts, namely that consciousness:

1. Is a qualitative unitary whole.
2. Has a temporal structure.
3. Has non-separable parts.
4. Is not an aggregate of quantitative parts.

Although this first description of consciousness denies the atomistic hypothesis that it is a set of separable parts, Brentano is unable to provide convincing arguments for the existence of a substantial bearer of psychic phenomena. His descriptive analysis of psychic phenomena only shows the succession of a continuous series of groups of simultaneous units in a sufficiently continuous variation.

Psychology II and III conducted further exploration of intentional presentation, the inner object, continua, and the parts and the whole of consciousness, from both a psychological and an ontological point of view.

6 BACK TO ARISTOTLE?

In the years between publication of Psychology I (1874) and Psychology II (1911), Brentano made careful examination of these topics in his lectures at the University of Würzburg. As Kraus recalls, in his lectures Brentano divided psychology into two sections:

1. The first dealing with psychic phenomena and their laws.
2. The second dealing with the substrate of psychic phenomena and with the immortality of the soul.83

Both these themes, at different levels, would be present in Brentano’s elaboration of a psychology from an empirical standpoint and its subsequent variants.

In the first part of his Würzburg lectures, Brentano divided the fundamental psychic functions into three categories (presentations, judgements, feelings) and analysed the relations among them. With regard to the laws that govern psychic phenomena, as we have seen, he recognized only the fact that

83. Kraus 1919, 135ff.
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every presentation leaves behind a disposition for a similar presentation to occur in similar psychological conditions.

Subsequently, Brentano’s lectures delivered during the 1887-88 winter semester introduced a distinction between:

1. Genetic psychology, and
2. Descriptive psychology.

This distinction relates to an issue widely debated during the nineteenth century, namely the difference between descriptive method and genetic method. Brentano used ‘descriptive’ (initially beschreibend, then deskriptiv) in the sense of ‘morphological’, opposing it to the ‘explanatory’ or ‘genetic’ nature of the method used in Fechner’s and Wundt’s psychology. According to Brentano, genetic psychology reduced concepts to their subjective origin, such as psychic events, and was thus at risk of psychologism.

Brentano’s descriptive psychology instead put itself forward as a theoretical discipline (though empirically founded) which sought to classify the facts of inner experience. The term psychognosy as a synonym for descriptive psychology dates to Brentano’s Würzburg period and more precisely to his lectures of the 1880-81 semester.84 Brentano states that:

Psychology is the science of people’s inner life, that is, the part of life which is captured in inner perception. It aims at exhaustively determining (if possible) the elements of human consciousness and the ways in which they are connected, and at describing the causal conditions which particular phenomena are subjected to.

The first is the subject matter of psychognosis, the second that of genetic psychology.85

And further:

1. Psychology is the science of the soul.
2. As such, its task is, above all, to analyse the phenomena of the soul in order to arrive at the parts which all phenomena of the human soul are composed of, and to determine each of these parts according to its manifold characteristics. Involved in this may also be the compatibility or incompatibility, and separability or inseparability of certain sub-phenomena. This part of psychology is called psychognosis.

Psychology, furthermore, has to explain the law according to which the phenomena of the soul come into being and cease to be. Further questions may be added here, such as whether the soul itself ceases to exist with the cessation of the phenomena of the soul, as well as the question concerning the beginning or the being without a beginning, the end or the indefinite continuation of the soul, and possibly the question concerning its manner of existing and its life activities after the dissolution of the body. This part of psychology is called genetic psychology.86

All the variants of Brentano’s thought and many of its developments by his pupils relate to the distinction between genetic and descriptive. In fact, when discussing his school Brentano writes:

My school distinguishes between a psychognosis and a genetic psychology (in distant analogy with geognosis and geology). The former contains all the basic psychic elements from whose combination results the totality of psychic phenomena, just as the totality of words results from the letters. The use of psychognosis may serve as the basis for a *characteristica universalis* as considered by Leibniz and before him Descartes. The latter teaches us the laws according to which psychic phenomena appear and disappear. Given that – because of the undeniable dependence of the psychic functions on the processes of the nervous system – these are conditions which are largely physiological, we see that in this case psychological research must interweave with physiological research.87

On careful consideration, however, the distinction between descriptive and genetic psychology is much more complex than this. Generally speaking, a description of the facts and elements of psychic life and of the laws that govern them can be undertaken from both a dynamic and a morphological point of view. The nature of this complementarity would become clearer in certain developments of Brentanism, Husserlian phenomenology for example, but one cannot say that it was entirely absent in Brentano (especially the late Brentano). It explains in particular his constant concern to have a laboratory of psychology available so that the hypotheses of descriptive psychology could be verified. He observes:

All the same, this is not to say that psychogenetic knowledge could not become useful at some point in psychognostic research […] it will be of extremely wide-ranging importance for psychognostic investigations to take into account those genetic laws concerning the conditions under which we are tempted to deceive ourselves about our inner phenomena. For often we misinterpret inner perception grossly, in spite of their evidence, e.g. ZÖLLNERian figures; a perspective.

86. Brentano 1995b, 165.
87. Brentano 1895, 34.
We take what is equal [Gleiches] for unequal, plurality for unity (e.g. [when] two lines which phenomenally stick out not inconsiderably from one another are taken to be one, in spite of the space which separate them and suchlike). Even though much more ought still to be added, let these remarks be sufficient to substantiate our claim that in many cases psychognosy uses the knowledge of genetic psychology advantageously.\textsuperscript{88}

The complementarities of these two points of view was a constant feature of Brentano’s work in its entirety. In fact, although for a certain time he increasingly concentrated on the Cartesian nature of inner perception, especially in the texts published as *Descriptive Psychology*, Brentano continued to examine issues of the laws of form organization: in particular, as evidenced by *Researches in Sense Psychology*, ones relative to phenomena of auditory and visual presentation.

\textsuperscript{88} Brentano 1995b, 9-10. On optical illusions see Chapter 4.
Chapter 4

Metaphysics and the science of the soul

1 THE MAGNITUDES OF THE SOUL

Psychophysics sheds light on one of the key problems of psychology as a science, namely the applicability of mathematics to the measurement of psychic phenomena, an issue which had also been addressed, but left unresolved, by Kant. But as the question entered the realm of the exact sciences it carried with it the traces of metaphysical disputes.

The problems confronted by scientific psychology were the following. Before any attempt to apply mathematics to psychic phenomena could be made, it was necessary to demonstrate that the latter were measurable magnitudes. Secondly, it was necessary to establish whether they were extensive magnitudes, and therefore measurable in space, or whether they were intensive ones, in which case their intensity could be measured – if not directly then at least indirectly through measurement of the physical phenomena on which they were based; which, as we have seen, was Fechner’s approach.

Interestingly, one of the classic components of psychophysics, the theory of magnitudes, highlighted inter alia the problem of the nature of the relationship between consciousness as a whole and its parts, and also the problem of their separability, real or conceptual. To be noted, however, is that the authors of the period used the term extensive and intensive magnitudes in several senses which differed according to the context (physical, psychic, metaphysical) and the consequent relevant vocabulary (natural, scientific or metaphysical).

The question of magnitudes is still an open question in contemporary psychophysical science. Stevens for example, classifies them into prothetic and metathetic, pointing out the difference in behaviour apparent in, for example, the auditory continuum between loudness and pitch. The former can be described in terms of degrees of magnitude, or of quantity (prothetic continuum), while the latter varies from high to low, has a position, and can be described in terms of quality (metathetic continuum).

1. On these distinctions see Poli, Mazzola 2000. It is not the case, from a strictly scientific point of view, that a different metaphysical option regarding the type of magnitude assumed by the soul – whether intensive à la Schelling and Herbart (and also Fechner) or extensive à la Lotze (Weber and Brentano) – necessarily impedes joint empirical research, as testified by the development of psychophysics from Weber to Fechner.
In short, we can characterize extensive magnitudes as follows:

1. They always exist between two points.
2. They can be summed (aggregates) and are therefore additive.
3. The whole contains smaller parts of the same type (parts are prior to the whole).
4. They have a prothetic order (quantitative, based on ‘more than’).

In other words, extensive magnitudes concern ‘how much’.

In complementary manner, intensive magnitudes can be characterized thus:

1. They are not necessarily extended (they may be punctiform in nature).
2. They are functionally co-dependent.
3. They cannot be summed and are therefore substitutive.
4. They do not contain smaller parts of the same nature (i.e. non-homogeneous) (the whole is prior).
5. They have a metathetic or positional order (qualitative, based on ‘different from’).

In other words, intensive magnitudes concern ‘where and how’.

Examples of extensive qualities are volumes, which can contain other volumes as their parts, or a light pressure on the arm that becomes stronger (more than). Examples of intensive qualities are colour, because the colour of the whole is not the sum of the colours of its parts (in fact, it can at most be a pattern), or a tactile stimulus which we notice as it moves from one part of the body to another (as different from).

At the time of Brentano, following the debate opened by Müller’s theory of specific energies, the psychophysical law had posed the problem of the qualitative status of our perceptual experience but, as we have seen, failed to resolve a number of essential questions. For example:

1. Was the perception of difference among perceptions quantitative (as between two surfaces) or qualitative (as between two shades of ‘red’)?
2. Further, did the perception of difference apply (i) to the intensity of the sensations themselves (acts), i.e. to processes of apprehension, or (ii) to their content, i.e. to the correlates ‘red’, ‘dark’, ‘high’, etc.?
Finally, more in general, still undefined was the status of the sensations – did they pertain to the physiological and/or the phenomenological level of appearances – and therefore their eventual cognitive import. Questions which are still unresolved today.

As Brentano points out, the theory of intensity has always been marked by great confusion because it is often considered in terms analogous to extensive magnitudes. On one side, intensity is obviously related to extensity, in the sense that the intensity of a sensible quality is a function of extensive magnitudes. The question concerns all sensory modalities. In this respect, he observes:

if we let several tones play a chord with massive strength the composed sound as a whole appears to us more intensive than any individual tone in it. No unbiased person will fail to discern this, especially if he observes that the point in question is not the strength which the tone would have if the only force used for its causing were at work, but the strength with which it is performing now, when others are simultaneously produced, as one of the parts of the composed sound.

According to the traditional apprehension of intensity, however, this fact, which is known to almost everyone because on occasion it can be easily observed, is completely inconceivable. According to it, only to the single tones in the composed sound, but not to the composed sound as a whole, could be ascribed an intensity. Or, if anyhow one wants to take the liberty of talking inaccurately here of an intensity of the whole composed sound, this could only happen nearly in that one would attribute to the composed sounds an intensity corresponding to the average of all the intensities contained in it, therefore an average intensity. This, however, has not certainly occurred to anybody yet.

On the contrary, from our point of view it is highly acceptable that to the composed sound must be due 1) an intensity of its own and 2) an intensity higher than the individual tones contained in it, that is an intensity even made up of their intensities.

We find the very like in the sphere of the sense of sight.

When Hering says that colour phenomena showed no difference in intensity, this is true in a certain sense and for what he has in mind; it is however wrong in a certain sense and definitely contrary to experience.

Let us assume that we had three colour phenomena: one pure red, one pure blue and one of an intense medium violet; Hering shows rightly that the intensity of this red-blue, considered as a whole, would not be different from the intensity given by those pure colours which are near it. But also in the redblue the two colours, red and blue, subsist (we have proved this) in all truth included in its content. And about them it must be manifestly admitted that they here appear notably weaker than they do where they are pure. (The equality of quality makes the comparison of intensities particularly easy and safe.) Therefore, the higher intensity of violet, equal to the intensity of pure red and pure blue, is composed here of trifling intensities of the two elements, red and blue.
As we can see, the case of the composed colour is substantially similar to the one of the composed sounds above. And then, just as that one, it is wholly obvious according to our apprehension of intensity, whereas by tradition it would appear by all means impossible by acknowledging the really multiple character of the colour.²

For Brentano intensive and extensive qualities differ from each other by virtue of, respectively, their absence or presence of parts. For example, the greater or lesser intensity of a colour on a surface is due to the greater or lesser density (empty space and filled space) of a given appearance, below the threshold of the noticeability of local differences. In other words, purple is a mixture of small, imperceptibly red and blue, particles. For this reason the presented intensity cannot be a magnitude and cannot be measured.

Another important point concerned the difference of intensity between the act and the content of presentations, an issue which was addressed in Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint. In this regard Brentano writes:

> it is however indubitable that the intensity of the sensing and the sensed, the intensity of the sensory representing and the sensory represented must be, always and utmost precisely, the same. Lotze has emphasized this, again and energetically, after it had been disclaimed by a certain party.³

And further:

We have already touched another point where the hitherto existing apprehension of intensity has led to manifold confusion. It was the question concerning the relation between sensing and sensed. Like the sensed, also the relevant sensing has an intensity. Well, is the intensity of the one always the same as that of the other? We have seen that the contrary came to be assumed. However, those who could not resolve to admit the possibility of a difference in intensity between sensing and sensed, as a result often made the mistake of assuming straight away an identity instead of an equality inexplicable to them. Thus they disclaimed altogether the important difference between the primary and the secondary object of the sensation. We have seen how the new interpretation, without using such drastic measures, proves very easily the necessary equality of intensity for sensing and sensed and, on the whole, for any psychic activity and its interior object, wherever the same partakes itself in an intensity. Now also this cause for confusion has then been removed.⁴

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As to Brentano’s methodology it has to be noted that it gave rise to a distinctive method of *subjective introspection* — different from that of the Würzburg school, however — that nowadays reappears in some fringe areas of the study on perception. His method is exemplified by the type of experiments which himself conducted, and which have a Goethian flavour. For example, as acutely observed by Zimmer, Brentano conducted one of the first experiments in cross-context matching.5 As Brentano described in one of his letters to Marty:

I have been able to produce a distinct green by simultaneous contrast: a) by the way of coloured shadows, when putting a yellow paper into the violet blue shadow produced by candle light in twilight. This appeared in a distinct green colour; when taking orange instead of yellow (paper) it appeared to be reddish green. I would be interested in knowing what you see b) when covering an orange surface with tissue paper, after I had exchanged a grey piece for a yellow one (which produced an afterimage in violet blue, therefore this also has to be a result of simultaneous contrast). It appeared to be in a distinctive green colour. How it is possible to explain this new mixture from reddish blue with yellow resulting in green? Definitely not by subtraction! It should have to remain red.6

From these observations we can conclude that Brentano sought to analyse the complexity of the question of *psychic* magnitudes and their difference from *physical* magnitudes by drawing on the experimental analyses of his contemporaries and by simultaneously attempting to provide a descriptive psychology of those magnitudes. His interest, in all cases, was strictly connected to metaphysical enquiry.

After publishing *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, Brentano addressed the question in the writings subsequently published as *Descriptive Psychology* and in those comprised in the *Researches in Sense Psychology*. The former dealt in particular with ontological analysis of the parts of the soul, while the latter examined the types of qualities that ‘fill’ the intentional reference structure to produce the various psychic phenomena which appear in the perceptual phenomenal space (*Sinnesraum*) of the intentional presentation.

Brentano’s account of the nature and of unitariness, or otherwise, of the soul as a single unitary sentient subject (whole) but at the same time endowed with parts, is once again of Aristotelian derivation and indeed had been already adumbrated in *The Psychology of Aristotle*.7

The theme was also closely connected to the problem of the *inner perception* of psychic phenomena (one of the key concerns of *Psychology I*) given that they distinguished descriptive psychology from genetic psychology, which was instead concerned with inner observation.

But, in what exactly did inner perception consist? The question is not wholly clear to the reader of *Psychology I*.

## 2 TOWARDS A SOUL MEREOLGY

As *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* showed, the peculiarity and the originality of Brentano’s doctrine, which can be defined as *immanent realism*, lies in its attempt to conciliate the presence of an often *irreducible transcendent foundation* of perception with its *immanent and equally irreducible categorization* by the intentional acts. Even space is an ‘experienced’ space, i.e. a phenomenon connected with inner experience.  
Hence, classifying the structures of experience entails that one must begin by classifying the structures of the acts of inner presentation, their specific spatial and temporal ‘extension’.

Immanent realism has clearly Aristotelian roots. In particular, as we have seen, Brentano’s Aristotelism follows Bonitz’s interpretation by which *categories are ontological concepts*, or in other words, concepts with which thought expresses and manifests the *determinations of things*.

The fundamental ontological categories of immanent realism are those of:

1. *Individual substance*.
2. *Inherency*.

Inherency indicates accidental determinations. In other words, it concerns the way in which accidents inhere (that is, are) in the substance. Inherency divides into two classes, that of absolute accidents and that of accidents of relationships, depending on whether they inhere directly in the substance or in relation to something else.

The problem of the predicative relationship between substance and accident is part of Brentano’s ontology as set out in his theory of the *primacy of inner perception*. Brentano in fact distinguished (as we shall see later in more detail), between a ‘primary’ and a ‘secondary’ use of the copula. The pri-
mary use of the copula appears in the *phenomena of inner perception* and is accompanied by evident perception. In fact, according to Brentano, we can have evident perception of things only in inner perception, which recognizes them as *existent*; should this not be the case, we have only non-evident knowledge. As for the substance-accident relationship, Brentano defines this as a relationship of unilateral separability.

The accidental and substantial determinations of a particular thing concern two different ways in which ‘things can be stated about things’. Between the substance (man) and its accidents (‘sitting down’, ‘strolling’, ‘white’, ‘Greek’, etc.) there is a relationship of proper part-whole in which the ontological weight of the existence of the whole is all on the *part*, in the sense that if we take away the substantial part of the whole there is nothing left. Furthermore, here Brentano differs from Aristotle in that it is accidents that identify the substance and differentiate the accidents from one another: the accident is the *mode* of existence of the substance, that is, the substance modally extended or qualified in a certain way.

Thus inherential predication in Brentano is equivalent to *the way in which the object is present in the consciousness*, so that, for example, we can have a presentation of ‘Socrates sitting down’ or of ‘Socrates walking’. This aspect is also connected with the Aristotelian doctrine that, from a cognitive point of view, sensibility absorbs objects into the consciousness only according to their form.\(^\text{11}\)

Brentano translated this capacity of the sense to receive sensible forms into itself without their matter into the *psychic* (or *intentional*) existence of objects which are presented in an evident way. In other words, things exist (for us) in so far as they are presented, and therefore categorically modified by the structure of the intentional inherency.\(^\text{12}\) Furthermore, Brentano defines the object of the acts of presentation as *objective*, his purpose being to indicate that in perception only the *form* of the material thing is assimilated.\(^\text{13}\)

Staring from these premises, the act of presentation takes the form of a *whole* endowed with *parts* and *moments* of various kinds (objects, characteristic notes, aspects, modes of presentation and modes of recognition, formal and material connections among the parts, etc.) whose totality, however, amounts to something more than, and different from their arithmetic sum. Inner presentation is *not an extensional whole* where it is the parts that determine the whole according to some principle of composition; it is, in fact, the reverse.

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12. See Aristotle, *De Anima* 424 a 18; 434 a 19; 432 a 1; Brentano 1995a, 124 n.
13. Sources for the ‘formal’ and the ‘objective’ character of Brentano’s object of presentation are once again Aristotle, *De Anima* II, 6, 418 a 3; III 2, 426 a 20; Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus and Descartes. See Brentano 1977a.
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It is therefore advisable to bear at least one basic mereological classification in mind, even if the nature of the whole of presentation is still far from been clarified and in my opinion is not perfectly matched by the Aristotelian morphology of wholes.

Aristotle defines the concept of whole or totality (holon) in two ways:

1. First, as that which is such by nature and not by constraint (examples being things which are joined by glue or nails or by being tied together), but which contains in itself the cause of its continuity.14

2. Second, a whole is one in form.15

Specifically, in book 10 of Metaphysics Aristotle distinguishes among different kinds of wholes:

1. A whole as an aggregate such that all its parts are separable (a heap of sand, a flock of sheep, a flight of birds, etc.). Aristotle calls this an improper whole or one which is such ‘only by analogy’.

2. An integral whole, a whole insofar as it embraces quantity, i.e., ‘Socrates’ whose parts can be partially separated, partially not. For example, you can cut off Socrates’ finger, but not his head, for if you do you destroy the whole.

3. An essential whole, which does not have separable parts: for example, according to Aristotle, God. An essential whole is also a whole provided by definition.

These two latter types of whole are such ‘in the proper sense’ and not by analogy.16

A second difference is that in the case of the aggregate its parts can also exist independently (the individual grains of sand, the individual sheep, etc.), while in the case of integral and essential wholes, the existence of the whole precedes the existence of the parts, which are such only in relation to the whole to which they pertain. There are therefore at least two laws of composition of wholes, and we can label them as ‘bottom up’ and ‘top down’. In both cases there is a relation of ontological dependence: in the first case (sum), the relation goes from the parts to the whole; vice versa, in the other case, the relation goes from the whole to its parts. Immanent realism has nothing to do

with the whole as aggregate. It concerns, instead, the integral and the essential wholes.

Aristotle then gives four different definitions of part.\footnote{Aristotle, \textit{Metaphysics}, 5, 26, 1023 b, 11-25; 10, 1034 b, 33.}

1. Part is that into which the quantity (poison) may be divided.
2. Part is that into which the form (eidos) may be divided.
3. Part is that into which the whole (holon) may be divided.
4. Part is that into which the definition may be divided (stoicheion).

Brentano’s immanent realism considered parts of type 1, 3, and 4. Furthermore, over the years it underwent a modification identifiable in the transition between the writings of \textit{Psychology} I and \textit{Psychology} II and which concerned, in particular, the classification of psychic phenomena. Brentano’s change of perspective is apparent in the writings subsequently published as \textit{Descriptive Psychology}.

3 \textbf{THE PARTS OF THE ACT}

In what way were Brentano’s investigations in descriptive psychology indicative of a change in his classification of psychic phenomena expounded in 1874 and which became apparent in \textit{Psychology} II?

Brentano now believed:

Something which is not implicitly perceived by us does not occur in our consciousness. Above all, we must ensure that we keep in mind exactly what the aim of our investigations is. We are asking about the conditions of noticing. By noticing we mean an inner perception, in fact an explicit perception of what was implicitly contained in the perception of [as performed by] our consciousness [Wahrnehmung unseres Bewusstseins].

But that does not at all mean that it is explicitly perceived. A clarification of this distinction seems to be desirable.

Perception is an acceptance [Anerkennung]. And if the accepted thing is a whole with parts, then the parts are all, in a certain manner, concomitantly accepted. The denial of any of them would contradict the acceptance of the whole. Yet the individual part is, for this reason, by no means accepted [-] let alone judged [-] specifically (by itself) and in particular.

A comparison with the case of denial may highlight this point even further. In a simple denial of something, the part is not likewise an object of a denial.
Indeed, there is not even an implicit concomitant denial of the part. There is however an implicit concomitant denial of everything belonging to the extension of the concept. But it is obvious that not all of this is implicitly judged. And this highlights the importance of the difference between the state of judging merely implicitly and that of doing so explicitly.\footnote{Brentano 1995b, 36-37. Emphasis mine.}

Noticing and perceiving are occasionally said to be a kind of predicating, in fact sometimes a negative and sometimes an affirmative one. For example, the perceiving of a difference, the noticing of a distinction. To perceive or notice that one thing is identical with another thing. When I speak of noticing in this context, I have in mind only simple accepting judgments. Yet, I am not denying that in many cases such negative and affirmative predications are also intimately tied to the acts of noticing with which we are concerned here, and that they are no less infallible than these acts.\footnote{Brentano 1955b, 91-92.}

In the writings of \textit{Descriptive Psychology}, the parts or \textit{elements} of which the soul is made up appear to be of essentially two kinds:

1. Separable
2. Non-separable.

\textit{Separable elements} or parts are \textit{acts}. They are characterized by intentional reference, which as we have seen may be of two types, primary and secondary. Acts are \textit{not spatial} and they \textit{do not have qualitative nature}; accordingly, they should not be confused with contents. Moreover, they divide into two classes:

1. Fundamental acts.
2. Superposed acts.

The primary objects of \textit{fundamental acts} are sensory phenomena (which for Brentano as well as Aristotle include several kinds of appearances, like perceptual presentations, illusions, hallucinations, reflections, after-images, etc.). The fundamental acts also comprise acts of temporal \textit{proteraesthesia} involving perceptions of motion and stillness, and auditory perceptions like hearing a syllable, a melody, etc.\footnote{Literally, from the Greek: \textit{proter} (earlier) and \textit{aisthesis} (sensation/perception). See Stumpf 1976, 38-39. By ‘\textit{proteraesthesia}’ or original association Brentano means the process by which the object of a sensory presentation is set in relation to a continuous series of presentations which \textit{modify it temporally}, giving it the character of \textit{pastness}.} The point is important, as Brentano’s sub-
sequent analyses would show, for it was in this way that the Aristotelian idea of the assimilation process as qualitative movement began to assume the features of Brentano’s theory of the temporal modes of presentation. Brentano started from a very simple observation: the object of an inner perception remains in the consciousness for a certain amount of time, even after the stimulus has ceased – as shown by the example of the melody. These temporal moments of the past are elements added by the phantasia to the sensations. Only the present is intuitively given.

As Stumpf recalls:

At that time [about 1870] Brentano described consciousness as follows: At every moment of an (inner or external) perception, a presentation is produced of the content of the perception which is qualitatively the same but which is temporally more remote to a certain extent. For him the characteristic of time was a determination of content whose regular alterations are subject to the very laws of consciousness. He called the process an ‘original association’ as opposed to the ‘acquired associations’ of memory. If several impressions, a, b, c, d, follow one after another, we see that at the entrance of the second one the first has been pushed back in the above-stated manner, and so on [...] This clear initial description of the facts he later ‘modified’ in the literal sense of the word, in that he defined the transformation not as the content, but as a change in the mode of presentation. His reason was that the past is not real, and that irrealia cannot be the objects of presentations.

The effect of the original association, moreover, is very short-lived, since it lasts only for the time required to utter a phrase or listen to a melody, therefore the original association does not concern phenomena that require a much longer time of presentness.

Brentano observes that:

The great similarity and the close genetic tie with the experiences concerned was the reason that it [the proteraesthesis] was for a long time generally confounded with sensations. The components belonging to proteraesthesis are even today often counted as components of sensations. Locke, Leibniz and many physiologists and psychologists of today still speak, like Aristotle, of experience of motion.

Indeed, we will show that a sensation is nothing of its own, that it only exists as a boundary of a proterosis – however not as a boundary in the sense of a terminus intra but in the sense of a terminus extra.

21. On this see infra Chapter 5.
As we know from *Psychology I*, a fundamental act – *seeing*, for example – always has a bipolar act/correlate structure (i.e. the act of *seeing* versus the cat *seen*, the light *seen*, etc.). It is a whole endowed with parts, where the parts are non-independent. Fundamental acts, moreover, have a further inner structure. In seeing, for instance, the *noting* of something constitutes the transition from an implicit perception to an explicit one in which the object seen acquires a *frame of reference*: consider, for example, the difference between seeing a lark in the sky and noting its presence on a balcony. Noting is always internal to an act of presentation, and it should not be confused with other states like:

1. Being struck (emotional state).
2. Taking notice (fixing an impression gradually).
3. Paying attention (disposition to note).
4. Memory (where an outright substitution (*Stellevertretung*) of the object takes place).

Noting may be absent from an act of presentation and be impeded by various factors often of a psychophysical nature, like the constant growth or diminution of the magnitudes, spatial or acoustic thresholds, the direct correspondence between parts of the seeing and parts of the seen, distraction, or more simply the perceiver’s incompetence. It may also be impeded by language or prejudice (for example, the perceiver refuses to accept that phenomenally, in presentation, black is a colour, or that orange is a mixed colour),\(^{24}\) or the temporal quality (too short, too long or contemporaneous).

Superposed acts, vice versa, are based on fundamental acts like, for example, the presentation of a *general object* (a colour, a shape, a particular brightness, etc.), the desire to make a journey (which is always based on a concrete presentation), or non-intuitive presentations (e.g. the presentation of a grey-black).

The separability of acts can be *unilateral* or *bilateral*. Examples of *bilateral separability* are:

1. Seeing and hearing.
2. Parts of seeing and parts of hearing.

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\(^{24}\) The concept of mixed colour is of great importance for Brentano’s descriptive psychology because it concerns the difference between intensive and extensive qualities. See Brentano 1981a, 61 and ivi, Kastil’s note 106, p. 225. See also Brentano 1979.
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Examples of one-sided separability are:

1. Seeing and noticing.
2. Seeing a colour and presenting its concept.
3. Concept and judgement.
4. Premises and conclusions.

The other components of consciousness consist primarily of the contents (the physical phenomena of Psychology I) made up of mutually pervading parts, i.e. spatial determination [Räumlichkeit] and quality. The question introduces the topic of the continuum. As Brentano observes:

But without wanting to choose here between nativism and empiricism, I rather observe only that from what has been said it is surely possible to speak, at least in a broader sense, of a “space of sensation”. However, we speak about spaces (spaces of time) also referring to the time continuum and in the newest geometry we find the name “space” applied to fictions of any great number of dimensions.25

Apropos the specific spatiality of phenomenal appearances, i.e. the objects of fundamental acts, he writes:

The primary objects of fundamental acts (that is of experiences and proteraesthesis) share a number of striking properties which distinguish them from those of other psychological acts. I mentioned that they are concreta of mutually pervading parts. These concreta display, without exception, the following components, whose nature and mutual relation, will, in many cases, reveal itself best by considering the particular.

[The reason for this is that] the layman has a very confused view of many of them, and often we can only achieve a clearer insight by summoning all the auxiliary means of induction, intuition [Intuition] and deduction.

At first I shall just list them one by one. All primary objects of fundamental acts (a) have a specific spatial or space-like [räumähnliche] determination (One of their pervading [parts] is spatial determination or [its] analogue).

(b) They have a second specific determination which, as a pervading part of the spatial determination, occupies the place (or, the analogue of the place), [i.e.] fills the space (or the analogue). In the case of experiences (and presumably also in the one of proteraesthesis) these second specific determinations are called qualities (colour in the widest sense, tone or its analogue).26

Hence, the mutually pervading parts of the contents of presentations may be both:

1. Objects given in sensation.
2. Objects given in the temporal modification of the proteraesthesia.

In the former case, the parts are present and are both spatially and qualitatively characterized (examples are colours or sounds) and can be conceptually distinguished but not phenomenally separated. In the latter case, the parts are temporally modified (as in ‘seen’ colour, ‘heard’ sound).

In their turn, the qualities of the parts of the contents of sensation have diversified components. For example, we can have colouredness vs. colourlessness, lightness vs. darkness, saturation vs. unsaturatedness: in other words, we can have something that is blue-coloured vs. something red-coloured; something red, or blue coloured vs. something grey, black or white; or something sound vs. something soundless.

Qualities therefore have components of their own and, as Brentano observes, they are distinguishable.

Within that which is called quality (or analogue of quality) in the wider sense, we can distinguish two more components,
(a) lightness or darkness (or [the] analogue thereof),
(b) saturation or unsaturatedness (or [the] analogue thereof).

Instead of saturation, one could also say colouredness \([\textit{Kolorit}]\) or sonance \([\textit{Sonanz}]\), by generalizing expressions which at first were used in a more narrow experiential field.

[This is so] because in the domain of visual experience, the contrast between saturation and unsaturatedness occurs as that between colouredness \([\textit{Farbigkeit}]\) in the narrow sense and colourlessness of visual phenomena – black, white, grey.

And similarly, in the domain of auditory experience, it occurs as the [contrast] between the sonorous, or tonal \([\textit{klanghaft}]\) and the toneless \([\textit{klanglos}, \textit{tonlos}]\) – bangs and other noises.

We shall see that analogous [contrasts] occur in all sensory domains.\(^{27}\)

Thus, in the case of \textit{mutually pervading parts} (like space and colour), we can distinguish further (distinctional) parts in the primary contents of sensation, like lightness. Take, for example, the case of two patches of colour given in the actual presentation, a blue patch and a yellow one (here represented by different shades of grey):

\(^{27}\) Brentano 1995b, 95.
These are distinguished by:

1. The places that they occupy.
2. Their colour.
3. Their respective lightness.

The *place* occupied by the objects of the presentation is decisive for their individuation, because if we move the yellow patch to another position, from the phenomenal point of view it is no longer the same patch but another one with a different determination of colour. According to Brentano, just as in the spatial world a substance is impenetrable to another substance, so in the sensory (perceived) space a *quality is impenetrable* to another quality.

This aspect, however, is strictly related to that of *multiple qualities* (multiple sounds, nuances appearing in different colours, etc.), that is, to the fact that the qualities presented are generally not simple but several in number and play the role of *integral parts* of the whole. An example is given by Brentano in his analysis of the ‘phenomenal green’, a perceived colour with ‘similarities’ to yellow and blue independently of their physical mixture; or by the fact that red and green, antagonistic colours (as remarked by Helmholtz), can be perceived together, at the same place, for example in ‘olive green’. The same hold in the auditory field for the pitch series, which can be analysed in terms of ‘Dumpf’ (dark) and ‘Hell’ (light). The questions, thus, are the following:

1. How can the impenetrability of qualities and their composed perceptual nature co-exist?
2. How is it that we are able to compare the intensity of perceptions in different fields, for example the difference between a loud sound and a faint odour?

The questions may be approached and analysed by directly introspective experimentation, which is a turning point in psychological analysis of the field.

As to comparison of the intensities of perceptions in different fields, Brentano writes:

On the basis of the distinction of the fundamental classes of the sensations, in each one can be showed – beyond the specific modality, which gives the common character to the group, a *light and dark*, then an *intensity*, and in certain auditory phenomena also a *colouredness* with an higher or lower grade of saturation.28

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And he specifies in a note:

The expressions ‘light’, ‘dark’, ‘colouredness’, ‘saturation’, especially in the field of vision, appear to through analogy to all the fundamental classes. The expression ‘light and dark’ used in the auditory field coincides with that is defined here as ‘high and low’. A sound that approaches a noise in character we pronounce a less saturated tone sensation that another which is less like a noise. In the field of taste, indeed, Aristotle correctly remarks that sweet is related to bitter as is a brighter to a darker colour. And similarly several persons whom I have asked have definitely pronounced the cool sensation of a breeze blowing on the hand as brighter than the feeling of a warm breath. A sensation of coolness compared with that of sweetness or with the odour of a lily, is as unsaturated as white compared with a colour in the narrower sense, or as a hiss or other noise compared with a vibrant tone.29

The examples cited by Brentano demonstrate the composite nature of the qualities in the appearance, the merging of the modes, and the presence of common components in all the perceptual fields, confirming once again Aristotle’s doctrine of the existence of an intermodal perception. Furthermore, the idea of the existence of parts of appearances and the possibility that they have similarities in different perceptual fields are strong arguments against the atomism of sensations or, more generally, against the sense data tradition of qualia.

As to the first point:

As in the physical space matter for matter, *quality for quality in this sensory space proves to be impenetrable […]* Nevertheless, the separability of qualities in the sensory space was denied by more than one reputable researcher. And precisely it was for certain cases of multiple quality (composed sounds, shades playing in several colours, and the like) that some of them were made to believe in the possibility of a changing penetrability. Others though preferred to declare the multiplicity itself as rather not present here. The temptation to suppose it should partly rest on the fact that certain plain qualities should be characterized and named in relation to several others among which they would take a sort of middle position, partly due to the fact that they have complicated prerequisites, certain parts of which, even where they are the only ones given, give origin to certain qualities, of which someone perceives one, someone else another.30

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Consequently, given two coloured appearances of the following type:

Place 1.

Place 2.

colour and space are mutually pervading parts relative to individuals which are inseparable.

Now consider two blue patches, a yellow one and a grey one:

In this case, 1≠2 as regards place, 1,2 ≠3 as regards colour, 3 is similar to 4 as regards lightness, 1,2 ≠3, 4 as regards lightness. Colour, place and lightness are thus distinctional parts of the psychic phenomenon.

Other kinds of distinctional parts are of logical type and they include a distinction by genus and specific difference, like place and redness, and the parts of the dyenergy of the act, i.e. its twofold structure directed toward the primary object and directed toward itself as secondary object. The latter, in that it is effectively non-separable, can be only distinctionally, i.e., conceptually, analyzed.

Lightness/darkness and saturation/unsaturatedness are therefore the two general components of phenomenal appearances. We are not authorized, according to Brentano, to hypothesise others. He observes:

For if colourlessness [Farbenhaftigkeit] were a particular genus, then colourlessness would not be a positive but a privative contrast [to colourlessness]; like evidence to blindness in the case of judgments. Yet we are at this stage only dealing with the general characteristics. Thus we are, for the moment, left with just place and quality. But then two more [components] seem to be added, namely intensity and purity or mixture [Gemischtheit] (quality, simplicity or multiplicity, or analogue [thereof]).

There are, however, many [different] views about the nature of the one and the other. Concerning the purity or mixture discerned in colours, [some] important scientists claim, for instance, that colours are actually all of equal simplicity, yet some are, so to speak, corner colours, the others edge, surface and interior intermediate colours. Again in the cases of tones, it is claimed that we are given the faculty of a two-, three- and even higher fold sensory field with the same spatial species. Or, rather [it is claimed] there is not a conflict in filling a place, but rather penetrability. Space [it is said] is filled two, indeed n-times, and one filling is said to exist as if the other did not.
(Such that there would be different qualities of mutually pervading parts like place and quality).

According to this, the multiplicity in the case of vision would be completely different from the one of hearing, yet in neither case would it be a particular pervading part [besonders durchwohnender Teil].

These views are probably untenable. I do believe though, that we shall clearly see that in the correct view, the difference of simplicity or multiplicity will also not require us to assume a third pervading part. And likewise, it might turn out that it is only due to confused presenting that we are tempted to see intensity as a particular pervading part of the primary object. This temptation is, at any rate, something which is to be found in a characteristic analogous way in all known domains of fundamental acts. (Short explanations concerning unnoticeably small parts).31

The parts of the objects given in proteraesthesis are a more complex matter because these objects are modified distinctional parts. For example, in the case of ‘red seen’, colour is a distinctional part; while in the case of ‘red seen’, colour is a modifying distinctional part (the same holds for ‘sound heard’, etc.).

The main question, then, is whether the temporal determination [Zeitlichkeit] is a third part of the primary objects given in fundamental acts; or in other words, whether sensation and proteraesthesis are two fundamental separate acts. If they are, we may speak of temporal determination as the pervading part only relatively to acts of proteraesthesis. The distinction has numerous practical advantages.

Brentano writes:

Is the analogue of a concretum of quality and spatial determination [Örtlichkeit], which we called the primary object of sensory proterotersis, exhaustively and with full accuracy described if one says it consists of past concreta of quality and spatial determination? By careful scrutiny of the state of affairs one will find reasons for denying this.

One will find that what is given as the primary object of proteraesthesis is not directly a past quality and a past spatial determination thereof, but rather a past experience of the quality with its spatial determination.

One might be tempted to deceive oneself about this in the case of motion [or] change. However, I believe that in the case of rest every one will, under careful self-examination, be able to notice that actually it is not directly the quality which appears as past, but one’s experience.

(In the case of vision [this is] more [so] than in [that of] hearing, because there [there is] more noticeable unrest. Look at your hand and recognize that it is at rest).

So it seems that the primary object of proteraesthesis does not, properly [speaking], adjoin as continuation [als Fortsetzung anschliessen] the primary object of sensation, but rather something belonging to the secondary object, namely the intentional rela-

tion to the primary object which we call experience. Whereas sensation shows a present experiencing as its secondary object, proteraesthesia shows, as its primary object, a past experiencing which in its object matches the primary object of the preceding sensation.

We thus observe that the realization of the primary object of proteraesthesia and its deviation from that of sensation is indeed considerable and needs to be marked clearly and precisely. All of this serves to recommend this, albeit mere fictitiously, isolating way of looking at sensation.

The question [whether temporal determination constitutes a third generally pervading part of primary objects] may at present not yet be decidable.32

As we shall see, this was a point to which Brentano would constantly return.

Thus, Brentano’s analysis of the soul started from his reflections on Aristotle, after which he explored the psychophysical relation from a scientific-experimental point of view, concluding that psychophysics is not a science of the soul and so returning to ontological inquiry, albeit mediated by the results of his empirical psychology. As for Aristotle, so for Brentano analysis of the soul, its elements and its laws of internal dependence, led to the boundaries of metaphysics.

At the basis of Brentano’s distinction among the parts of the soul and their separability and otherwise lay the concepts of *perceptual space* and plurality of spaces relative to the problem of the continua (spatial and temporal), which interested him until the last years of his life.33

Brentano’s analysis of mixed colours, which are not mixtures of the primary colours but are composed of juxtaposed phenomenal parts which are not noticed, and his analysis of noticing as such, led him to conclude that the intensity of sensations is nothing but a function of the phenomenal space filled with a particular quality.

According to the analyses of Brentano’s empirical psychology, regarding both psychophysics and the descriptive theory of the soul, perceiving figures is a cross-modal spatial process which comes about within a peri-personal, proprio-centric space and in which vision is the dominant modality. For example, regarding the intensity of colours, he puts forward an argument similar to Ostwald’s idea of *Vollfarbe*:

The case where colours with the exception of grey are defined intense seems to be connected with the notion of freedom from grey. As soon as a red, blue, orange, etc. turns into grey, it is no longer named as intense red and the like. But also a whitish red

33. See Brentano 1988c, and Chapter 7.
Immanent Realism

or orange is no longer defined intensive red or orange, and nobody speaks of intensive whitish red (intensive rose) and so on. The same applies also to blackish red, blackish blue and so on. The idea suggests that one wants to use the expression “intense” with colours to indicate the full or nearly full uniqueness of a colour element. This is particularly clear with intense black, intense white, red, blue, yellow; if we speak of intense green as well, this could be explained by the fact that we are not aware of the combination of blue and yellow, which is yet straightforwardly denied by many, and also about orange and violet we were not perhaps so clearly aware as most are about grey, which was acknowledged as a mean and a blend between black and white. But maybe there is also no real internal consistency, and orange, violet and green when saturated are called intense only because they are then accompanied by a lively feeling which distinguishes saturated colours from unsaturated ones. On the other hand, he who in brown discerns red and yellow will certainly say that each of the two elements, according to its preponderance, is more intense than the other one and neither is as intense as where it is present as a pure colour. This has then similarity to the cases where several tones of various strengths are joined into a chord, and thus it appears that, after all, the expression “intensity” is used here in a very similar way as it is for tones. The only difference is that, whereas a weak tone can exist in itself, black is always associated with a weak colour as a supplement in a complementary measure.34

The metaphysical outcomes of Brentano’s analysis of the soul conducted in *The Psychology of Aristotle*, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* and *Descriptive Psychology* led him to the conclusion that the sensible quality (accident) (i.e. the Aristotelian proper sensible), be it auditory, visual, tactile or whatever, contains *place* as its ultimate subject (substance), and that accidents attach to the single substance transmitted from one part to another. In this theory, still clearly Aristotelian, the soul in its potential aspects is viewed as a *locus* of immaterial forms which are altered by their perception.

Brentano’s analyses subsequent to his so-called *reist* turn of the early 1900s focused on the relationship between *quality* and *spatial place*, *quality* and *temporal modification*. They induced him to take up a radical position which reversed the relationship between substance and accident so that the quality of the act of presentation (‘seeing red’, for example) becomes the sole existent reality while simultaneously instantiating the relative spatial continuum.35

In fact:

The difficulty we allude to arises from the fact that with continua like violet and grey in their steady transition from red to blue and from white to black we are not dealing

35. Brentano 1988c.
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with primary but with secondary continua. They are always based either on time or on space as a primary continuum. Secondary continua differ from primary ones in very essential characteristics. As to the primary ones, it is impossible that they are given other than in an indefinite multiplicity of species, which differ infinitesimally from one other; therefore there can be no spatial point for itself, there must be indefinitely many others, each of which is specifically different from each other as a local point, and the same applies for the temporal point. It cannot be that something starts and finishes at the same time without another, infinitesimally different time determination following. It is quite different for violet; the red forming the starting point of the continuum could also be real in itself and fill evenly a whole surface. The same proves itself to be true for motion, where a spatial continuity as a secondary continuum is given because of a temporal primary continuum. Instead of the spatial variation there could also have ensued the preservation of the specifically same spatial determination during the whole time of the process of the movement.

It follows that like an antithesis between staying unchanged and altering, differences of minor and greater changes in the same time or in the same space as a primary continuum could also be possible, whereas with primary continua the strength of the variation as the variation as such is unchangeably certain. Therefore, the variation in space is the same in every direction and in time it is the same as in space.

Whereas the variation of the primary continuum, time for example, cannot be slackened or accelerated at all, the variation of every secondary continuum can become slower and faster in indefinitum. None is so slow that it could not be 1/2, 1/4, 1/8 times and so on slower; none is so fast that it could not be two, three, four times faster, and so on. With slackening, the continuum approaches the zero of the variation, which is given in case of a constant duration of a species, to infinity. With acceleration, on the contrary, it goes more and more away and to infinity. However, the primary continuum, in its necessarily constant variation, shows a fixed definite difference from the constancy of duration in absence of any variation.36

Besides Descriptive Psychology, an important stage in Brentano’s shift to reism consisted in his writings on the psychology of sense, which further clarified the nature of the extensive qualities, the phenomena of mixed chords in the acoustic field – analogous to mixed colours in the visual field – and the characteristics of the Spürsimn (sensory intuition) including tactile, gustatory and kinaesthetic perceptions.

4 THE SPACE OF THE SENSES

Of particular importance for the development of Brentano’s thought, besides the topics discussed during his lectures of the 1880s on the correlate

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of the act of presentation (the writings in Descriptive Psychology), were his psychological analyses conducted at the turn of the century, mainly in the fields of visual and auditory perception, and which made him into one of the protagonists of the debate on the theory of perception then ongoing between nativists and empiricists. To use Helmholtz’s distinction, the nativists believed that all sensation contains not only a qualitative determination but also a spatial one. Hence, any whatever sensation of colour, every sensation of pressure, etc., must always be a spatial sensation as well. The empiricists, on the contrary, denied that sensation ever comprises a spatial quality.

In 1907, under the title of Researches in Sense Psychology, from which some passages have already been quoted, Brentano published a series of writings which centred on the theme of multiple qualities in the various sensory fields. Brentano discussed, amongst others, the theses of Helmholtz, Hering, Mach and Lipps on the theory of colours, auditory perception, and optical-geometric illusions. In particular, between 1904 and 1906 he read Mach’s Beiträge zur Analyse der Empfindungen (On Analysis of Sensations) and commented closely on individual chapters of his Erkenntis und Irrtum (Knowledge and Error). One article in the book in particular reflects these readings.37

There were numerous differences between Mach and Brentano. Specifically, as regards Mach’s theory, they principally concerned the following:

1. Mach’s rejection of the difference between psychic phenomena and physical phenomena – which was instead the foundation of Brentano’s psychology from an empirical point of view.
2. His denial of any relation between the psychic and an object – another fundamental component of Brentano’s psychology from an empirical point of view.
3. His extreme sensualism, which induced him to reject general concepts, and consequently also to reject the difference among sensible presentations in the specific sense of the term, sensible judgements, and emotions.
4. His rejection of the concrete nature of individual sensations and of local as well as temporal determinations as further sensible qualities.
5. His failure to give clear determination to the nature of intensity.

37. Brentano 1988b. The article in question is “Von der psychologischen Analyse der Tonqualitäten in ihre eigentlich ersten Elemente” (On the Psychological Analysis of the Sound Qualities in their Primitive Elements).
6. His failure to deal with the phenomenal velocity of the transformation of perceptual forms.38

7. His denial of the unity of consciousness.

8. His belief that it is a sensation’s membership of a complex of mutually associated presentations which makes it conscious.

9. His denial of the principium indiscernibilis.

10. His belief that the sense of colour consists of six elements.

11. His contention of the asymmetry between the spatial and temporal senses.39

The differences between Mach’s and Brentano’s theories are spelled out in Researches in Sense Psychology. This is a collection of writings of various provenance: papers given at psychology conferences, for example on the concept of multiple qualities and the intensity of sensations delivered at Munich in 1896, or on the concept of saturation at Rome in 1905; lectures given to the Vienna Philosophical Society, for instance on ‘phenomenal green’ in 1893; and articles published in specialist journals.

The current 1979 Meiner edition is augmented with writings that Brentano intended eventually to publish in a second edition. These writings, too, deal with a variety of topics. They date to the period between 1896 and 1907 and are therefore coeval with Psychology II and III. One of them resumes the discussion of the Müller-Lyer illusion begun in a previous article, while others examine the doctrine of intensity, the number and inter-relation of senses, and the nature of sensible space.40

From this point of view, the Researches in Sense Psychology are part of a line of inquiry begun by Psychology from an Empirical Point of View and they highlight the empirical/experimental development which Brentano’s thought might have undergone had academe not dealt such devastating blows to his personal life and scientific career.

At the same time, Brentano’s outline of a theory of perceptual space – one analogous to the theory of the temporal modes of intentional presentation – was a prelude to the task of developing an overall theory of continua, and the laws of their organization, which occupied Brentano for the rest of his life. He maintained, in fact, that the sensory fields are nothing but perceptual continua and can therefore be analysed in terms of their part/whole structure – as

38. On the concept of ‘teleiosis’ see infra Chapter 7.
already adumbrated in *Descriptive Psychology* with regard to acts of intentional reference.\textsuperscript{41}

Brentano’s *Lectures* conduct more detailed analysis of themes previously discussed, such as the difference between implicit and explicit perception, and the elementary characteristics of sense data – for instance, clarity, intensity and colouredness in visual perception (topics already addressed in *Descriptive Psychology*) – and they anticipate themes on which he would reflect until the last years of his life: the theory of multiple qualities (also examined in *The Theory of Categories*), and the theory of the intensity of qualities, these being viewed as pointillistically proportional to the filled sensible space.\textsuperscript{42}

Thus, the *Researches in Sense Psychology* analyse the complexity of the concept of sensation as outlined in Brentano’s Aristotelian writings on perception and which he further specified following his critique against classical psychophysics in *Psychology from an Empirical Point of View*. Once again, the central issue was the difference between the inner side of psychophysics (i.e. the pure presentation as the interior condition of the assimilative process) and its external side (i.e. the sensory conditions relative to stimuli). Again, *mutatis mutandis*, the debate at the time among Hering, Helmholtz, Zöllner, and others, still rotated around the theoretical options left open by the Aristotelian theory of perception.

I discuss here only some of the numerous themes addressed by the articles published in the 1907 *Researches* – the composite or unitary nature of the colour green (the ‘phenomenal green’), the multiple qualities and the intensity of sensations, the concept of colouredness (*Kolorit*), or the measurement of distance – and specifically the article on individuation, which continued to deal with the problem of the intensity of sensations, and the one on the nature of optical-geometric illusions.

The first article in the collection, “Über Individuation, multiple Qualität und Intensität sinnlicher Erscheinungen” (On Individuation, Multiple Quality and the Intensity of Sensible Appearances) was first published under the title of “Zur Lehre vom Empfindung” (On the Doctrine of Sensation) in the proceedings of the 1896 Psychology Conference held in Munich.

I have selected this article because it furnishes a quite precise idea of the pertinence of Brentano’s intervention in the debate at the time, and also because illusions are still today the focus of research, with the consequence that Brentano’s theories continue to be of descriptive utility.\textsuperscript{43} Other themes

\textsuperscript{41} See Chapter 8.
\textsuperscript{42} See infra Chapters 7, 8.
\textsuperscript{43} For a survey and analysis of optical-geometric illusions see Fineman 1981.
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dealt with by articles in *Researches* will be discussed later in relation to Brentano’s subsequent writings.

The illusion in question is the one described by Müller-Lyer in 1889. It consists of two vertical and parallel straight lines of 3 cm length, positioned at a distance from each other of ca 6 cm. The extremities of the first line are tipped with acute angles (arrowheads) of 30˚, those of the other with obtuse angles of ca 130˚.

Discussion centred on the cause of the apparently different lengths of the lines in relation to the shape of the angles on their ends. For Müller-Lyer the difference was due to the fact that the observer instinctively and visually interprets the angles on the ends of the lines as ‘pulling’ them in one direction or the other. Brentano instead attributed the apparent difference to underestimation of the small angles and overestimation of the large ones – an interpretation also proposed by James. The discussion is important because it was part of the broader debate between empiricists (Helmholtz, Zöllner) and nativists (Hering, Wundt) which Brentano also joined by taking up a position in favour of the latter but with distinctive features of its own. Brentano’s innatism, in fact, consisted in considering *sensation* to be:

1. **Qualitative**, contrary to the theses of classical psychophysics.
2. **Spatially determined**, in the specific sense of *spatial relationships*.
3. **Independent** of processes of *logical-inferential* and/or *unconscious elaboration*, which instead characterized the positions taken up by Helmholtz or Zöllner.
4. **Further determined** with respect to the correspondence between the organization of the stimuli and the perceptual system, which was instead the *physical-physiological* position of Hering, or the purely physiological one of Wund.
As specifically regards the Müller-Lyer illusion, as said, Brentano ascribed the apparent difference in the lengths of the lines to the different sizes of the angles on their ends. His position did not coincide with Wundt’s, although it was couched in the same terms, because it attributed an entirely different role to the angles. Wundt, in fact, considered optical-geometric illusions to be straightforwardly physiological sensory illusions due, for example, to the eye movements which produce the illusions of spatial extension and direction.44

Wundt affirmed as follows:

1. In the case of two equal angles, the one divided by lines into smaller angles appears to be larger.
2. In the case of two right angles, the one divided by lines appears to be larger, and the horizontal line is perceived as being slightly bent at the centre.
3. In the case of two unequal angles which together form 189 degrees, the obtuse one appears to be relatively too small and the acute one relatively too large, because of rectification of the angles by eye movements.

As the debate progressed, and saw the successive involvement of Jastrow, Lipps, Delboeuf and Brentano himself, Wundt contemporaneously developed his ideas on genetic research which, by analysing presentations, would show the elementary processes by which they are generated. For a long while thereafter Brentano pursued his inquiries, and directed those of his school, in outright opposition to Wundt’s theories.

The complementarity of these two points of view was a constant feature of Brentano’s work in its entirety. In fact, although he sometimes concentrated on some Cartesian aspects of the nature of inner perception (evidence), especially in the texts of Descriptive Psychology, he continued to examine issues of perceptology: and in particular, as evidenced by the Researches in Sense Psychology, ones relative to phenomena of auditory and visual presentation.

As we have seen, in the lectures delivered during the 1887-88 winter semester at Würzburg Brentano had already introduced a distinction between genetic psychology and descriptive psychology.

In 1892, in an article “Über ein optisches Paradox” (On an Optical Paradox) published by Zeitschrift für Psychologie und Physiologie der Sinnesorgane (Journal of Psychology and Physiology of the Sense Organs) Brentano pointed out with regard to the Müller-Lyer illusion that it persists even if changes are

44. Wundt 1874, 1887, 3 ed., II.
made to the figure – for example, by replacing the arrowheads with small wings so that salience is reduced at the line ends.\(^\text{45}\)

*Figure 2.*

Or by eliminating the lines to leave only the end angles. In this case, the distance between the acute angles seems to be shorter than that between the obtuse ones.\(^\text{46}\)

*Figure 3.*

As for Wundt’s interpretation that eye movements were the cause of the illusion, Brentano pointed out that when the end angles were replaced with square brackets turned inwards or outwards, if the illusion still occurred, it did so with less intensity even for less trained subjects, who almost immediately realized that the lines were of the same length.\(^\text{47}\)

\(^{45}\) Brentano 1979, 106.

\(^{46}\) Brentano 1979, 107.

\(^{47}\) Brentano 1979, 108.
Brentano commented thus:

If the reason for the illusion were as suggested, then it should persist despite this change, but in fact it does not. If susceptibility to the illusion is still present, it is substantially less, and to an extent that, as I myself have witnessed, even observers with little training do not succumb to the illusion, and on paying only brief attention, they immediately pronounce the lines to be of equal length. The most general and principal reason for the illusion is therefore another. From this variation one sees that it is the oblique slant of the end segments which matters.48

A series of subsequent changes to the figure, made also on the basis of comparison with the Zöllner and Poggendorf illusion, prompted Brentano to reaffirm that the oblique slant of the end segments, with the consequent over-estimation of the small angles and underestimation of the large ones, and the judgment of comparison, were responsible for the illusion, and not eye movements as Wundt maintained.

The debate continued after the criticisms made by Th. Lipps, so that Brentano devised a series of further variations to the Müller-Lyer illusion on the basis of a model originally developed by Helmholtz. His further reflections on the matter were published, with the same title as Part Two, in Zeitschrift für Psychologie und Physiologie der Sinnesorgane in 1893.49 The variations he made to the figure were, for example:

Figure 5.

In this case the figure consists of two adjacent right angles, one of them divided into smaller angles of 10’ each. The sum of the nine small angles is perceived to be greater than the undivided right angle, which appears to be acute.

Or the following:

Figure 6.

In this case the straight line, which is intersected by others radiating from a nearby point, appears to be interrupted at every point of interception and seems to be part of a slightly curved polygon. In this case too, according to Brentano, overestimation and underestimation occur when comparing the two angles adjacent to the side of the triangle.

Brentano commented on these new figures as follows:
What, therefore, is the result of our inquiry? Does there or does there not exist a law according to which we are habituated to underestimating large angles and to overestimating small ones, which was my point of departure in explaining the optical paradox? I believe that the statements just made are able to resolve all our doubts. By direct induction we have given different kinds of proof, also doing so on the basis of more profound principles. To be sure, we have then shown that this occurs only under particular conditions; indeed not even here is it uniquely determined, in that estimation of the size of the angles may be simultaneously influenced by other circumstances. But there is nothing here that might alienate those who know that all the laws of genetic psychology suffer from a similar indeterminacy (*Unbestimmtheit*) owing to the complexity of the relationships and the impossibility of analysis founded on ultimate principles. This, for example, is the case of the so-called laws of the association of ideas, which do not for this reason cease to be of utmost importance for psychological explanation. In effect, bearing this inexactness (*Inexaktheit*) in mind, we should not say “in these conditions it happens that”, but “given these conditions it usually happens that”. But precisely because this restrictive formula is properly general/necessary it no longer arises everywhere in the individual case, as is obvious for that matter.  

Whether or not the results of Brentano’s investigations into perceptual illusions are correct, their theoretical importance concerns two aspects in particular of his thought, the *theory of judgement* and the *modes of intentional presentation*, which he revised during the years at the turn of the century.  

In fact, in response to the criticisms brought against his theories by Lipps, Brentano points out in the same text that two illusions occur with respect to the angles and the lines:

The first is due to the fact that our phenomena do not correspond to what is given objectively, as for example when a stick immersed in water appears to be broken, or a drawing reflected on a sphere or a cone appears to be distorted […] the second, to which the name of an ‘illusion of judgment’ in the strict sense is usually given, derives from false evaluation of the relationships given phenomenically, as is forcefully evident […] in Zöllner’s figures.

Brentano was therefore convinced that perception comprises diverse forms of completion – from sensory to what in contemporary terms we may call ‘amodal’ and mental – involving types of cognitive integration. The under-
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lying theoretical problem which provoked the controversy was whether these further forms of completion responsible for perceptual illusions were presentations or judgments, or in the terminology of the time, whether they were eventualities of presentation or eventualities of judgment (Vorstellungs- oder Urteilseventualität).

As to the real issue at dispute between Brentano and Lipps in the article mentioned – namely the idea that lines as such are bearers of phenomenal movement, whence derives the role of apparent movements in evaluation of angles – the question closely concerned the primitives of perceptual space. These Brentano dealt with in his theory of continua and in a series of writings produced at the same time as those cited by Psychologies.54

5 A TRANSITION PHASE

As said, many of the themes treated in Brentano’s analysis of so-called perceptual illusions, and more generally in Researches in Sense Psychology, were preludes to his reist turn in the early 1900s. Among the themes subject to revision, and which are discussed in more detail in the next chapter, were the following:

1. The nature of the objects of presentation, also of the so called illusory ones.
2. The recognition of objects with respect to their simple presentation (acceptance or rejection of the content of the presentation).
3. The difference between implicit recognition in the presentation and recognition/acceptance in the judgment.
4. The modes of their recognition (direct or indirect), in particular of temporal ones (which Brentano first attributed to the judgment and then to the presentations, and in particular to the modes of the presentation).55
5. The structure of intentional reference, which increasingly assumed the features of a single-term relation, involving metaphysics, theory of knowledge and language.

54. Lipps 1897. On Lipps’ aesthetic space see Albertazzi 1998a. On Brentano’s primitives of perceptual space see Albertazzi 2002b.

55. See Chapter 4.
These themes amply characterize the texts issued as *Psychology* II and III, but because of a series of circumstances they were never completely developed and remained at the stage of ‘work in progress’. Thereafter, because of Brentano’s increasing blindness and his various personal and academic problems, his writings lacked unitariness and took principally the form of thought in ongoing evolution. The poor state of the posthumous editions of his writings by some of his pupils only heightens the sense of exploring the provisional in those scholars who set out to trace their development.
Chapter 5

A woodworm in the intentional relation

1 A NOT NEGLIGIBLE NEW POINT

*The Classification of Psychic Phenomena*, known as *Psychology* II, was first published in German in 1911. By that time, as mentioned, Brentano had spent sixteen years in Italy, where he took up permanent residence in Florence.

These were the years of Brentano’s discussions with De Sarlo, who set up a laboratory of experimental psychology and, under Brentano’s influence, developed a particular version of descriptive psychology; and they were also the years of Brentano’s discussions with the pragmatists, in particular with Vailati. Brentano now began to harbour doubts about his classification of psychic phenomena of 1874; doubts may also have been prompted by the debate within De Sarlo’s group on the nature of judgement, and by the influence of Vailati.1

The original intention was that this second volume of *Psychology* should appear in Italian, but owing to various circumstances it was first published in a German edition and then, in 1913, came out in a partial Italian version edited by Mario Puglisi.

The text of 1911 comprises the revised edition of chapters 5 to 9 of the second book of *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* of 1874, with the addition of twelve Appendixes written specially by Brentano for the planned Italian edition. The next edition of *Psychology* II, edited by Oskar Kraus in 1924, contained a further five previously unpublished Appendixes and sixteen additional notes. The texts are of remarkable significance, since they testify to a profound revision of the theory expounded in 1874.

As Brentano remarks in the Preface to the 1911 edition, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* had enjoyed great success, but:

My book was published more than thirty years ago, and later investigations have not substantially altered the views expressed in it, although they have led to further developments or, as I myself at least believe, to improvements on some rather important

1. See Calò 1908; Rossi 1916, 1917, and Chapter 1.
points. It seemed impossible not to mention these innovations, yet at the same time it
seemed advisable to retain the original format of my work, the form in which it had
influenced its contemporaries. I was further prompted to follow this procedure by the
realization that many eminent psychologists who had shown great interest in my doc-
trine, were more inclined to rely on it in its first form, than to follow me in my new
lines of thought. So I decided to reprint the old text with practically no changes, while
at the same time supplementing it with certain observations which are to be found par-
tially in the footnotes, but mainly in an Appendix.²

The important differences, therefore, did not appear in the main text of
Psychology II. The first section of the book is in fact entirely devoted to develop-
ing the classification of psychic phenomena set out in 1874. Some minor
changes to the subdivision of 1874 concern the theory of judgement (in partic-
ular the relationship between the object and content of judgement) and the
relationship between emotions and judgements.

To the revised edition Brentano added a number of Appendices in which
he dealt with the objections that had been raised in the meantime and
expounded a new point of view of the object of intentional reference. He now
writes:

One of the most important innovations is that I am no longer of the opinion that psy-
chic reference can have something other than a thing [Reales] as its object. In order to
justify this new point of view, I had to explore entirely new questions, for example I
had to go into investigation of the modes of presentation.³

Among the modes of presentation an eminent role is played by the tempo-
ral modes. In the focus of Brentano’s attention, then, after the space of the
sense, there is now the specificity of temporal presentations.

The problem of whether the apprehension of the temporal differences
among the objects of presentation is given by differences within the object or
within its modes of presentation preoccupied Brentano throughout his lifetime,
and it also exercised his most outstanding pupils, Marty, Husserl and Meinong.
That Brentano developed something close to an obsession with the problem of
time and eternity has also been noted by experimental psychologists, notably
Thinès.⁴ For that matter, Kraus himself recalled that there were only two other
questions apart from the existence of God to which Brentano constantly and
patiently returned in his lifetime: the problem of the origin of our temporal pre-

² Brentano 1995a, xxv-xxvi.
⁴ Thinès 1987, 117.
sentations, and the problem of the continuum. These three questions, as Brentano’s last writings would show, were closely interconnected.

That Brentano’s metaphysics centres on the problem of temporal presentations is demonstrated by the fact that his theory of the inner time underwent at least four changes, to which corresponded, as mentioned, at least four distinct phases in his theory of intentionality, which was modified as a consequence.

What is the point at issue?

All psychic phenomena are actual in the moment-now and therefore have a temporal connotation. We say, in fact, that now we see a colour, that yesterday we heard a sound, that tomorrow we shall think about something else. One of the problems to be settled for a theory of reference is this: does connoting the object of a psychic phenomenon as present, past or future concern the object presented, the act of presentation, or the act of judgement?

In other words, is the characteristic note of ‘present’, ‘past’ or ‘future’ part of the object, part of the act of presentation, or part of the act of judgement, that is, of two different classes of psychic phenomena? Moreover, is the object that I have in mind immediately temporally connoted, or must some form of subsequent temporal recognition intervene? Finally, are ‘present,’ ‘past’ and ‘future’ modifying attributes of objects or are they not? For example, is or is not a melody heard yesterday a real object?

The four phases correspond to the diverse answers that Brentano gave to the problem in a constant exchange of opinions with Marty, who worked for years on the same problem of whether time is given by differences in the object or in its modes of presentation. I cite individual passages because they correspond to successive shifts in Brentano’s theory in his writings which culminated in a definitive overturning of the original Aristotelian theory in Psychology III and The Theory of Categories.

The main problems concerning the theory of temporal modes of presentations are the following:

1. The relationship between the continuity of the flow of presentations and the discreteness of presentations taken individually.
2. The relationship between the actuality of the presentations that we experience as directly existent and their inexorable receding into the past and into non-existence.
3. The direction of the intentional reference, which, as we know, is probably the most fundamental concept in Brentano’s theory.

5. Kraus 1919, 39.
7. See Chapters 6, 8.
1.1 1st Phase: 1868-1870

In the first phase, Brentano viewed temporal differences among objects as differences of judgement. This idea had originally been proposed by Mill, who, in his *System of Logic* in 1843, had explained the origin of temporal differences in linguistic terms. At first sight, it does indeed seem that matters stand thus, as shown by the forms of verbs and of the copula.\(^8\) We may say in fact that presenting a colour will be, presenting a colour is, presenting a colour was. Brentano’s first thesis, therefore, in accordance with Mill, was that temporal differences do not concern objects but are due to acts of judging expressed linguistically by verbal forms.

If temporal differences are connected to the tenses of the verb, however, ‘present’, ‘past’ and ‘future’ are disconnected moments characterized by abrupt passages and entirely due to the act of judgement which judges that a thing ‘is,’ ‘was’ or ‘will be.’ But this explanation conflicts with our effective experience of natural time, which is continuous.

1.2 2nd Phase: 1873-1894

While teaching at Würzburg, Brentano became aware of the difficulties raised by the question and began to examine it more closely. According to Stumpf, who was his pupil at that time, Brentano devoted at least twenty hours of lectures to the theme of the original association.\(^9\) This latter is a crucial concept in Brentano’s theory of intentional reference, and it provided the basis for Husserl’s subsequent development of his own theory of intentionality.\(^10\)

What was Brentano concerned to show? He started from the very simple observation, already made by St. Augustine, that the object of an inner perception remains in the consciousness for a certain amount of time even after the stimulus has ceased – as shown by the example of a melody.\(^11\)

Contrary to what Brentano previously thought, therefore, it is not possible to speak of only one mode of the past (or only one mode of the future). What instead occurs is a constant flow of many modes of the past (or of the future) in succession. But these temporal moments of the past (or of the future) are not given in actual perception: as Brentano had shown in the *Psychology of Aristotle*, they are instead elements added to the sensations by the phantasia (the original association).\(^12\) Only what is intuitively given is present.

\(^8\) See Mill 1843; Marty 1910, and Chapter 2.
\(^9\) See Stumpf 1976, 38, and Chapter 4, n. 20.
\(^10\) Husserl 1966.
\(^11\) For criticism of Brentano’s thesis see Husserl 1966.
\(^12\) Cf. note 66, Chapter 2.
The effect of the original association is very short-lived, however, because it lasts only for the time required to utter a phrase or listen to a melody, so that the original association does not concern phenomena which require a much longer span of time for their presentation.

In short, in this second phase, Brentano argued that temporal differences are due not to acts of judging but to acts of presenting with the intervention of the *phantasia*. However, these are *differences within the object*, not within the act (given that, according to *Psychology I*, two presentations are only differentiated by the primary object of the presentation). In particular, the continually changing *temporal moment* is a *part of the object*.

This second thesis, too, raises difficulties. One usually says that every object is temporally characterized by a *temporal point* which does not change in *objective time*. Pertaining to the object is a temporal point on the calendar, so to speak, and not a constantly changing characterization in objective time. That which is now at a point has never been nor ever will be so at the same time: *first* there is an object at a past point, *then* an object at a present point, *subsequently* an object at a future point. For example, there was a ball at 12:35 yesterday, there is the same ball at 11:50 today, and it will be the ball at 2:17 tomorrow.

The question has always given rise to serious *aporias*: for example, is an ashtray that loses a piece in time the same ashtray? Is the chair that exists now the same chair that existed two centuries ago? And what happens to eminently temporal objects like a trill or a siren blaring in the street?

By way of summary, in this second phase, for Brentano temporal moments are apprehended as *parts of the object*. And, unlike in the first phase, an abrupt passage between past, present and future is not hypothesised. Instead, Brentano envisages a *continuous modification of the object*, which from the present is modified into the past, *from real into unreal*.

This hypothesis, however, gives rise to contradictions, because the real (present) cannot constitute a continuum together with something non-real (past, future).13

### 1.3 3rd Phase: 1894-1904

Brentano continued to work on the aporias of the apprehension of temporal differences in the object of presentation. In this third phase he hypothesised that temporal differences are due to judgement, and in particular to the *mode* of judgement.14

14. See Manuscript T65, 1899; Stumpf 1939 (-40), 284; Marty 1895.
This third phase therefore resumed arguments already formulated in the first phase (temporal differences pertain to *judging*, not to presenting), and from the second it retained the idea of the original association (which Brentano now called, as in *Descriptive Psychology, proteresthæsis*): in consciousness, added to the *present object* are a series of psychic phenomena directed towards the *past object*.

This third thesis also raises problems: for instance, it does not explain negative judgements, which should also have a present mode, and it does not explain the phenomenon of the melody, which has *past temporal modes* present in an *actual presentation* (in fact, *actual sound*, *past sound*, and *melody* as a whole are *contemporaneous* in the time of presentness in which they develop).

Moreover, as in the second phase, Brentano considered every object to have a temporal mode. This is not a mode that continually changes but a temporal *point*. Consequently, *only present objects can be real*. In this third phase, in fact, Brentano considered every object that is real now, or that will be or has been real as occupying an *objective temporal place* which is either prior to, contemporaneous with, or subsequent to other temporal places.

However, we present the temporal continuum to ourselves as a *continuum of modes of recognizing* the object directed both towards the real and the non-real.

### 1.4 4th Phase: 1904-1917

But how can we explain the fact that we are also able to *fantasticate* temporal objects? From this point of view it seems that temporal differences also reside in the *presenting*, and they are prior to judging. This, therefore, is a partial return to the theses of the second phase. Moreover, as Brentano now observes, we *desire* something in the present or in the future, and neither in this case are judgements involved, only presentations and feelings. It is this last point of view that prevails in *Psychology II*, although fleeting references to previous conceptions are made in all Brentano’s subsequent writings.

The fourth phase therefore still concerns the *primary objects* of the presentation and the *modes* of presentations, but with a variant: namely the role performed by the *whole of consciousness*. As Brentano now affirms, the successive presentations of the present, past and future object are not *individual acts* that exist individually and separately. They are instead parts of a *whole*.

In the temporal extensity – that is, in the time of presentness – we apprehend *being before* and *being after*: in other words, we have a presentation of the temporal duration. Moreover, the *temporal modes*, previously considered to be modes of presenting together with the direct and indirect modes are now
considered to be included in the indirect modes, so that the only direct mode is the present one.\textsuperscript{15}

Brentano’s theory of time thus becomes a particular case of the theory of the modes of presentation. Moreover, his theory of the modes of temporal presentation and the mereological theory of the parts of consciousness (set out in Descriptive Psychology) once again find a point of confluence and come to constitute the change of perspective which Brentano stresses at the beginning of Psychology II and expounds in the Appendices.

According to the late phase, then, temporal determinations are the modes by which substance perceives the primary object of presentation, which is given in the indirect modes. Time is a determination of the objects of our experience in so far as these are objects of inner perception. In a moment-now which is no longer punctiform and includes relations like ‘before’, ‘simultaneous’, ‘after’ and ‘partial coincidence’, the impression of the instantaneous of the actual content of a presentation depends on the fact that its extension coincides with the unitariness of our consciousness. In other words, duration is the objective characteristic note of the contents of presentations which renders them uniform. In this way Brentano’s writings on time constitute the core of his immanent realism and act as a prelude to Husserl’s analysis of internal time.

To conclude, a number of standard issues can be extrapolated from Brentano’s painstaking analyses of the temporal modes of intentional reference, viz.:

1. The problem of whether temporal differences are differences in objects or differences in the modes of the acts. If they are differences in objects, the problem arises of modification because a past object is no longer a real object: it is unreal, etc. Hence the problem also arises of the consistency of continua.

2. The problem of whether temporal differences are differences of presentation or of judgement. And then, if they are given in the presentation, is or is not the presentation point-like? If it is not, do the differences come about subsequently? Finally, as Marty pointed out, if temporal differences are given in the judgement, are they given simultaneously?

\textsuperscript{15} This aspect is also investigated in the subsequent Appendix 2.
3. The coexistence of, and difference between, the time of presentness and objective time.

4. The problem of whether the sequence of a perception coincides with the perception of a sequence (one of the main topics of Psychology I).

In many respects these issues once again concern the laws regulating the process of perceptive assimilation analysed in *Psychology of Aristotle* and subsequently investigated on an experimental basis in *Psychology I*. It will be seen that, despite the apparent abstractness of Brentano’s arguments on the temporal modes, his interest still centred on the fundamental problems of a *science of the soul*, doing so in accordance with the canons of a *psychology from an empirical point of view* that took account of all his previous analyses at different levels of granularity.

2 A DIVERSE PERSPECTIVE ON THE SOUL: APPENDICES

As previously mentioned, the first twelve Appendices added to *Psychology II* are of interest because they show the successive layering of Brentano’s theories from the beginning of the century onwards. The writings, intended “to explain, defend, expand and correct” his previous theory,¹⁶ concern, in particular:

1. The specificity of psychic reference.
2. The nature of the object of reference.
3. The temporal modes.
4. The attributive modes of presentation.

The themes treated in the Appendices are also analysed in Brentano’s dictations and correspondence, and they reflect in particular his discussions in those years with Marty and Kraus. The Appendices can therefore be read in concomitance with other writings by Brentano published posthumously by Kraus and Mayer-Hillebrand: for example, *Wahrheit und Evidenz* (Truth and Evidence) (1930), *Die Lehre vom richtigen Urteil* (The Doctrine of Correct Judgement) (1956), *Die Abkehr vom Nichtrealen* (Detachment from the Non-Real) (1966).

The further Appendices added by Kraus to the posthumous edition of 1924 are even more innovative. Coeval with Brentano’s other writings on the continuum, in fact, these Appendices present his metaphysics of reism, and they act as a prelude to Sensory and Noetic Consciousness (Psychology III). More specifically, they deal with the metaphysical foundation of descriptive psychology and the meaning of existence.

The Appendices in their entirety therefore shed important light on the evolution of Brentano’s thought. I accordingly now discuss the Appendices to the 1911 edition, examining the role played by Brentano’s inquiries of the previous thirty years and the changes of perspective that they wrought to the theses set out in Psychology I.

One of the first themes of 1874 subjected to revision was the difference between psychic reference and relation proper. As we know, when addressing the problem of categorization (i.e. the relationship among ontology, logic and language) in The Several Meanings of Being in Aristotle, Brentano observed that the parts of speech corresponding to the categories were:

2. *Nomen adjectivum* (quantity, quality).
4. *Adverbium* (where, when).
5. *Adjectival, adverbial and verbal* forms (relation).

During the years from 1862 until the early 1900s, however, as we have seen, Brentano’s investigations in empirical and experimental psychology, and those on the parts of consciousness in his descriptive psychology, induced him to modify his classification of psychic phenomena and consequently to revise the structure itself of intentional reference. The latter, in fact, no longer took the form of a classic two-term relation (foundation and relation). It now had only one term and was therefore more properly described as a quasi-relation (see below). Brentano pointed out that the lack of a grammatical category for relation was due to the minimal degree of being of that category, to which pertained neither existence nor non-existence but whose role was merely to accompany substance, externally or internally.

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The “some rather important points” stressed by Brentano in his preface to *Psychology* II concerned the following two changes to his original theory:

1. Intentional reference *can only have something real as its object.*
2. Presentation *always implies a form of recognition.*

Brentano’s constant correspondence with Marty in those years testifies to the complexity and difficulty of his transition to the new version of his theory, which came to be described as a ‘woodworm’ in his theses of 1874.19 While the *temporal modes pertain to presenting,* as we have seen, and therefore also to the perceptive presentation, *sensible perception at primary level is always tied to recognition of the object.*20 There is consequently no presentation which does not imply a recognition, contrary to Brentano’s assertion of 1874 that presentation and judgement belong to two fundamentally different categories. This conclusion prompted Brentano to conduct profound revision of his 1874 classification of psychic phenomena, and considering the intimate interconnections among metaphysics, psychology and logic in his investigations, it also constituted the premise for his attempt to reform traditional logic on the basis of a new theory of the judgement (see below).

As to the first point – the structure of the presentation – the problem was as follows. At first sight, the fact that the *psychic act* refers to something as its object configures it as a relation. However, as Aristotle also pointed out, this is a highly particular relation given that, unlike usual relations, in this case only the *foundation* exists while the *term* may even be non-existent. In other words, that which always and necessarily exists is what is *psychically active,* while the *object* of the reference may be entirely fictional or non-existent. For a psychic referent to exist, all that is necessary is the *existence of someone who psychically refers to it.* As Brentano puts it:

What is characteristic of every psychic activity is, as I believe I have shown, the reference to something as an object. In this respect, every psychic activity seems to be something relational. And in fact, where Aristotle enumerates the various main classes of his category of *pros ti* (relation) he mentions psychic reference. But he does not hesitate to call attention to something which differentiates this class from the others. In other relations both terms – both the fundament and the terminus – are real, but here only the first term – the fundament – is real.21

19. See in particular Brentano 1977b.
Chapter 5: A woodworm in the intentional relation

Brentano thus stresses the peculiarity of intentional reference with respect to other classes of relations like, for example, comparative relations.

It is entirely different with psychic reference. If someone thinks of something, the one who is thinking must certainly exist, but the object of his thinking need not to exist at all. In fact, if he is denying something, the existence of the object is precisely what is excluded whenever his denial is correct. So the only thing which is required by psychic reference is the person thinking. The terminus of the so-called relation does not have to exist in reality at all. For this reason, one could doubt whether we really are dealing with something relational here, and not, rather, with something somewhat similar to something relational in a certain respect, which might, therefore, better be called ‘quasi-relational’ (‘Relativliches’). The similarity consists in the fact that, like someone who is thinking of a relation in the proper sense, someone who is thinking of a psychic activity is, in a certain way, thinking of two objects at the same time, one of them in recto, as it were, and the other in obliquo. If I think of someone who loves flowers, then the person who loves flowers is the object I am thinking of in recto, but the flowers are what I am thinking of in obliquo. That, however, is similar to the case in which I am thinking of someone who is taller than Caius. The taller person is thought in recto, Caius in obliquo.

Brentano’s revision of the nature of intentional reference – according to which for something to stand in psychic reference the existence of the object is not essential, only the existence of someone that refers psychically to it – had considerable and immediate consequences from a metaphysical point of view on the difference between being and existence. Brentano observes:

I do not wish to bring this discussion of psychic reference to a close without having given a word of consideration to the view that there is a distinction between ‘being’ and ‘existing’. According to this view both are to be taken in a very peculiar sense. Namely, a person might be led to say that if someone is psychically referring to an object, the object really always has being just as much as he does, even if does not always exist as he does.

Perhaps none of the advocates of this view has gone quite so far. But in any case many of them say that of the red and the blue we see, the sounds we hear, and other objects of sensations which according to science do not exist, that although, of course, they do not exist, they nevertheless have being. And if we think general concepts, they maintain that the universals which are our objects have being as universals, although they do not exist.

I confess that I am unable to make any sense of the distinction between being and existence […] But that it is impossible to make use of that distinction – of which I can make no rational sense – between being and existence for psychic reference generally

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is already quite well enough proved by our earlier reference to those cases in which an object of presentation is at the same time an object of our correct denial.23

A major change in the theory results from Brentano’s exploration of the relationship between direct and indirect modes, and between the primary and secondary object of reference.24 As we know, Psychology I had distinguished, within presentation, between a mode of direct reference to the primary object (for example, sound, colour, etc.) and a mode of indirect (the Aristotelian en parergo) reference to the secondary object (consciousness of hearing, seeing, etc.). Brentano now clarifies the point as follows. When a psychic reference occurs, even if it is a unitary phenomenon, there is always a plurality of references. For example, there is always a primary reference and a secondary one, so that any presentation directed at an object implicitly comprises awareness of that same reference. Moreover, within the secondary reference there also exists a multiplicity of indirect references to the same object: in fact, I can simultaneously see, accept as true, and even gain pleasure from, something.

Consequently, Brentano observes:

The secondary object is not a reference but a psychic activity, or, more strictly speaking, the psychic active subject, in which the secondary reference is included along with the primary one. Although now no infinite regress of psychic references en parergo can arise, it does not follow that psychic activity is to be conceived as something simple. Even when psychic references have the same object, they can still be different if the modes of reference are different. This is what we find to be the case with psychic references en parergo. We have distinguished three fundamental classes of modes: presentation, judgement and relations of feelings. It is obvious that in psychic references en parergo the mode of presentation is never absent, for it is the prerequisites of the others. Judgement, however, is no more absent than presentation is, and, in fact, an evident affirmation is always present. In addition, it is very generally believed that there is a so called ‘feeling-tone’ (‘Gefühlstone’) in every psychic activity which is as much as to say that just as every psychic activity is the object of a presentation included within it and of a judgement included within it, it is also the object of an emotional reference included with it. I myself adopted this view in Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint. Since then, however, I have abandoned it and I now believe that even among sensations there are many cases in which there is no emotional reference, and so no pleasure or displeasure, contained with it. Indeed, I believe the entire broad classes of visual and aural sensations to be completely free of affective character. This does not rule out the fact that very likely affects or pleasure ordinarily

accompany them in various ways determined by laws. On this point, see my *Untersuchungen zur Sinnespsychologie*.

The fact that the psychically active subject has himself as object of secondary reference regardless of what else he refers to as his primary object, is of great importance. As result of this fact, there are no statements about primary objects which do not include several assertions.25

The fact that every psychic phenomenon comprises a plurality of references also explains why the inner perception, despite its evidence, is general and confused – that is, not immediately distinguished into all its parts. Distinction of the parts, as the writings of *Descriptive Psychology* had already shown, only comes about later through noticing (das Bermerken) and the distinction of its individual components, which is now explained on the basis of the development of the theory of the indirect modes of presentations. As Brentano points out, the problem had also been addressed in his lectures on the psychology of sense:

I believe I have demonstrated in my *Untersuchungen zur Sinnespsychologie* that the notes combined in a chord and the colour-elements of a compound colour are always really apprehended, but often not distinguished. The dispute about the simplicity or complexity of phenomenal green, which still goes on today, is related to this fact. Indeed I believe that I have shown that the differences in the intensity of sensible objects are to be derived from differences in phenomenal thickness. Sensible space is alternatively full and empty in one place and in another, but the individual full and empty places are not clearly differentiated. If it is true of physical phenomena, something analogous is true of the psychic activity which refers to it. Thus we have in this case, and in many others elsewhere, psychic activities which are not explicitly perceived in all of their parts. Inner perception is, rather, confused, and although this imperfection does not limit the degree to which it is evident, it has nevertheless given rise to various errors. And these themselves have again led some psychologists to dispute the fact that inner perception is evident and even to question the correctness of saying that inner perception is universally valid.26

Thus, the reduction of the intensity of phenomenally dense sensations (i.e. full and/or empty extensive parts), which Brentano had discussed in the *Researches in Sense Psychology*, is a further argument in favour of the generality of inner perception because the parts are not immediately distinguished, as evidenced by phenomena of chromatic fusion.

The third Appendix examines the modes of presentation, the temporal ones in particular (see above). It is thus the outcome of Brentano’s analyses of

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the previous decades as already described. He now claims that temporal differences are differences not in the objects presented but in the modes of presentation, a view that he would maintain for the rest of his life. Brentano notes:

If we hear a series of sounds in a conversation or in a melody, or if we watch a physical object which is in motion or is changing colour, the same sound, the same individually spatially and qualitatively defined coloured thing, appears to us first as present, then more and more as past, while new things appear as present, whose presentation then undergoes the same modal alteration. Anyone who took these differences to be differences of the objects involved – somewhat as spatial differences undoubtedly are when I have a presentation of something more to the right or more to the left in my field of vision – would be unable to do justice to the great difference which exists between space and time. As far as space is concerned, we can assume without absurdity that there are non-spatial things too: spirits without length, breadth, and depth and without really being in one place or another. In the same way we can assume topoids of four and more dimensions, in which the fourth dimension is supposed to be added to length, breadth, and depth analogously as in the physical thing depth is added to breadth and breadth to length; and the same would hold of every further dimension in relation to its predecessors – a very familiar idea in modern geometry; on the other hand, it would be simply absurd for someone to set up a hypothesis according to which something might exist and yet not be present and contemporary with everything else which exists, in that either it has no analogy with the present, or it endures or changes in a chronoid of more than one dimension. Just as no judgement can fail to have a qualitative mode, and we can confidently assert this for all beings which make judgements, no presentation could fail to have a temporal mode.27

Brentano once again emphasises that the point is crucial for his theory of intentional reference:

This point, which is of the utmost importance, has the most far-reaching consequences, and I shall go into it in greater detail on another occasion.28

In fact, the question became one of the key themes in Psychology III, and to various extents it was central to Brentano writings on the continuum, as we shall see.29

The relationship between apprehension of temporal differences, intuitive temporal properties, and experimental measurement of temporal distances – a

29. See Chapter 7.
corner point of the mind/body problem in modern parlance – also constituted one of the main questions addressed by the schools of philosophy and psychology which drew on Brentano’s descriptive psychology. The leading experimental researchers in the field were the already-mentioned Vittorio Benussi in Graz and Padua, and Enzo Bonaventura and Renata Calabresi in Florence. Brentano, aware as he was of the importance of the matter from an experimental point of view as well, stressed in this Appendix the outstanding importance of a descriptive analysis of time which examined the apprehension of the indirect temporal modes of the intentional presentation. He writes:

It hardly needs to be remarked explicitly that the question of what is meant by time can in no way be reduced to the question of what serves as the basis of our measurement of temporal quantities and intervals, whether it be by rational assessment or by habitual or originally instinctive estimation. The latter too is of great psychological interest and leads the investigator to teleological factors similar to those which are found in blind trust in memory, habitual expectation, and many other inclinations and antipathies.\(^{30}\)

Bound up with the theme of the temporal modes, as we have seen, is the theme of the attributive connection of the presentation in direct and indirect mode.\(^{31}\) Brentano writes:

It is well known that our presentations of objects which are not entirely simple are sometimes more and sometimes less distinct. As often as we have a rather distinct presentation of such objects, the presentational reference is a complex one and is clear in the Cartesian sense in a complex way. As it has to do with the whole, so it also has to do with the parts individually, which then appear to be united in a determinate way. This is the case, for example, when I distinguish a red patch as coloured, as red, as spatial, as located here, as triangular, etc., and think of it as characterized by all of these attributes. One of them then appears as something which is united with the others in a determinate way. Every presentational reference to an attribute has a particular object which, since the attributes are determined, forms along with the others the intuitively (\textit{anschaulich}) presented unitary whole.\(^{32}\)

Thus, presentational complexity and the multiplicity of the modes of reference give rise to what Brentano calls \textit{objective wholes of attributive unity}; in other words, they generate every sort of intentional presentation. Of such nature are also the characteristics notes in and of themselves, like a shape, a colour, and also a ‘square circle’, a ‘white blackness’, a ‘blue redness’. The

\(^{30}\) Brentano 1995a, 280.

\(^{31}\) Brentano 1995a, Appendix 4 (On Attributive Combination of Presentation \textit{in recto} and \textit{in obliquo}), 281-283.

\(^{32}\) ‘Attribute’ in the text might be translated as ‘characteristic note’ (\textit{Merkmal}).
attributive nature of the connection among the various parts of a presentation sheds further light on the difference between direct and indirect modes of identification, among identification, distinction and connection of the parts and the judgement, and finally on the origin of negation by means of indirect attributive modes. Brentano specifies the matter as follows:

It is plain that a clarification of the presentation can come about through an analysis of its object both *in recto* and *in obliquo*. And those free identifications which are possible *in recto* are just as possible *in obliquo*. In addition, something which is thought of *in recto* can be identified with an object thought *in obliquo*, as for example when I have a presentation *in recto* of flowers and of a flower-lover who wants these flowers, in which case flowers are thought of both *in recto* and *in obliquo* and are identified with another. If I am thinking of a green tree, I am thinking of the tree *in recto* and of the green *in recto* and I identify the two presentationally. If, on the other hand I think, as they say, of a non-green tree, the process seems a much more complicated one. For Aristotle, at least, denied that a negative could be an object. And if it is really impossible, as I have no doubt that it is, nothing is left but to assume that we are thinking of a tree, of which it is correct to deny that it is green, so that we are then dealing with a case of identification *in obliquo*.

In particular, these observations shed light on the question of the possibility of a judgement implicit in presentation (of both types with respect to the presentational content, that is, positive as recognition and negative as rejection), which was one of the topics of *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* subject to revision in that period. These matters were also studied by Brentano’s pupils, Marty in particular, who viewed cases of the type ‘non-green tree’ as identification *in obliquo* (S Non P) (see below). And these discussions were also among the formative bases of Meinong’s ontology.

As regards the relationships between the modification of judgements and emotional references through the modes of presenting, Brentano now shifted the focus of his analysis from the types of *objects* (and of *parts*) of presentations to the *modes* of not only presentations but judgements and emotional references as well.

Brentano also asserted the primacy of direct presentation over indirect presentation in the case of judgements and emotional references: for example, in the case where I recognize someone who denies something. He writes:

In connection with the difference between *modus rectus* and *modus obliquus*, it is true that judgements and emotional attitudes are based only on presentations *in modo recto*

34. Brentano 1995a, Appendix 5 (On the Modifications in Judgment and Attitude Brought about by the Modes of Presentation), 283-287.
and not on presentations in modo obliquo all by themselves, for, of course, the latter never exist all by themselves but only together with a modus rectus in a psychic act. If I think of someone who is denying something or even if I know of someone who is denying something I do not deny this myself more than I cause something when I think of a cause that produces that thing, even though the indirect object and the particular modus obliquus with which my thought is directed to it are not irrelevant to the content of my judgement; it is as a result of them that judgement is directed on one object rather than another.35

The point is theoretically important because it introduces the theme of assumptions (Annahmen). These Meinong considered to be a fourth class of psychic references besides presentations, judgements and emotional references.36 In this he differed from Brentano, who regarded them to be only a set of particular psychic activities, and specifically as sub-types of the mode of indirect presentation. The dispute involved Brentano’s school in its entirety, as evinced by Kraus’s introduction to the 1924 edition of Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint.37

Instead of positing a fourth class of psychic phenomena, Brentano assumed the content (or the state of affairs of the assumption) in modo obliquo. He was aware of the multiple uses of the term ‘assume’, for instance as a synonym for ‘recognize as such’ (anerkennen) or ‘approve’ (zustimmen), or to denote a more complicated type of psychic behaviour: a keeping hold of the intentional presentation ‘as if’ one were really judging something in order to see at what practical conclusion it would lead, or to verify to what other judgement it would lead if one continued to think in rational manner.38 This type of fictional procedure, which characterizes hypothetical reasoning, makes it possible to analyse an object without necessarily having to recognize it as existent, and to clarify the consequences of its assumption without necessarily having to accept them.

One of the controversial points in Psychology I was the impossibility of attributing an intensity to every psychic reference, and in particular the impossibility of conceiving degrees of conviction and preference as differences of intensity.39 This topic was closely connected with the theme of psychophysical measurement. In 1874 Brentano had declared that he subscribed to the

35. Brentano 1995a, 284.
38. The text has many similarities with Vahinger 1922, as Kraus points out.
opinion that degrees of conviction should be understood as differences in intensity. Subsequently, in the *Researches in Sense Psychology*, Brentano corrected his initial opinion. He now maintained:

[There] I show too that the degree of preference and the will’s degree of determination are not at all comparable to the degree of intensity of a sensation. And I show in general that the view that every psychic reference exhibits intensity in the strict sense must be given up since we even find presentations (as for example that of the number ‘three’ in general) without intensity. Consider two persons who are distinguished by the fact that one judges something affirmatively and has no doubts about it whatsoever, while the other believes it to be merely probable. The latter does not make the same judgement as the former but with a lesser degree of intensity. Rather, the one who judges with probability makes a judgement (actually he makes several judgements differentiated in content), which refers only *in obliquo* to what the other person’s judgement refers to *in recto*.40

In other words, the *probability judgement*, as Kraus observes in a note, according to Brentano is a judgement about judgements. The difference between a *probable knowing* and a *judicative knowing* thus does not consist in a difference of intensity. This is because the former is based on one or more judgements with *diverse content* which *indirectly* concern that at which judgement of the latter is directly addressed.

As to the similarities between the class of judgements and of feelings, which Brentano had already emphasised in *On the Origin of Moral Knowledge* of 1889, he had induced many of his readers to allocate judgements and emotional references to a single class. The seventh Appendix to *Psychology II* thus deals with the impossibility of unifying judgement and emotional reference into a fundamental class. The two different types of psychic phenomenon resemble each other in so far as they comprise pairs of opposites, like love/hate and acceptance/denial, or more generally the right/wrong opposition. However, Brentano reaffirmed, not only are there specific phenomena of emotional reference to which nothing in judgement corresponds (like ‘preferring’), but more in general, whereas the true/false pair exists in judgements, the emotions comprise not only the complementary pair good/bad but also ‘better’, ‘not as good’, ‘worse’, ‘not as bad’ – that is, an entire series of intermediate gradations.41 The eighth Appendix, in its turn, concentrates on the impossibility of assuming – analogously to presentation and judgement – two different classes for sentiment and the will, because, as in the case of assumptions, here too a complexity of references is involved.

40. Brentano 1995a, 286.
41. On this see Chapter 6.
Chapter 5: A woodworm in the intentional relation

The ninth Appendix is one of the most important of them, for it explains in exactly what consists the change of viewpoint announced by Brentano in the Preface of Psychology II and adumbrated in the previous Appendices. The point concerns the object of intentional reference, its content and modes of existence, and it is developed in parallel with a critical analysis of ordinary language.

Returning to the fundamental problem of the concept of existence, Brentano now states:

Everything that refers psychically to something refers to things.42

In many cases, the things to which we refer do not exist. But we are accustomed to saying that they then have being as objects. This is a loose (uneigentlicher) use of the verb ‘to be’, which we permit with impunity for the sake of convenience, just as we allow ourselves to speak of the sun ‘rising’ and ‘setting’. All it means is that a psychically active subject is referring to those things. It is only consistent to go on and permit such statements as ‘A centaur is half man, half horse’, although in the strict sense centaurs do not exist and so, in a strict sense, there is no centaur which has a body that is half of human form and half in the form of a horse.

Because reference to things is a distinctive characteristic of someone who is psychically active, we have been led to talk about objects having being or subsisting in the psychically active subject. Similarly, the fact that the subject refers to the same thing in different ways has led people to talk about something which is in some way more than the object, for it includes the latter within itself, and is likewise within the subject. It has been called the ‘content’ of the psychic reference. Especially in connection with the psychic act of making judgements, there has been talk of a content of judgement as well as an object. If I judge ‘A centaur does not exist’, it is said that the object is a centaur, but that the content of the judgement is that a centaur does not exist, or the non-existence of a centaur. If it is said that this content has its being in the active subject, then once again ‘to be’ is being used in a loose and improper sense and means exactly the same thing as is expressed by the use of ‘to be’, in its proper sense, in the words, ‘A psychically active subject is denying a centaur in the modus praesens’.43

The habitual procedure of intentional reference therefore reveals how we are accustomed to treating the contents (for example, the non-being of the centaur) in analogous manner to the objects of presentation. It is therefore

42. I have replaced the phrase which in the original English translation runs: “All mental references refer to things”.

important to take account of whether these contents exist – that is, whether or not they refer to real entities.

It is not possible, according to Brentano, to render a content into an object. It is only possible to render into an object he who affirms or denies the content, so that the centaur, for example, is an object of presentation only in modo obliquo. The centaur is thus the oblique term that is referred to the foundation of the intentional relation given by he who thinks, who falls within the concept of real, and who constitutes the direct object of the intentional reference.

The change of perspective is therefore substantial and not immediately intuitive. In effect, by overlapping with the point of view expressed in Psychology I, it gives rise to interpretations that Brentano considered to be entirely arbitrary. He wrote thus to Kraus in 1905 on a misunderstanding of his theory by Höfler:

As for your account of Höfler’s comments, I was baffled by the reference to the ‘content and immanent object’ of thought (‘Inhalt’ und ‘immanentes Objekt’ der Vorstellung). When I spoke of ‘immanent object’ I used the qualification ‘immanent’ in order to avoid misunderstandings, since many use the unqualified term ‘object’ to refer to that which is outside the soul. But by an object of a thought I meant was it is that the thought is about, whether or not there is anything outside the mind corresponding to the thought.

It has never been my view that the immanent object is identical with ‘object of thought’ (vorgestelltes Objekt). What we think about is the object or thing and not the ‘object of thought’. If, in our thought, we contemplate a horse, our thought has its immanent object – not a ‘contemplated horse’, but a horse. And strictly speaking only the horse – not the ‘contemplated horse’ – can be called an object.

But the object does not exist. The person thinking may have something as the object of his thought even though that thing does not exist.

Of course, it has long been customary to say that universals, qua universals, ‘exist in the psyche’ and not in reality, and such like. But this is incorrect if what is thus called ‘immanent’ is taken to be the ‘contemplated horse’ (gedachttes Pferd) or ‘the universal as object of thought’ (gedachtbes Universale). For ‘horse contemplated in general by me here and now’ would then be the object of a general thought about a horse; it would be the correlate of me as an individually thinking person, as having this individual object of thought as object of thought. One could not say that universals as universals are in the soul, if one of the characteristics of the ‘things existing in the soul’ is that they are ‘objects of my thought’.

When Aristotle said that the aistheton energeia is in one’s experience, he was also speaking of what you call simply ‘object’. But because we do use the word ‘in’ here, I allowed myself the term ‘immanent object’, in order to say, not that the object exists, but that it is an object whether or not there is anything that corresponds to it. Its being an object, however, is merely the linguistic correlate of the person experiencing having it as object, i.e. his thinking of it in his experience.
Chapter 5: A woodworm in the intentional relation

Aristotle also says that the *aesthesis* receives the *eidos* without *hyle*, just as the intellect, of course, takes up the *eidos* in abstraction from the matter. Wasn’t his thinking essentially the same as ours? The ‘contemplated horse’ considered as object would be the object of inner perception, which the thinker perceives whenever he forms a correlative pair consisting of this ‘contemplated horse’ along with his thinking about the horse; for correlatives are such that one cannot be perceived or apprehended without the other. But what are experienced as primary objects, or what are thought universally as primary objects of reason, are never themselves the objects of inner perception. Had I equated ‘object’ with ‘object of thought’, then I would have had to say that the primary thought relation has no object or content at all. So I protest against this foolishness that has been dreamed up and attributed to me. Just what statement of my views is it that Höfler is attacking? Certain passages in my *Psychologie*? - Or perhaps something I am supposed to have said in my lectures? But where? When? Before what audience? I would indeed like to know. I haven’t looked at the *Psychologie* or my notebooks for a long time, but, as I remember, I put the matter in the way I have just described. I would like to have it made clear that, unless something incorrect was said, which I do not believe, I have always held (in agreement with Aristotle) that ‘horse’ and not ‘contemplated horse’ is the immanent object of those thoughts that pertain to horses. Naturally, however, I did say that ‘horse’ is thought or contemplated by us, and that insofar as we do think of it (N.B., insofar as we think of the *horse* and not of the ‘contemplated horse’) we have ‘horse’ as (immanent) object.44

As regards Meinong’s point of view on objectives in particular,45 in the Ninth Appendix Brentano continues:

Some have gone even further than this, however, and taking the difference between correct and incorrect judgement into consideration, speak of contents which exist in actuality and those that do not exist in actuality. Hence, for example, since anyone who denies a centaur judges correctly, it is said that the non-existence of the centaur is actual, while the existence of the centaur is not actual. And contrariwise, because it is true that there are trees, it is said not merely that trees exist, but also that the existence of trees has being and that their non-existence does not. Thus, contents are treated as analogous to objects, among which we distinguish some which have their being only in a loose and improper sense in the psychically active subject, and some which have being in the strict sense outside of the subject, where they belong to the realms of real things. Since there has been some hesitation, however, about declaring the non-existence of a centaur a real thing, it was believed that this difference, on one hand, and the similarity, on the other, could be taken account of at the same time by calling contents ‘objectives’.46

44. Brentano 1966, 77-79. Also in this case the translation should be revised, as to the term ‘thought’.
In fact, the development of the theory of intentional reference at the hands of the members of Brentano’s school had given rise to a ‘proliferation’ of objects of reference, such as immanent, ideal, impossible, etc., and to situations of affairs, states of affairs, objectives, etc. By contrast, on the basis of the results of his investigations into the modes of presentation, and in particular the indirect temporal modes, Brentano was forced to acknowledge as existent in the strict sense only what is given here and now, modo recto, in the present moment (Jetzt), and to attribute merely fictional status to all the other objects and contents of intentional reference. As to the latter, he writes:

But surely we are dealing here with mere fictions. Anyone who says that the non-existence of a centaur has being, or who answers the question as to whether a centaur does not exist by saying, ‘That is so’, only wants to say that he denies centaurs in the modus praesens, and consequently, also believes that anyone who denies a centaur judges correctly. Aristotle is quite correct, therefore, in saying that the ‘That is so’, by which we indicate our agreement with a judgement means nothing but the judgement is true, and that truth has no being outside of the person judging; in other words, it exists only in that loose and improper sense, but not strictly and in reality. 47

Brentano’s new position therefore rejects the theory of the truth of predicative contents as correspondence, a point of view which he had to some extent put forward in his early investigations. Now he restricts truth to affirmative judgements modus praesens alone.

A second consequence of this conception of the truth of judgements is Brentano’s precise differentiation between the roles played respectively by the objects and by the contents, which was a rather obscure point in the 1874 Psychology. He now specifies the difference as follows:

A content is never presented in the sense of being object of the presentation, nor is it ever affirmed, in the sense in which an object is affirmed, not even by those who believe that it is to be affirmed. In so saying, of course, I do not want to deny that, according to another even more common usage, instead of saying that a person affirms something, we can say he affirms that a thing exists. But absolutely the only thing which is presented is a person who is making the judgement concerned, and we judge that insofar as we are thinking of such a person, we are thinking of someone who judges correctly [...]. Hence we are certain that one cannot make the being or not being of a centaur an object as one can a centaur; one can only make the person affirming or denying the centaur an object, in which case the centaur, to be sure, becomes an object in a special modus obliquus at the same time. And so it holds true generally that only that which falls under the concept of a thing (Reales), can provide an object for psychic reference. Nothing else can ever be, like a thing, that to which

47. Brentano 1995a, 292.
we psychically refer as an object – neither the present, past, nor future, neither present things, past things, nor future things, non existence and non-existence, nor necessity or non-necessity, neither possibility nor impossibility, nor the necessary and the non-necessary, neither the possible nor the impossible, neither truth nor falsity, neither the true nor the false, nor good nor bad. Nor can the so-called actuality (*energeia*, *entelecheia*) of Form (*eidos*, *logos*, *morphē*) of which Aristotle speaks, and which we express in our language by means of such abstractions as redness, shape, human nature, and the like, ever be the objects of a psychic reference, and this is true of objects as objects (Objeckte als Objekte) as for example, the affirmed, the denied, the loved, the hated, the presented.\(^{48}\)

Brentano therefore argues that the objects of intentional presentation are always and only real things, sometimes in recto, sometimes in obliquo.

In actual fact, Brentano’s reism was not a radical watershed in his thought. On closer inspection, it had Aristotelian roots and reached back to his dissertation *On the Several Meanings of Being in Aristotle*, where he carried out a first reduction in the number of the categories. Moreover, while continuing to adhere to a moderate conceptualism, his ontology still admitted the existence of abstract or non-real entities. It was his subsequent investigations into the nature of the presentation (*Psychology* I), of the correlates (*Descriptive Psychology*), of the contents of consciousness, and especially of the temporal modes of presentation in the Appendices to *Psychology* II, that induced him to restrict even further, by excluding universals, abstracts and non-reals, the number of the entities of reason that qualify as objects of presentation. In effect, Brentano’s list of *entia rationis* was not a radical departure from his early Aristotelian studies on the concept of being. The list comprised the following:

1. All abstract nouns like ‘extension’, ‘colour’, ‘thought’, ‘space’, ‘time’, given that in reality there exists only the extended, the coloured, the thinking, something spatial, temporal.
2. Nouns expressing possibility like ‘capacity for thought’, ‘capacity for movement’.
3. The contents of presentations like ‘the non-being of the centaur is’, ‘a non-existent centaur is’.
4. Whatever belongs to the Aristotelian category of *ens per accidens*. For example, in ‘this man is armed’ the predicate has solely the meaning of an *extrinsic determinatio*, given that there is no real identity between subject and predicate.

\(^{48}\) Brentano 1995a, 293-94.
5. Whatever belongs to the Aristotelian category of *ens tamquam verum*. For example, one can only say that ‘an oak is’ if one recognizes an oak; or ‘the non-being of the centaur’ only means that one denies a centaur.

6. All *scientific fictions*, like unreal numbers, fractions, infinity and infinitesimals in mathematics.49

Reism, the critique of language, analysis of the judgement and a reform of logic: these were the themes that traversed all Brentano’s writings in the early 1900s. Indeed, Brentano was one of the first to recognize a need for a critical analysis of language. As Mayer-Hillebrand writes, recalling developments in formal logic at the time:

Recently, logicians in particular (Couturat, Russell, Whitehead, Hilbert, Schlick, Waismann, Kraft, Carnap, Wittgenstein, etc.) have sought, with the creation of a new language borrowed from mathematics, to free logic from all its sources of error. It should be pointed out, however, that Brentano was the first to undertake a reform of logic, in that he energetically stressed the importance of clarifying the relationship between language and thought.50

However, in order to understand the thematic unity of the above-mentioned topics discussed by Brentano in the last Appendices, one should bear in mind that, unlike the logicians, he based his endeavour to reform logic once again, as in his youthful Aristotelian writings, on a close nexus between logic, metaphysics and psychology, or in other words, between theory of predication, entia realia and psychic phenomena. It is also to be noted that he was writing at the time of the formal ‘turn’ and at the height of the controversy on psychologism – of which he had been accused of being an exponent.

3 A NON-INDEPENDENT CLASS: JUDGEMENTS

What, therefore, do the final appendices to *Psychology* II have to say; and why did Brentano’s theory of judgement assume such importance from the early 1900s onwards?

As we know, Brentano’s theory of evidence as set out in *Psychology* I consisted in the clear and distinct inner perception of the identity between

perceiver and perceived: or in other words, between the actual psychic phenomenon and the object of its reference.

We have seen, however, that Brentano subsequently drew a further distinction between the object and content of reference, and that he identified the structure of intentional reference in a quasi-relation, i.e. in a relation with possibly one single term: the actual psychic phenomenon in the proper sense. Whence also derived the fact that judgements are based solely on direct presentations and not on oblique ones, and that the latter exist solely in relation to the former, which constitute their foundation (see the above example of the centaur).

In general, it is possible to distinguish a semantic approach and a metaphysical approach in Brentano’s reism, although they are closely interconnected.

From a metaphysical point of view, as we have seen, his theory was based on the primacy of the real as the object of intentional reference. From the early 1900s onwards, Brentano gave two definitions of ‘thing’ or ‘real’: the first stating that things are concrete entities, fully determined and temporal, and exemplified by bodies extended spatially and temporally, and psyches extended only temporally; the second stating that a thing is something that exists now and is connected with the primacy of the actual presentation. Brentano’s analysis of continua, which was also partly set out in certain passages in Psychology III, thus affirmed the primacy of the temporal continuum over the spatial continuum, so that the concept of ‘thing’ as substantially determined (i.e. in so far as it comprises a substance) would come progressively to coincide with that of ‘temporal’.

From a semantic point of view, and consequently, given the implicit connection among metaphysics, psychology and logic that constantly characterized Brentano’s thought, his reism consisted in a theory of predication which excluded abstract terms and argued that all the predicates of language should be converted into concrete terms. This entailed a substantial revision of the traditional theory that a judgement ‘attributes properties to things’ into a theory that a judgement ‘relates (real) things to (real) things’. To be noted is that the new theory of predication proposed by Brentano in the early 1900s had an antecedent precisely in De Interpretatione, where Aristotle argues that things are combined in affirmative judgements and separated in negative ones.

Brentano took impersonal propositions as a major confirmation of his reform of logic. The case of impersonal or subjectless propositions had

51. Brentano 1981b, Part 2, Chapters 3, 4. See also Chapters 6, 7.
52. Aristotle De Interpretatione 16 to 11.
been analysed by Miklosich in an essay of 1883, *Die Verba Impersonalia im Slavische* (The Impersonal Verbs in Slavonic)\(^{54}\) and is in fact an argument against the universality of the traditional distinction between subject and predicate.\(^{55}\) The essay had wide resonance and caused considerable polemic. As Brentano himself recalls:

In order to make the reader familiar with the contents of this valuable little book a notice written at the time for the Vienna Evening Post may prove useful. Through an oversight it was printed as a feuilleton in the Vienna newspaper. As no one would certainly look for it there, I include it here ([*On the Origin of Right and Wrong*, 105-116] by way of an Appendix. Meantime, Sigwart’s monograph, *The Impersonalia* has appeared, in which he opposes Miklosich. Marty has submitted this, as well as (shortly before) the corresponding section in Sigwart’s *Logic* to a telling criticism in the *Viertlejahrschrift für wissenschaftliche Philosophie*, with regard to which criticism Sigwart, though without any reasonable ground, has shown himself highly indignant. ‘*Il se fache*,’ the French say, ‘*donc il a tort*’. That Sigwart’s theory in its essential points has not succeeded, even Steinhalt really allows, though in his *Zeitschrift* (chapt. xviii., p. 172 seq.) he burns thick clouds of incense to the writer of the monograph, and even in his preface to the fourth edition of his *Origin of Language* applauds a form of conduct which every true friend of that deserving man (Sigwart) would regret.\(^{56}\)

Brentano introduced the question of subjectless propositions into the debate on the nature of the judgement in traditional logic, and referred to conceptions variously put forward by Herbart, Steinthal, Benfey, Sigwart and Trendelenburg. He put the problem as follows:

An ancient tenet of logic holds that judgement consists essentially of a connecting or a separating, in a reciprocal relation of presentations. Held firm for two thousand years with almost complete unanimity, logic has influenced other disciplines as well. And thus, since ancient times, we find among grammarians that there is no, nor could there be, expressive form of the judgement connecting a subject to a predicate simpler than the categorical judgement. However, it could not be gainsaid for long that application of this theory raised difficulties: propositions like ‘it is raining’, ‘it is flashing with lightning’ seemed not to fit the theory […] Some thought that when one says ‘it is

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54. Brentano’s essay in response to Miklosich was originally published in *Wiener Zeitung* 13-14 November 1883, then as an appendix to *On the Origin of the Knowledge of Right and Wrong*. The theses of Sigwart that Brentano disputes, in favour of Miklosich, are those that contest the originality of even the negative judgement.

55. This is topic of the twelfth Appendix of *Psychology II* (Miklosich über subjectlose Sätze) (Miklosich on Subjectless Propositions). The appendix has not been included in the English translation, because it was translated and restored by Chisholm in *The Origin of Right and Wrong*.

56. Brentano 1902, 55-56.
raining’ the implied subject is Zeus. The sense would be ‘Zeus is raining’, but if one says ‘it is murmuring’, it is obvious that Zeus cannot be the subject. Thus others argued that here the subject is the murmur and that the sense of the proposition is ‘the murmur murmurs’, completing the above example thus: ‘the raining or the rain rains’. But if one now says ‘money is lacking’, then the sense should accordingly be ‘the lack of money lacks money’. But this does not work. So it was explained that here the subject is instead ‘money’ and the sense of the proposition is ‘money lacks money’. But on close inspection this is a dangerous infraction of the hoped-for unity of the explanation. And while in these cases the matter could be concealed by shutting an eye, this was no longer possible in the case of propositions like ‘there is a God’, where it was not possible to come up with an acceptable sense, neither in the proposition nor ‘a God is given’ [es gibt einen Gott], ‘the given gives a God’ [das Geben gibt einen Gott], nor ‘God gives a God’ [Gott gibt einen Gott].

However much one attempts to determine the subjects of impersonal propositions like ‘it is raining’, ‘it is thundering’, etc., it seems that they are devoid of them, and that their meaning consists simply in recognizing or denying the existence of a fact. Miklosich had grouped the main types of impersonal propositions according to their verbal forms (active, passive, reflexive, etc.). He looked for examples in various languages, finding that the finite verbs of subjectless propositions are always expressed in the third person singular and, when possible, as neuter. Brentano points out that:

In the second part of the essay (pp. 33-72), the multiplicity of these propositions induces Miklosich to group them into classes: thus we have subjectless propositions with the *verbum activum*, with the *verbum reflexivum*, with the *verbum passivum* and with the *verbum esse*, and each of these four classes is illustrated with numerous examples taken from a wide variety of languages. This concerns above all the first class, which Miklosich divides into eight sub-classes, grouping the propositions according to the diversity of their content. As a general principle he states (p. 6) that the *verbum finitum* of subjectless propositions is always in the third person singular and, where the gender form is possible, it is neuter. He goes on to consider the matter from other aspects as well. He argues that the propositions in question are not subsequent to propositions that assert something of a subject, but appear originally in the construction of propositions (pp. 13ff, p. 19), and he maintains that with time they have disappeared from some languages (p. 26).

Brentano declared that he fully agreed with Miklosich’s conclusions, although he himself had reached them independently by means of purely psy-

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The first disagreement concerned the fact that, according to Brentano, the propositions in question were not only subjectless but also predicate-less, so that neither was it possible to call them simple predicative propositions. Calling them such might suggest that Miklosich, although he did not directly say so, believed that a second concept (the subject) is implicitly thought in adjunctive manner; or that he considered these propositions to be the original and atrophied forms of categorical prepositions.

For Brentano, therefore, the expression ‘subjectless proposition’ could be justified in only one sense:

When, that is, one believes that because the concept contained in the subjectless proposition is the only concept, it is naturally also the principal concept – what in the categorical proposition we have identified as the predicate. Likewise, as regards categorical propositions compared to hypothetical ones, we may say that these are not so much propositions without apodosis as propositions without protasis. This is not because, in the absence of protasis, we cannot talk of apodosis, but because in a hypothetical proposition the apodosis is the main proposition. In this sense I may perhaps find myself in agreement with the author’s expression ‘subjectless proposition’.

The second point on which Brentano disagreed with Miklosich was that, for Brentano, there were no limits to the use of impersonal forms. He writes as follows:

The use of the subjectless form in the strict sense should be practically limitless because, as I believe to have shown in my *Psychology*, every judgement expressed in categorical, hypothetical or disjunctive form can be expressed, in different guise, also in the form of a subjectless proposition or, as I have said, in the form of an existential proposition, without the minimal change of meaning. Thus the proposition ‘a man is sick’ is synonymous with ‘there is a sick man’, and the proposition ‘all men are mortal’ is synonymous with ‘there is no immortal man’, and so forth.

Brentano then observes that if existential propositions are considered to be subjectless propositions, then these are present in all languages and are not exclusive to just some of them. The conclusive identification of existential propositions with subjectless propositions comes with Miklosich’s analysis of propositions like ‘a God is’, where the concept is posited in absolute manner, without a subject, and in regard to which, as Brentano points out, Miklosich observed that:

This ‘is’ of the existential proposition takes the place of the so-called copula ‘is’ – indispensable for statement-making in many but far from all languages – which has the same meaning as the personal desinences of finite verbs, as clearly shown by ‘is summer, is night’ together with ‘summer comes, night falls’. ‘Is’, therefore, is not a predicate (p. 34, see also p. 21 above). In reality, if the proposition ‘there is a God’ is considered to be subjectless, so also is the proposition ‘a God is’, but then also the proposition ‘Gods are’ is deemed to be subjectless. Hence the above rule is shown to be too rigid. However, on considering existential propositions (and analogous patterns) to be subjectless propositions, confirmation should be provided for what we sought to show earlier: namely there is no language, nor could there be, which lacks these extremely simple propositions.61

The arguments underpinning Brentano’s position were developed further in other writings which resumed the theme of the mechanisms by which the objects of presentation are conceptually identified in direct and oblique mode as previously discussed in the fourth appendix to Psychology II.

The nature of existential and impersonal propositions was discussed within Brentano’s school by Husserl and Twardowski, but it was subjected to particularly close scrutiny by Marty, who drew a novel distinction between the form and matter of the judgement.62 On this Marty wrote as follows:

I dare to claim that the ancient and illustrious dogma of the dual articulation of the judgement, the opinion that every statement has a subject and a predicate, is based on a confusion between inner form and meaning, and so too is the oft-heard doctrine that subject and predicate express the relation of inherence and subsistence.

That this latter representation (of substance and the accident that inheres in it) in the categorical statement may be understood – in many cases – not properly but symbolically or figuratively has been recently realized and asserted by many logicians […] The above-mentioned collateral representation, however, can be explained as recollection of cases in which the categorical formula – or better, the nouns, verbs and adjectives used in it – really possessed the meaning of a thing, or of a doing, or of an undergoing inherent in it, or of one of its properties; and as the transposition of these forms to other cases in which they do not maintain that meaning. […] The genesis of such phenomena is simply as follows: a mode of expression suited to expressing a certain class of judgements (of double judgements, i.e. attributing or denying) is transposed to an entirely different class (simple recognition or rejection) and undergoes a change of function, while there still remains a recollection of this latter as collateral presentation of the current meaning. Thus it is of so-called ‘impersonals’ and of the existential proposition. In reality, these have neither subject nor predicate (the ‘es’ in ‘es regnet’ is not a true subject, the ‘is’ in ‘God is’ is not a true predicate but only the

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rudiment of a predicate), yet they appear to be such and have consequently deceived many logicians and grammarians.63

Thus, for Marty, impersonal prepositions are instances of inner linguistic form (innere Sprachform), or of presentational contents of the intentional reference reawakened by language.

It is at this point that logical analysis, grammatical analysis, theory of language and metaphysics merge together and from now onwards proceed in parallel for both Brentano and Marty.

4 THE CONJECTURED URSPRACHE OF TLÖN

As previously said, Brentano based his reform of logic on knowledge of the nature of judgements and he was aware of the revolutionary implications of his ideas. He declared:

In logic, too, the failure to understand the essence of judgement necessarily engendered further errors. I have thought through the consequences of that idea from this point of view, and have found that it leads to nothing less than a complete overthrow, and at the same time, a reconstruction of elementary logic […] I replace the old rules of the categorical syllogism with the following three main rules, which can be directly applied to each figure, and which are perfectly sufficient by themselves for testing any syllogism:

1. Every categorical syllogism includes four terms, two of which are opposed to each other, and the other two appear twice.
2. If the conclusion is negative, then each of the premises has in common with it its quality and one of its terms.
3. If the conclusion is affirmative, then the one premise has the same quality and an identical term, and the other has the opposite quality and opposite term.

These are rules which a logician of the old school could not possibly hear without being horrified. Each syllogism is said to have four terms, yet he has condemned the quaternio terminorum as a fallacy. Negative conclusions are said to have purely negative premises, yet he has always taught that nothing can follow from two negative premises. Even among the premises of an affirmative conclusion we say there is a negative judgement, while the traditional logician would swear that this conclusion invariably demands two affirmative premises. Indeed, there is no longer any room for a categorical conclusion derived from two affirmative premises; yet he has always insisted in his lectures that affirmative premises are best and he calls it a pejor part when a negative premise is adjoined to an affirmative one. Lastly, no mention is made in these new rules of ‘universal’ and ‘particular’ premises; yet he always has these

expressions on the tip of his tongue, so to speak. And have his old rules not shown themselves to be so well-adapted for the testing of syllogism that, in turn, the thousands of inferences measured by their criteria are themselves now proof and confirmation of them? Shall we no longer admit as valid the famous syllogism ‘all men are mortal. Caius is a man. Therefore, Caius is mortal’, and all those like it? – This seems an impossibly unreasonable demand.\textsuperscript{64}

The classical types of categorical judgements (universal and particular, either affirmative or negative, known with the labels $a$, $e$, $i$, $o$) were subjected by Brentano to the following translation.

Universal affirmative sentences (All As are Bs) are taken as meaning ‘there is no non-BA’ or ‘a non-BA does not exist’. In other words, they affirm that there is no exception to the said claim. Particular affirmative sentences (some As are Bs) becomes ‘there is an AB’ or ‘there exists an AB’. Similar transformations apply to the remaining cases. In this way, universal judgements become negative judgements, while particular judgements become positive ones. The principle of identity (A is A, or, better, all As are As), becomes ‘there is no non-AA’.

According to Brentano, the case of impersonal sentences shows that the traditional distinction between subject and predicate (and the connected metaphysical distinction between substance and accident) is in need of reconsideration. His way out is to substitute the traditional theory of predication with the theory of parts and wholes. Instead of saying ‘some As are Bs’, we will say ‘there is an AB’, where the expression ‘AB’ means the whole composed of both A and B. The canonical version of his translation will become ‘an AB is’ (or ‘an AB is not’ in the case of what Brentano takes for negative judgments). An even simpler version considers only the schemata ‘AB is’, ‘AB is not’.

This base structure consists of two parts termed:

1. The \textit{matter} of the judgement (‘AB’).
2. The \textit{function} of the judgement (‘is’ or ‘is not’).

The core of Brentano’s theory of judgement is provided by the two following rules:

1. Denying a matter entails the negation of all the possible individuals that correspond to it.
2. Accepting a matter does not entail recognition of all the possible individuals that may correspond to it.

\textsuperscript{64} Brentano 1995a, 230-31.
The immediate consequence of these two rules is that the ‘subject’ of a Brentanian judgement need not necessarily be a proper noun or a definite description. However, if the subject does not necessarily have to be an individual, neither does the predicate necessarily have to be a universal.

The difference between the meaning of the copula (‘is’, ‘is-not’) in expressions like ‘God is’ and in expressions like ‘it is not possible that’ consists in the difference in the matter of the judgement (i.e. on the one hand ‘God’ as a real being, on the other ‘impossibility’ as an abstract entity) and not in the function of the judgement, which is expressed using the same functor in both cases.

The distinction between matter and function in judgements also makes it possible to show that the two negations characterizing the existential interpretation of an universal affirmative judgement do not elide together, because one pertains to the matter and the other to the function. Moreover, the difference between negation of the matter and negation of the function highlights that in a particular negative judgement the negation pertains to its matter and not to its function.

Brentano’s *idiogenetic* conception of logic is in fact a revival of the medi eval theory of the copula *secundum adjacens* (AB is), as distinct from the theory of the copula *tertium adjacens* (A is B). Sentences rewritten according to the above two rules are termed by Brentano ‘existential’. According to Brentano, all judgements have existential character, because they are based on the primary role of the copula, which is that of *recognising existence in the intentional reference*. The translatability back and forth between categorical judgements into existential ones is based on Brentano’s intuition that,

The existential judgement consisted in the fact that the object of an affirmative judgement is presented in the intentional reference with the subject (S) and its determination (P) identified in the present mode.

A judgement, according to Brentano, therefore consists in the way in which the object of the intentional reference is presented, and therefore in accepting or rejecting the whole as such, even before its possible separation

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65. See Rossi 1926, 41, who shows the coincidence of views on this point between Brentano and Sigwart.
66. The term ‘idiogenetic’ (*idion genos*) indicates that judgements are a particular class of psychic phenomena, which is contrary to the classical conception that they involve a connection or association of ideas. See Hillebrand 1891, 26.
67. See Chapter 8.
68. Poli 1993b.
into what are traditionally taken to be the sentence’s subject and
determination.

An obvious problem arising from the part-whole reading of predicative
sentences is the impossibility of distinguishing between ‘AB is’ and ‘BA is’.
Which is the bearer, if any, of the whole? The double judgement (Doppel-
urteile) theory provides an answer precisely to this problem. A double
judgment is a complex judgement in which the first part existentially affirms
the whole S (considered as a bearer) and the second re-affirms the same
whole, this time with its determinations P. This aspect of the theory was sub-
sequently given particular development by Anton Marty, who saw the theory
as a linguistic consequence of the functioning of the modes of presentation.69

The connection and at the same time the difference between existential
judgements and double judgements is emphasised by Brentano with his use of
different terms in relation to recognition: in the case of thetic judgements he
uses anerkennen/verwerfen (to recognize/to deny); in that of double judg-
ments zuerkennen/aberkennen (attributing/denying), which stresses that in the
case of double judgements what happens is effectively a recognizing of some-
thing that has already been recognized in the first instance in existential mode.
In other words, a double judgement breaks down into two thetic judgements
of the type [a man is][a man criminal is] in a form that closely resembles ana-
phoric predication.70

From this point onwards, Brentano’s critique of language, theory of judg-
ment and of indirect presentations were means towards his further and more
definitive revision of the theory of categories.

69. Marty 1916a II, 1, 247-259, and infra.
70. Poli 1998a.
Chapter 6  

Ficciones  

1 TOWARDS A THEORY  OF CATEGORIES REVISITED

The further five Appendices to Psychology II which Kraus appended to the 1924 edition were dictated by Brentano, now afflicted by blindness, in the years between 1915 and 1917. They therefore relate to the last three years of his life. Because of the further conceptual changes apparent in them, here they will be treated separately from the previous ones, together with the writings that form the third volume of Brentano’s psychology from an empirical standpoint: Sensory and Noetic Consciousness published posthumously in 1928.

These various texts are treated jointly here because they address the same themes and belong chronologically to the same period. In fact, both the first and second parts of Psychology III date to 1915 and 1916, and Brentano’s last dictation, published as the fifteenth Appendix, to 9 March 1917, which was eight days before his death.

The central concern of these writings, notwithstanding their fragmentariness, is the status of the secondary consciousness and of the indirect presentations: in particular the modes of temporal presentation individuating substance, discussion of which was complementary to Brentano’s elaboration of a theory of continua.1

As pointed out, Psychology III is a composite volume consisting of a number of Brentano’s dictations interpolated with explanatory passages written by Kraus on Brentano’s oral instructions. The editing of the book has aroused numerous criticisms, owing to the fact that the order and organization of the texts reflect the intervention of the editors more than they should. Yet the operation was apparently sanctioned by Brentano himself, who sent a letter of authorization to Kraus in 1916 which is cited by Franziska Mayer-Hillebrand in the Introduction to her revised edition of Psychology III published in 1968.2

Psychology III divides into two theme-based Parts, the first of which elaborates the distinction between external perception and inner perception, while the second deals with the difference between intuitive thought and conceptual thought. In general, they contain no substantial changes of position with

1. See, respectively, Chapters 5 and 7.
Immanent Realism

respect to the previous *Psychologies*, although detailed analysis of individual topics, as we shall see, reveals Brentano’s further progressive shift towards the realism apparent in the first series of Appendices to *Psychology II* already discussed.\(^3\)

One should bear in mind when reading *Psychology III* that it addresses themes that in those same years gave rise to a large body of analysis, discussion and polemics involving Stumpf, Marty, Twardowski, Meinong, Höfler and, on certain issues, Husserl, and therefore the entire school of Brentano.

Another point to bear in mind is the similar dating of the texts subsequently published with the titles of *Philosophical Lectures on Space, Time and the Continuum* and *The Theory of Categories*, texts in which Brentano’s theories of perceptual continua and of substance are closely connected and which, because of their complexity, will be treated separately.\(^4\)

As already mentioned, in the last years of his life Brentano intended to produce a final volume of Aristotelian writings but was prevented from doing so by ill health. The texts cited above, however, afford good insight into the general development of his ideas. When considering the themes treated, one is once again struck by Brentano’s almost obsessive interest in the *temporal modes* of presentation. The connection among questions of experimental psychology, theory of knowledge and metaphysics that gave such distinctive originality to the theory of intentional reference in *Psychology I* was still very close – as evidenced by the collection of essays and dictations in *Psychology III*.

Because of the diversity of the manuscripts and dictations that make up *Psychology III*, the topics treated in its chapters do not always proceed in an orderly sequence: indeed, individual sections repeat and recast a set of recurring themes. I shall consequently briefly recapitulate the themes of the individual chapters before moving to thematic treatment of the topics addressed.

The first chapter of *Psychology III* deals with the ‘Inner Perception (Secondary Consciousness in the Narrowest Sense)’. This is an essay about what may be termed a theory of knowledge in so far as it is concerned with the concept of *evidence* and the difference between *actual knowledge* and *mnestic knowledge*. The essay, as Kraus points out, was originally intended to be an *Introduction* to a metaphysics or a ‘first philosophy’ in Aristotle’s sense. At the same time, because of the twofold nature of the theory of intentional presentation, the essay is also an introduction to the psychology of the senses, and therefore to inquiries similar to those published by Brentano in 1907.\(^5\) Brentano reiterates the identity of perceiver and perceived but also states that

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3. See Chapter 5.
4. See Chapters 7, 8.
‘Aside from our knowledge of ourselves as psychically active beings, we have no directly evident knowledge of facts’.6 This is in accordance with the change of perspective presented in Psychology II and a clear differentiation from the positions taken by Meinong and Husserl.

The second chapter continues the discussion of ‘Inner Perception in the Narrower and Broader Senses and the Possibility of Being Deceived’. The German editor inserted into this dictation, which dates to 1916, extracts from the manuscript Kategorienlehre (Doctrine of Categories) and in particular §§ 7-17. The essay should therefore be read in concomitance with the third part of The Third Draft of the Theory of Categories.7

The third chapter, which is taken from another essay written by Brentano in 1916, Metaphysik, sets out to conduct ‘A more Detailed Discussion of Perceiving, Comparing and Differentiating’ and therefore pertains to analysis of descriptive psychology. Indeed, as the subtitle tells us, it is ‘An essay on Descartes’ clare et distincte percipere’ (clear and distinct perceiving)’ in which Brentano examines the difference between perceiving and the other conceptual operations. The essay explores the difference between the two first classes of psychic phenomena – presentation and judgement – a difference that, as we have seen, was one of the crucial components of the theory subjected to revision in those years.

The fourth chapter consists of various dictations rearranged by Kraus. Specifically, it comprises essays on metaphysics (Religionsphilosophie and Zur Metaphysik) (Philosophy of Religion and On Metaphysics), an essay on self-consciousness, parts of a letter from Brentano to Kraus, a note by Anton Marty, and a ‘psychognostic draft’ written by Kraus together with Brentano during a holiday in Schönbühl. This chapter is a sort of ‘Summary and Supplementary Remarks on Perceiving and Noticing’ or, as the subtitle states, once again an essay on the theme of ‘Perception and Apperception’.

The fifth chapter deals in particular with ‘Perception in modo recto, modo obliquo, and the Perception of Time’. Originally entitled Zur Lehre der Empfindung (On the Doctrine of Sensation), the essay examines topics once again pertaining to the psychology of sensation.

The second part of Psychology III (Phenomenognosy of Sensory and Noetic Consciousness) consists of a further four chapters assembled by the editor. In fact, the first, a ‘Survey of so-called Sensory and Noetic Objects of Inner Perception’, was originally part of the same manuscript from which the first chapter of Part One was taken, and which in Brentano’s unpublished writings is marked as Metaphysik 12 and dated to 1915.

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7. Brentano 1981b, 188-207. See also Chapter 8.
The second chapter, which was originally entitled *Die Universalien* (The Universals) conducts ‘A more Detailed Discussion of the Process of Abstraction and the Universal Nature of Perception and Sensation’.

The third chapter returns to the problem of ‘The Knowledge of the Temporal Absolute and its Species’ with a 1915 essay whose original title was ‘Zur Lehre von der inneren Wahrnehmung’ (On the Doctrine of Inner Perception), which once again confirms the close connection between Brentano’s theory of intentional reference and his analysis of the temporal continuum.

The fourth chapter consists of a dictation of 1916. Labelled in Brentano’s unpublished writings as *Metaphysik* 80, this is a ‘Further Investigation of the Universality of all Intuitions – in particular Spatial and Temporal Intuitions and the Temporal Absolute Universals’.

Immediately evident from this brief summary of the manuscripts and dictations making up *Psychology* III is that the topics treated by the individual chapters and sections are the resumption, repetition and, sometimes, slight modification of recurrent themes. For this reason, rather than dealing with the chapters individually, as I have mentioned, I shall group their themes around the two principal theoretical nuclei of *Psychology* III (these being, as said, the distinction between external perception and inner perception, and the difference between intuitive thought and conceptual thought).

These two theoretical nuclei are analysed in terms of the following themes:

1. Spatial and temporal localization.
2. Modes of presentation.
3. The relationship between intuitions and abstract thought.
4. Theory of the whole and parts.

A certain number of dictations centre on the problem of localization, in particular on that of spatial localization. The general problem of the localization of sensory elements had been thoroughly discussed by Lotze in his already-mentioned *Medizinische Psychologie oder Physiologie der Seele* published in 1852. As we have seen, in *Psychology* I, Brentano regarded Lotze’s book as one of the foremost contributions to a physiologically-based scientific psychology.8

More generally, Lotze was one of the main sources for Brentano’s concept of presentation (*Vorstellung*), despite the fact that Brentano himself harshly criticised it on various grounds, and in particular, as we have seen, with regard to the question of localization.

8. See Chapter 8.
Besides obviously having to do with psychophysics (the relationship between the physiology of the sense organs and inner perception), the theory of localization was also bound up with the theory of perceptual continua, given that it concerned extendedness (Extensität) (spatial and temporal), or otherwise, and then the direction as well as the homogeneity/heterogeneity of the psychic phenomena aroused by external stimuli. Moreover, the theme of localization was also addressed in relation to problems which differed according to the sensory field concerned: indeed, while the ‘spatiality’ of phenomena relative to sight and touch seems intuitively obvious, not so does the ‘spatiality’ of sounds and smells. Finally, the theme of localization more generally concerned the epistemological problem of reductionism and the ontological one of the levels of reality. It therefore related to the animated debate going on at the time among the proponents of dualism, monism and pluralism.

As said, Lotze’s point of departure was physiological and not simply physical. He consequently did not consider colours and sounds to be the immediate result of waves and frequencies; rather he concentrated his attention on the physiological processes of the sense organs.

According to Lotze – with regard to the sense of sight – during the perceptual process the geometric shapes of external objects undergo a complete destructuring in which they are replaced by a sum of intensive stimulations from which every element of spatial localization and every index of positionality has been removed. Drawing on Herbart’s theory, Lotze claimed that the spatiality of perceptual objects is not apprehended but is instead reproduced through the transformation of extensive magnitudes into intensive ones.

This issue, which was a matter of debate for psychology in all its sectors during the nineteenth century, involved not only the localization of individual phenomena but also that of the sensory fields, the problem of the perception of depth, and that of the perception of directional dimensions (high/low, right/left, up/down, etc.).

Brentano’s (and also Stumpf’s) criticism of Lotze’s theory of localization concerned several aspects, and specifically:

Firstly, the criticism was based on arguments drawn from Brentano’s theory of the whole and parts of consciousness, which he had developed as we have seen since his Würzburg period, and according to which there is a bilateral dependence between colour and extension (in other words, there is no perceptual extension without colour, and vice versa).

Secondly, Brentano’s criticism was more generally based on an original conception of perceptual extendedness which he elaborated mainly in his writings on the continuum.9

Thirdly, it concerned the nature of the objects of psychic phenomena, an aspect examined in the two previous volumes of *Psychology*.

Fourthly, Brentano’s criticism of Lotze provided him with an opportunity to develop further the difference between intuitions and abstract thought, which was one of the central topics of *Psychology III* and also revived themes from *The Psychology of Aristotle*.

Fifthly, it concerned the question of the number of the senses, and especially the issue of the homogeneity or heterogeneity of sensations.

With regard to this last issue, Brentano returned to another question already addressed in *The Psychology of Aristotle*, and which once again strictly concerned the nature of perceptual continua. Specifically, Brentano asked whether the continuous transformation of one colour into another was possible, and/or the continuous transformation of a colour into a sound, and how transformation of the continuum itself came about within its extremes. The question is as follows.

Sensible objects appear at rest or in motion, as single or multiple, and they belong to perceptive continua of various kinds, for example spatial, temporal, chromatic, sonorous, and so on. Because an internal variation may come about within a particular perceptive content – for example, a shift from red to blue – but an internal variation cannot come about from red to sonorous, i.e. between different perceptive fields, the qualification, form and extension of objects, according to Brentano, are generic properties yet they are specific to qualities. Substantially, therefore, sensible objects are extended, endowed with form and qualified, and sensible intuitions can be reduced to qualitative and local differences among phenomena, which is a conception already expressed by Brentano in *Descriptive Psychology* and reiterated in *Psychology II*.

As to the differences in intensity of sensible objects (for example a darker red, a weaker sound, but also, sometimes, a sound clearer than another), a matter which Brentano had analysed since his investigations into the psychology of sense, these belonged among the qualitative properties.

On this point, which once again manifests his constant return to the thought of Aristotle, Brentano writes:

We cannot speak of a special sense of space; every external intuition contains spatial elements given with concrete qualitative determinations, and I can isolate the former by disregarding these determinations only by means of an act of noetic thought. If someone speaks of a sense of balance, however, then he isolates a special group of intuitions not on the basis of a characteristic that belongs to them as such, but because they provide a special point of reference for judging certain relations […]

After ascertaining that all the objects that a sensory intuition presents to us manifest themselves as both extended and restricted in form, at rest and in motion, single and multiple, and may have part in these properties so that, though sensorially qualified, they are nevertheless qualified differently for each sense, Aristotle set about dividing the genus particularity of the proper qualities, thus separating the sense of the coloured from the sense of the sonorous, etc. The idea was correct, but it raises the doubt as to whether certain sensory qualities are homogeneous or heterogeneous [...] We see, therefore, that if we use homogeneity or heterogeneity of qualities as a principle of classification and as a criterion to determine whether objects of sensory intuition belong to the same or to a different class, we need a further criterion in order to determine homogeneity. It was pointed out that a continuum might possibly serve this purpose; it is possible to proceed continuously from note to note and from colour to colour, but not from note to colour. But whether the former is actually true has not been proved with absolute certainty.

Aristotle pointed out that there are two extremes in every one of the qualitative categories, e.g. black and white in colours, an extreme high and an extreme low tone in sound. Indeed, it appears that there is not only an analogy to light and dark colours in high and low tones, but that a similar analogy to light and dark is found in all sensory areas. If we compare the impressions of cold and warmth and if we ask which of the two would be called light and which dark, the unanimous answer would be that the cold appears relatively light and the warm appears dark. The same is true of sweet and bitter, the sweet being called light while the bitter appears relatively dark. It seems that in connection with colours, sounds and temperatures, we are dealing with lightness and darkness not in the same but only in analogous sense and thus we could say that we are dealing with different sensory areas when lightness and darkness appear not in the same but in an analogous sense.

Hence, the question whether the sensation of temperature and other tactile sensations are homogeneous or heterogeneous relates to the question whether lightness and darkness subsist in them in the equivalent or analogous sense. And investigation shows that they do so in the analogous sense.11

In these dictations, therefore, Brentano returns to the question of the inter-modal aspects of the qualities – that is, whether qualities are homogeneous even between different phenomenal fields, so that we say that a red is ‘hot’ and a blue is ‘cold’, or that there is a ‘black sound’ or a ‘white sound’ in the octave – that he had already raised in Descriptive Psychology and in Researches in Sense Psychology.12 Brentano thus relates the question of the homogeneity or heterogeneity of the sensations of the various sensory domains to the question of the analogous existence, in these fields, of two qualitative extremes of lightness and darkness corresponding to hot and cold, sweet and bitter, etc., according to the type of sensory intuition.

12. Brentano 1979, Part I, 1 and 2; Brentano 1971, Part II, Chapter 1, § 23, XX.
Here the problem of the localization or otherwise of the objects of sensory intuitions links with the problem of the intensity or extensity of the objects themselves, a question which, as we have seen, was central to Lotze’s theory of localization. Denying spatial localization, in fact, according to Brentano, would mean also denying that phenomenal objects have form and extension, and accepting in principle an associationist theory of knowledge à la Helmholtz based on past experience, whilst Brentano, as we know, was a keen proponent of a variant of nativism.

In support of his position he observed that:

If, however, after closing his eyes and stopping up his ears, a person makes a sound, a local relation is established between darkness in the eyes and the sound in the ears. This could not be done without the homogeneity of local determinations. Another illustration is the fact that something sweet seems not only lighter than something bitter, but also lighter than something warm; this is a distinct sign that we are dealing with lightness in the same sense of the word. Let us repeat: every sensory intuition partakes of local determinations and in a homogeneous sense.13

Brentano maintained that the objects of sensory intuitions are extensive also on the basis of mereological considerations. As we have seen, in *Descriptive Psychology*, he distinguished the objects of intentional presentation among:

1. Actually separable parts.
2. Unilaterally separable parts.
3. Distinctional parts.

In this regard, of particular importance among the distinctional parts are the inner parts, which Brentano also termed the ‘pervading parts’ of the whole of presentation (like extension in the visual field or the quality of the act). It was his descriptive analysis of this class of the parts of psychic phenomena that enabled Brentano to confute certain of the theses put forward by Lotze.

In these dictations Brentano once again objects to Lotze’s theory of the intensive qualities by observing that intensity does not have parts; rather, the phenomena that manifest themselves in the sensory fields have a density which is due to the gradual dwindling away of a series of extensive parts. This happens, for example, when a surface changes colour from red to blue passing

through violet: in this case, parts of red and parts of blue coexist, although they are imperceptibly small qualitative solids and blanks.\textsuperscript{14}

The question of the intensity or otherwise of the objects of sensory intuitions touches again on the problem of the homogeneity or heterogeneity of sensations. Lightness and quality can in fact be considered two different parts of phenomena and as such, at least in principle, they are present even separately from each other in the sensory fields. From this point of view, therefore, as Brentano notes:

all differences among sensory intuitions are derived, ultimately, from qualitative and local differences.

As to the qualitative aspects, which are heterogeneous in every sensory area, and which are not synonymous with each other, but merely analogous. In one and the same sensory area they are homogeneous, thus it can happen that two phenomena, even though they have specific qualitative differences, appear equally light. Doesn’t that force us to distinguish between two other absolute components i.e. lightness and quality? Some might still be inclined to assume that in certain cases there exists only one darkness or lightness that corresponds to the respective sensory area, while in other cases, the above mentioned qualification is added. Thus a person might maintain that, as regards the sense of sight, black, white and the grey in-between are nothing but differences in lightness, while the so-called saturated colours reveal qualitative differences as well. Thus a red or a green could be of the same degree of lightness as a certain grey, but to the degree of lightness would be added another quality which the colour grey does not have. This would be a mistake in my opinion. Pure red has a certain lightness that belongs to this qualitative species, and this lightness would be the same as that of a particular shade of grey. But wouldn’t that mean that the red is part of the grey in that it shares its lightness, since the grey consists of nothing but in this lightness? One would have to say that the grey is mixed in with it, i.e. imperceivable small particles of grey which constitute its whole lightness, alternate with other particles, that are red and which do not partake of lightness or darkness. As to lightness, it would be the same as that of the grey, but less intensive, since the lightness would be less dense in it. If I mix grey with pure red, then according to this theory the infusion of lightness would merely intensify that already given. But this does not seem to correspond to all the actual phenomena. In such a case we cannot speak of a greater intensity of lightness, but only of the occurrence of a deviation in quality, whereby the lightness remains the same.\textsuperscript{15}

From these and other phenomenological observations, Brentano concluded that the lightness and darkness of the objects of sensory intuitions depend on the extent of their distance from black, and that as a consequence lightness and

\textsuperscript{14} See Chapter 7.

\textsuperscript{15} Brentano 1981a, 51.
qualification cannot be separated out as two different qualities. It is worth noting that a similar theory, propounded by Hering amongst others, was tested experimentally by Meinong and Benussi, and later by Musatti. These authors developed certain aspects of the geometry of colours through analysis of chromatic perceptions and explained the intensity, saturation and brightness of sensations on the basis of the relation between continuous chromatic variety (colours) and continuous achromatic variety (greys).¹⁶

In conclusion, these phenomenological observations led Brentano to affirm that the differences among sensory intuitions are all due to qualitative and local differences, and that the local quality is homogeneous for all the sensory fields and for all sensory intuitions.

Another problem posed by Lotze’s theory of localization concerned the apprehension of depth: this, according to Lotze cannot arise automatically, but only from the kinaesthetic experience of the movement around the object, which was a theory subsequently developed within Brentano’s school by Husserl in particular.¹⁷

In this regard, however, Brentano pointed out that a distinction must be drawn between being extended in three dimensions and being determined in relation to three dimensions. He writes:

In this connection it is of great importance to point out that to speak of something’s being ‘determined in relation to three dimensions’ is quite different from its being ‘extended in three dimensions’. Let us assume that the people are right who deny, with regard the sense of sight, that it is possible to see through something to that which is behind it; even if we grant this, we could not go so far as to say that a determination with regard to a third dimension is missing. The plane to which the visual intuition is limited would appear to have two sides, with the front one facing us. If we compare a stretch of time with a line, it appears, like the line, to be extended in one dimension. Yet there is a difference, for the line is one-dimensional but has a local determination with regard to three dimensions, while this is quite impossible in the case of time. We may doubt from the very beginning whether it is even possible to have a presentation of something determined three-dimensionally which is not presented as being extended in three dimensions, and it is true that it cannot fail to belong to the realm of the three dimensional. Yet that does not mean that there exists an extension of a determined magnitude in each of these dimensions. It is very important to make this difference clear, because a similar question will arise in connection with time, which exists only in terms of a point in time; the past existed, the future will exist, but only the present actually exists as the boundary between the non-existing past and the non-existing future. And if we know ourselves with evidence in inner

¹⁶. Meinong 1903; Benussi 1922-23; Musatti 1926.
perception, then, as already pointed out, this evidence cannot go beyond the present and extend to certain parts of the past or of the future.\footnote{18. Brentano 1981a, 53.}

Brentano concludes from these considerations that, apart from local determinacy, the most likely hypothesis as regards visual phenomena is that they have an extension in two dimensions and \textit{local determinacy in relation to the third dimension}. The importance of the issues addressed by Brentano is obvious also in the light of more recent developments in the theory of vision, amodal perception, and other areas of inquiry.

Brentano also returns to the problem of the apprehension of the temporal determinations in the above extract. A theme investigated by late nineteenth-century experimental psychology as regards Brentano’s theory of intentional reference, from the early 1900s onwards it became part, as we have seen, of his \textit{theory of the modes of presentation}.

The essential points of Brentano’s essay can thus be summarized as follows:

1. A rejection of inner proteraesthesis and the doctrine of reism.
2. The apprehension of the temporal determinations through the \textit{indirect} modes of presentation.
3. A \textit{reversal of role} between direct and indirect modes with respect to the primary and secondary object.
4. The relation between \textit{inner perception} and \textit{apperception}, i.e. between perceiving and evident and explicit noting.

2 \textbf{DIRECTIONS IN TEMPORAL EXTENDEDNESS}

From the very first pages of \textit{Psychology III}, Brentano returned to the problem of the \textit{apprehension} of temporal qualities. The problems of an \textit{inner proteraesthesis} arise from a simple consideration that Brentano put as follows:

When we perceive ourselves with evidence, we perceive ourselves only as existing in the present; yet for something to exist in the present it is necessary that something else exactly like it or only infinitesimally different from it has existed or will exist in a continuum of temporal modes in which the present mode forms a boundary line between past and future. Thus it seems that evidence would have to extend beyond the perception of our present selves to prior or subsequent ones.\footnote{19. Brentano 1981a, 11.}
Then, in the *Philosophical Investigation on Time, Space and the Continuum*, Brentano elaborates further on the point:

This assumption that inner perception, like outer perception, would have a proteraesthesis, too, of which perception of something as being present would only be the concluding boundary, is however subject to great difficulties. In such an inner proteraesthesis an earlier perceiving would have to appear to us as occurring earlier but as directed to something as if it were present. We would thus have to present also this recently existing former external object both indirectly as in the present and directly as having recently existed. Moreover, since also the inner perception which now appears to us as past was directed to an inner perception as recently existing, this inner perception too would now have to be given to us indirectly, and it would have to be given with the same temporal mode with which it earlier appeared to us directly. And if it were so, then its primary object would have to appear to us doubly indirectly with the temporal mode of the present. Things would have to go on in this way. And because there would be given to us in the proteraesthesis a series of perceptions following upon each other continuously (not only one, as in the perception that is directed to the present psychic act with which it comes to an end), this would lead to an endless, indeed to an endlessly endless complication; in fact, to a complication infinite to the infinite power, which can after all hardly be accepted as a possibility.\(^{20}\)

Once again, therefore, Brentano’s theories of presentation and the temporal continuum are inextricably bound up with each other.

The question of the temporal modes concerns Brentano’s *theory of intentional presentation* in various respects:

Firstly, because at issue is the complex nature of the actual boundary of the temporal continuum, which presents a double aspect: the punctiform extension (*Ausdehnung*) of the moment-now, and at the same time the extendenedness (*Extensität*) of perceiving an object in the duration which comprises parts of the past and of the future (this being a crucial point for the question of isomorphism).\(^{21}\)

Secondly, because it concerns the relationship among the classes of psychic phenomena: specifically between inner perception in presentation and judgement – that is, whether the judgement is implicit in presentation, and the subsequent comparison performed among different presentations (an aspect discussed in the first essays of *Psychology II*).

Thirdly, because, unlike Brentano’s previous writings, *Psychology III* describes the indirect modes (including the temporal ones) as being directed not at the secondary object (the consciousness of the act) but at the primary object (the sensory phenomenon) given in extended temporal modes.\(^{22}\)

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21. See Kastil 1951, 169, and Chapter 5.
Chapter 6: Ficciones

The theme of the modes of the direction of reference was always essential to Brentano’s theory of intentional reference. As we have seen, the first volume of *Psychology* in 1874 distinguished, in the first instance, between a direct mode addressed to the object of the intentional act and an indirect mode addressed to consciousness of the act of presentation. The dynamics of the modes of presentation relate to the various ways in which the psyche is directed in apprehension of various types of ‘objects’, be these a melody, a group of dots, a phrasing, a distance, a difference, and so on.

However, Brentano was prompted by his subsequent analysis of the dynamics of the modes of presentation to make the following specification:

Sensing is psychic reference to an object. Such relations may differ either because of a difference in objects, or because of a difference in the nature of the relation to the same object. So a judgment is different with respect to its content no only in those cases where it has a different object, but also in those cases where the relation to the same object differs, e.g. one judgment denies while another affirms it.

Thus we can say that proteraesthesia indeed has the same object as aesthesis, but that it relates to it in a different way, and the manner of relating varies continually from the aesthesis to the most remote element of the proteraesthesia.

The question remains in which of the three classifications to look for these temporal differences – under presentation, judgment or emotions.

Grammatically speaking temporal modes are not signified by nouns, which we often consider to be the linguistic signs for things which are presented, but by verbs, which serve, in particular, to complete the nouns with a predicate, i.e. they serve to express judgments. This suggests that the differences are to be understood as differences between various ways of judging. In his *System of Logic*, Mill, in fact, talks about temporal modes of the copula, depending on whether something is predicated as having been, being, or going to be. There is no doubt that someone who says ‘A is’, ‘A has been’, etc., makes judgments with completely different contents: he affirms A in some way in all three cases, but in essentially different ways. Yet isn’t it obvious that in the same way as we affirm or negate A as present, past or future, we can also wish it as present, past or future? Since this is not an act of judging, it seems to follow that the difference in these cases go deeper – that it must be based on a difference in the act of presenting which underlies (*substituiert*) both the judgment and the emotional activity. And, indeed, it is possible to have a presentation of something as we wish it in the future or as we could judge in the future.

Therefore we will have to regard the differences in sensation which are demonstrated by the first examples of temporal differences, primarily as differences in presentation.23

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The thirteenth Appendix is a dictation of 1917 bearing the title: ‘Thinking is Universal, Entities are Individual’. The development of Brentano’s conceptions and his theory of the modes which, as we have seen, in those years gave increasing emphasis to the role of the secondary consciousness brought into focus the fact that our intuitions can only be general. Brentano writes:

Those who say that substantial determinations in inner perception are never entirely absent may be right. Nevertheless those determinations cannot be considered as things which individuate intuition. They are restricted to generalities to such an extent that it is a matter of dispute whether whatever it is within us that thinks is corporeal or spiritual. It is easier to believe that outer perception reveals something individuated to us, e.g. a red point individuated by specification of colour and place. But an advanced psychology teaches us that the sensory intuitions of vision (Gesichtsanschauung) present us with the coloured thing with respect to its localizations, not in modo recto but in modo obliquo. What we think of, in the context of location, in modo recto, is only an unqualified place, from which the coloured thing is intuitively perceived as in a certain direction and at a certain distance. The same relationships of direction and distance, however, could be repeated with any spatial point, and along with the general character of the spatial point which is perceived in modo recto, the general character of outer intuition as a whole is demonstrated. 24

In this case, as well, metaphysics and psychology proceed pari passu, so that neither inner perception nor the external perception mediated by it ever manifest anything individual to us. But what is it, then, that distinguishes intuitive presentations from abstract presentations (one of the central themes of Psychology III and previously also of The Psychology of Aristotle)?

This matter is investigated in the fourteenth Appendix on ‘Intuition and Abstract Presentation’ or the difference between ‘Presentation with Intuitive and with Attributive Unity’. More generally, this essay also deals with the various structurally possible types of presentation.

There are internal and external perceptual presentations. As pointed out when discussing the previous Appendix, also inner perceptual presentations are general. On the basis of the original perceptual presentations there may form a second type of presentation which is even more universal and generalized: like, for example, the concept of ‘red’ or the even more general one of ‘coloured’. These are abstract presentations which manifest a simplified content with respect to the original perceptions. However, abstract presentations resemble intuitive presentations in that they possess unitariness.

Counterposed to them, however, is another type of presentation which springs from a particular process of connection, composition and identifica-

tion which yields concepts of compound things like ‘hot red’. What happens in this process? Brentano tells us that:

The identification of which we are speaking is connected with the fact that because of their lack of individual specificity, two presentations with intuitive unity can become presentations of one and the same thing despite their difference in content. That very thing which is red is also coloured, and in coming to be or ceasing to be this red thing, it also comes to be or ceases to be this coloured thing. One and the same thing thus becomes the object of two presentations, and someone who makes one and the same thing the object of two intuitive presentations is doing precisely what we call identification. He arrives at what we call an idea not with intuitive, but rather with mere attributive unity. 25

Even in the case of attributive unitary presentations, however, we are still in the domain of the first class of psychic phenomena: presentations like ‘red’, ‘coloured’, ‘hot’, but also presentations like a ‘hot red’ or a ‘hot, nice-sounding red’, etc., are all presentations, not judgements (as would be, for example, ‘a red is hot’, etc.). What, then, is the distinctive characteristic of attributive unitary presentations? Firstly, according to Brentano, it is that they individuate objects not wholly presented in intuitive unity, and only according to the subject. In fact, the same substrate is identified in a ‘hot red’, but not to the extent that there is complete coincidence between the two qualities.

Secondly, attributive unitary presentations are such because they result from the identification of something presented directly with something presented indirectly. Presented directly, for example, may be ‘someone who hates and loves’ and ‘who hates and loves with reason’, and indirectly ‘what that person loves and hates’ and ‘what s/he loves and hates with reason’.

Therefore, around forty years after Brentano first drew up his classification of the various types and modes of presentations in 1874, he gave it greater perspicuity and greater subtlety of distinction.

To sum up only as regards the domain of the first class of psychic phenomena, Brentano distinguishes among:

1. Intuitive unitary presentations.
   1.1. Abstractions, i.e. intuitions generalized and simplified as to their content.

2. Attributive unitary presentations.
   2.1. Identifications of intuitive unitary classes in direct and indirect mode.

Overall, the final development of Brentano’s conception (it was set out, in fact, in the last dictation before his death) states that both inner and external perception always involve presentations of general type. These perceptions are not all general in the same way, however: for example, ‘red’ and ‘coloured’ are general in different ways, as are a certain ‘red’ and another ‘red’ which differ in the same direction or opposite ones along the chromatic continuum.

One of Brentano’s main polemical referents for the discussion conducted in the Fifteenth Appendix was Meinong’s theory of objects – and more in general the problem of attributing existence to the objects of intentional presentation.

In the final version of Brentano’s theory – from the first Appendices to Psychology II – the only real being is something actually existent which presents to itself an objectuality of some kind, in the sense of a psychic act of presentation in the actual duration. Really existent, therefore, confirming the theses of Psychology I, are actual psychic processes like ‘a seeing’, ‘a hearing’, ‘a thinking’, ‘a loving’, etc. The objects of the psychic act – ‘the seen’, ‘the heard’, ‘the thought’, ‘the loved’ – are synsemantic (syncategorematic in the Aristotelian sense) in that their existence depends on the relative act. Brentano came to this final conclusion along the complex routes followed by his analyses of the indirect modes of temporal presentation, of the generality of the objects of perception, and of the theory of continua.

The Fifteenth Appendix is significantly entitled ‘On Objects of Thought’, and it was placed in this position by the editors even though it is chronologically earlier. It is in fact an essay of 1915 which belongs thematically to Brentano’s dictations on nominalism and the critique of language that he developed from the early 1900s onwards – as testified by his voluminous correspondence with Anton Marty and his relations with Vailati.26

On closer inspection, though, one finds that the thesis of the synsemanticity of the intentional object was already implicit in Psychology I, and that it had been adumbrated in Brentano’s Würzburg lectures on the correlate of the presentation.27 Initially, Brentano considered the intentional object to be an object in that it is seen, heard, loved, etc.; however, several decades later he specified as follows in the Fifteenth Appendix to Psychology II:

We can say not only that someone who is thinking is thinking of something, but also that he is thinking of something as something, as for example one thinks of a man as a man or in less definite way as a living creature. But that second something we have

26. Brentano’s Nachlaß contains ca. 1400 letters sent to Marty. Some of this material has been published in Brentano 1977b.
27. See Chapter 5.
added, and always must add, must obviously be univocal, too, if the term for thinking is univocal. But nothing is more apparent than this second something is not to be taken in the sense of ‘a thought object’. Someone who is thinking of a stone is not thinking of it as a thought-of stone, but as a stone. Otherwise, when he affirms it he would also be affirming it only as a thought-object, and a person who is denying the stone will do that, once he is conscious of denying it, just as much as the person who is affirming it will.

Now if the ‘something’ is a univocal concept, it can only be a generic concept under which everything which is supposed to be an object of thought must fall. And consequently it must be maintained that anyone who is thinking must have a thing (Reales) as his object and have this as his object in one and the same sense of the word. This is in opposition to Aristotle, who denied that there was any generic concept common to the ten categories he distinguished and to many moderns who say that we do not always have a thing, but often have a non-thing (Nicht-Reales), as our object.28

It is important to recall once more in this regard that Brentano’s linguistic nominalism and his critique of language do not entail a nominalist metaphysics: on the contrary, they furnish support for a realism – albeit not a naïve realism – which holds that objects of intentional presentations are things which are real, concrete, and immediately given with evidence. From this point of view, another of the conceptual nodes of Psychology I – the unitari- ness of act and object of intentional presentation as a single psychic phenomenon – is thus given further clarification.29

According to Brentano, the fact that language has a wealth of terms like ‘nothing’, ‘truth’, ‘impossibility’ (the impossibility of a square circle, for example, was one of the issues most frequently discussed by Meinongian ontology) does not entail that real entities correspond to those terms. Brentano wrote on the matter as follows:

I answer that this is explained by the fact that not every word in our language taken by itself means something. Many of them signify something only in combination with others. Prepositions and conjunctions are proofs of this. And besides this, one must take account of the fact that language makes use of many fictions for the sake of brevity; in mathematics, for example, we speak of negative quantities less than zero, of fractions of one, of irrational and imaginary numbers, and the like, which are treated exactly like numbers in the strict and proper sense. And so language has abstract as well as concrete terms and uses them in many ways as if they referred to things which are parts of the relevant concrete entity. It also says of the abstraction that it is and is in the concrete thing. If one does not wish to be seduced into a great tangle of specula-
tions here, one must become clear about the fact that this is all said in a very loose sense. What is here said to be does not exist in the strict and proper sense. Instead, everything must first be translated into concrete language.30

As said, Brentano was led to this conclusion – the nominalism of universals from a linguistic point of view – also by his analysis of the generality of the object of intentional presentation (as discussed with reference to the thirteenth Appendix) and of the indirect temporal modes (analysed especially in Psychology III).

As to this last aspect, the final sections of the fifteenth Appendix on the objects of thought resume the theme of the complexity of the modes of presentation.

The point at issue was that Brentano now realized that corresponding to one single direct mode is a wide variety of indirect modes, and that within the main classes of the indirect modes (causal, comparative, etc.), and for each of these classes, the indirect mode varies in multiple ways. On this he writes as follows:

Just as judgment is divided into affirmation and denial and emotional attitude into love or hate, so presentations refer in various ways. In particular, it is unmistakable that there is a great difference between something being an object of presentations in recto or in obliquo. So when I think of someone denying God, I am thinking of the person himself in recto, but of God in obliquo and this always occurs when one thinks of a so-called relative (Relativ). If I think of the larger in recto, then I think of the smaller in obliquo. If I think of the cause in recto, then I think of the effect in obliquo. Also, when I think of a boundary in recto, I must think in obliquo of something bounded by it, and if I am thinking of something which differs from something else in colour or size, place or time, here too, in addition to the thing I am thinking of in recto, I am thinking in obliquo of something else from which it is differentiated.

We see that there is one modus rectus as opposed to a great number of modi obliqui. People have already long since divided them into three classes of relations, in psychic, causal, and comparative references to an object. We should not overlook the fact, however, that in each of them the modus obliquus varies; for example, even when something is more or less different from another, the modus obliquus in which we think of the latter is already no longer quite the same.31

Brentano’s theory of the modes of presentation, and in particular of the modes of indirect reference, is thus another component in the reism that he embraced at the end of his life. In intentional reference, in fact, the foundation

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always exists, but not necessarily the term of this particular relation, which is always given in indirect ways.

Brentano mentions at least two cases of comparative relations in which this situation is evident. The first is the case expressed, for example, by the proposition ‘Tom is taller than Dick thinks Harry is tall’; the second is the case of ‘Tom is taller than Dick was and richer than his son will be’. The former example comprises a series of presentations with attributive unity (analysed in the Thirteenth Appendix), while the latter concerns the modes of temporal apprehension (already analysed in the third chapter of Part Two of Psychology III), which constitute a class of relatives of fundamental importance for Brentano’s theory of intentional reference. He observes as follows:

It will be necessary for us to make the distinctive character of this class of relations somewhat clearer. What we are concerned with are temporal relations, and the question arises first of all how we come to understand them. It seems certain that we can never think of anything without thinking of something as present, that is to say, however, as on a boundary line which exists as the connecting point of an otherwise non-existent continuum or as providing its beginning or its end. So along with the idea of the present, we also get those of the past and future in modo obliquo as that the boundary of which is formed by the present.32

Past and future therefore relate to an oblique mode of presenting because we recognize in the strict sense only that which is present. In the temporal continuum of the modes of presentation there are no differences among objects; there are only differences among the modes of presentation. In regard to the temporal determinations, Brentano writes as follows apropos the difference between the fields of vision and sound:

I stress the fact that those who want to trace the origin of our idea of time and our idea of ‘before’ and ‘after’ back to differences in sense-objects, as it is done with the origin of our ideas of space and of next to, above, and behind, are on the wrong track. To be sure, when we have a presentation of a succession of notes in a melody, we are having a presentation of a number of things following one after another (ein Nacheinander), just as when we see flecks of colour in our visual field, we are aware of a number of things alongside of one another (ein Nebeneinander). But in the latter case all of the coloured flecks appear to exist uniformly as do their spatial differences, but in the former case only one of the notes appears to exist and it, too, will subsequently appear to us as quite the same thing yet no longer existent, but rather as a note from which the one that does exist appears to be separated. And thus it appears itself to be to a certain extent removed from existing. And it is precisely this which makes the whole difference with regard to before and after. And so a person could in no way think of it in its

32. Brentano 1995a, 326.
distinctive temporal characteristic without thinking of something as present (gegenwärtig). This indicates that it is an object of presentation only in obliquo and not in recto.

The objection might be raised against this that there are cases in which a note is followed by a rest. Then one hears nothing as present, yet the note still appears to be past and, if the rest continues, ever longer past. Here, then, the note is supposed to be given in experience as past and of itself and consequently in modo recto. But this overlooks the fact that when the note appears to be past, one always simultaneously sees himself as perceiving or, so to speak, hearing the note as past, and as appearing in inner perception with like intensity.

Among other things this leads to a new and quite convincing refutation of those who deny that our outer perception is always accompanied by inner perception. If this were so it would then be impossible to experience outer phenomena as past.33

A metaphysical consequence of Brentano’s final analyses concerns, obviously, the fact that if this is how matters stand, then the absolute material determinations of objects are entirely transcendent to our perception. From this point of view, real being, which is confined to the ambit of the actual duration, is extremely limited in its field of presentness. A second consequence is that the temporal differences constituting parts of a continuum which consists of past, present and future make up a primary continuum; vice versa, endurance and the varying course of things in time form a secondary continuum. This theme would be the subject of a series of dictations on continua which Brentano developed in parallel with his revision of the theory of categories.34

Brentano returned to the question of the dependent and relative existence of the object of intentional presentation in the last months of his life. The Sixteenth Appendix, of January 1917, is once again ‘On the Term ‘Being’ in its Loose Sense, Abstract Terms, and Entia Rationis’.

The question of the existence of the object, writes Brentano,

is connected to the question of whether strictly speaking there exist concepts, presentations, phenomena, contents of judgements, judgements, images of fantasy, fantasies, affections, deductions, decisions, doubts, suppositions, projects, intentions, hopes, fears, etc. […] Further connected to this is the question whether a universal, a category, a genus, a species, and a specific difference strictly speaking exist, always, of course, in cases where it is truthfully said that they do.35

33. Brentano 1995a, 328-29.
34. See Chapters 7, 8.
35. Brentano 1995a, 331.
In other words, the question of the existence of the object of presentation – a problem which constantly accompanied the evolution of Brentano’s theory of intentional reference – concerns the existence, real or otherwise, of all conceptual products which are not phenomena of intuitive unity. This essay is important because Brentano’s linguistic analysis of these concepts acts as a prelude to his next essay, on the ens rationis (mental entity), which is one of his most celebrated works.

Resuming themes from his work of 1862, *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle* and focusing on the difference between ontological and linguistic categories, Brentano now draws a first distinction between concepts and words. Although, he argues, it is true that every word is bound to a meaning, the mode of the connection is not always the same: some words acquire their meaning only in relation to other words, not in relation to concepts. This, according to Brentano, is the case of prepositions, conjunctions, adverbs, genitives, etc. Doubts also arise concerning adjectives and nouns – especially nouns which denote an ens rationis, or abstract ones like ‘magnitude’, ‘thought’, ‘beauty’.

He puts it thus:

With other terms the question again rises whether they have meaning in and of themselves or only synsemantically. This applies in particular to the abstract terms which we usually derive from concrete ones, for example, the term ‘size’ (‘Größe’) from a ‘thing with a size’, (‘Grosses’) ‘thinking’ (‘Denken’) from ‘a thinking thing’ (‘Denkendes’). One will scarcely claim that ‘size’ or ‘thinking’ exist by themselves and it seems equally false that they could be thought of by themselves. I shall always have to have a presentation of something with size or of someone thinking. Shall I then also be in a position to distinguish its size as one part of it, or will it all come down to my distinguishing the thing as having a certain size, for example as having the size of a cubic foot, from the thing as having a certain shape, for example as being spherical? The spherical thing is not the spherical shape, however, and the thing which is a cubic foot large is not the size of a cube. It is the sphere, not the spherical shape, which has being in the strict sense, and so too it is the thing which has size, not the size. And just as they alone have being in the strict sense, they alone seem to be present to the psyche in the strict and proper sense.36

The final sections of the Sixteenth Appendix link directly back to the preceding one because they address the problem of intentional reference to something relative of which the foundation of the relation exists but not the term. Brentano’s theory of the modes of presentation, in particular the indirect modes, and his critique of language once again merge into a reist conceptual-

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ization. To the structure of concrete reference – i.e. to the existence in the real sense of the acts of actual intentional presentation – he now relates the objects and facts expressed by secondary propositions, infinitives and judgements. All these cases involve someone who thinks, judges, denies and who expresses different objects given indirectly in the form of the ens tamquam verum (being as true) and expressed in the form of attributive unity.

3 ON THE SEVERAL SENSES OF BEING REVISITED

In the last years of his life, therefore, Brentano returned to the problem which had been the theme of his dissertation so many years earlier. The last Appendix of Psychology II, the seventeenth, on the ‘Ens rationis’, which consists of an essay from January 1917, deals thoroughly with the problem.

In actual fact, Brentano had begun to discuss the question several years previously with Marty, to whom in 1906 he wrote in a celebrated letter as follows:

You say that by ‘ens rationis’ you understand whatever is not strictly a thing. Examples would be: an empty space, the impossibility of a square circle; a colour (in contrast to something coloured). And from what you say later, it would seem that you also include such determinations as ‘brighter than what is red’, ‘smaller than the size of a cubic foot’, and so on. All these, in your opinion, could be said to exist, in the strict sense of the term, and even when no one is thinking. But in this case, what justification would there be for the expression ‘ens rationis’? The expression is justified only in reference to ‘objects of thought’, for ‘ratio’ has the same comprehension as Descartes ‘cogitatio’. It is not enough to note that if there were no reason, then such entities would not be grasped in their individuality. This would be to commit the mistake of those ‘who prove too much’. The point is that the understanding does not produce such entities.

Possibly the expression ‘colour’ can be equated with ‘the coloured qua coloured’, or ‘the coloured as such’, but this ‘as such’, as Aristotle well knew, is also equivocal […]. But if one must speak about such entities, then one should be consistent and affirm that in addition to whatever is a thing, there is a second set of entities, subsisting quite independently of reason, and that these might be called entia non realia, but not entia rationis. However, I am not prepared to do this, as you are aware. I would say that relations and concepts such as shape, extension, positions (I am speaking of the concreta in question) are included among things. The mode of conception of these things is a special one, given only in case of complicated apperception where parts are distinguished within a whole. As for the so-called abstract names, such as ‘colour’, I

would say that psychologically they are not true names but are quite different parts of speech. Similarly for ‘the being of A’, the ‘non being of A’, ‘the impossibility of A’. These ostensible names are actually equivalent to such expressions as ‘that A is’, ‘that A is not’, and ‘that A is impossible’. Obviously the latter are rudimentary locutions which need to be completed as in ‘I believe that A is’, ‘I wish that A were not’, ‘I deny that A is impossible’, and so on. I am convinced that the doctrine of ‘reflection upon the content of a judgment’ is a complete delusion: there is no ground for saying that the so-called content of judgment might be presented merely as an idea and without involving any kind of judgment. To be sure, one can conceive of a person judging without judging in the same way oneself. But the rest is an absurd fiction. What goes on in the psyche when one says ‘I am presenting [ich stelle mir vor] that A is, that it is not, that it is impossible’ must be ascertained by means of an exact psychological analysis. Once this is accomplished, then we shall also have some inkling as to what happens when one ‘presents that A is good’, ‘presents that A is bad’, and so on. What leads to the entia rationis is best recognized in those cases where this term is more appropriate – i.e. in ‘A as object of thought’. If I say ‘I am thinking of A, who is clever’, I am connecting the thought of myself as someone thinking in a specific manner with the thought ‘A is clever”; that is to say, I am related to ‘clever’ in a wholly different way than I am when, thus thinking, I call myself clever.

The Seventeenth Appendix, a dictation of January 1912 which carries the subtitle ‘The Things of Thought’, resumes the themes begun with Brentano’s dissertation and which were discussed until the early 1900s in terms of what one might term a reverse Aristotelianism consequent upon Brentano’s development of his theory of intentional reference.38 This last Appendix of Psychology III consequently gives us an idea of what Brentano’s final Aristotelian writings would have contained if he had had time to complete them.

Brentano begins as follows:

There is one concept of the highest generality under which all the objects of our thinking fall. This is as true as it is to say that the concept of thinking is univocal. It is the concept of being (das Seienden) in the sense in which a thing has being.39

Then, after stressing that ‘since antiquity it has been recognized that the noun ‘being’ has multiple senses’, Brentano summarizes Aristotle’s position on the senses of being in a compendium of differences between ens per se and ens per accidens, and the ens tamquam verum, and the difference between potentiality and actuality and between matter and form, which he had analysed in his first works on Aristotle.40

38. See Chapter 8.
40. See Chapter 2.
In the first case, when dealing with \textit{ens per accidens} (in statements like ‘this man is learned’ or ‘this man is armed’) there is never an identity; rather there is a \textit{reference in multiple and diverse manner}. In fact, Brentano explains:

If I say this man is a man or is a living creature, then there is real identity, but if I say this man is armed or is learned, there is no identity in this case. The man is included as a part of that which is armed or that which is learned, but the part is not actually the whole and the whole is not actually the part. I speak only in a loose and improper sense, then, when I say that this man is this learned person and this armed person is this man. I would have to say: ‘This learned person contains this man within itself as subject’. It is like saying that this person who is hearing is this person who is seeing. He isn’t really. As a seeing person he can cease to be, while he still continues to be as a hearing person. In the strict sense of the word, I can only say here that this hearing person and this seeing person include one and the same thing as subject.

When you compare the example of the learned man and the armed man, it is easy to say how it is that being \textit{per accidens} never has to do with identity, but that what is asserted of something else is related to it in many different ways. The man who hears is contained in the hearing person as a subject; the arms are not the property of the armed man. Not just he, but the arms as well could remain as such if the armed man were no more. The armed man is the result of the fact that the man and the arms are spatially related in a certain way. We are dealing here with what has been called a \textit{denominatio extrinseca}.\footnote{Brentano 1995a, 340.}

As to the second case of the extended meaning of being, that of the \textit{ens tamquam verum}, here we have a form of being which \textit{is} only to the extent that it is or is not something real. Acceptations of this type of being are expressed by secondary propositions transformed into the subjects of other propositions: for example by statements like ‘this tree is an oak’, in the sense that a certain tree is an oak in the strict sense. Also the infinitives and the abstract nouns used in the place of these secondary propositions belong to this class of extended meanings.

The third case of the extended of being concerns \textit{being-in-potency} as opposed to \textit{being-in-act}. Brentano endorses Aristotle’s assumption that the \textit{ens per se} and the \textit{ens per accidens} exist in different ways, and he also endorses Aristotle’s distinction between being in the sense of the \textit{real} and being in the sense of \textit{ens tamquam verum}, as well as his contention that being-in-potency and its actual reality do not coincide. From this point of view Brentano is still an Aristotelian. The difference, however, between this new position and the one expounded in his early writings on Aristotle consists in the following, a result of the analyses conducted in \textit{Psychology II}:

\footnote{Brentano 1995a, 340.}
Chapter 6: Ficciones

But it does not follow from all this that anything other than a thing is ever the object of our thought. The equivocations involved were not equivocations in which each of the meanings designated an object in and of itself. It is rather that being – in the sense of ‘thing in a strict sense’ – designates an object in and of itself; the other meanings, however, are related to those which attach to prepositions, conjunctions, articles, etc., and so there seems to be no objection to repeating what we said earlier, namely, that everything which we are capable of thinking of falls under one and the same concept of the utmost generality, as could also have been inferred from the unity of the concept of thinking. The concept of thinking is the concept of someone thinking something and if the concept of a something did not have unity, the concept of the thinking thing could not have unity either.42

The Appendix continues with analysis of abstract nouns, and in particular of negative magnitudes, fractions, and of the infinite in mathematics, both as infinite-in-act and as infinitely small. Brentano accepts the concept of continuum but not that of infinite multiplicity. His continuum, in fact, on the basis of the developments of his theory of intentional reference, is a finite multiplicity, as great as one wishes, of actual reals which does not, however, coincide with the infinite-in-act.43

The final section of this Appendix returns to discussion of the ens rationis, and in particular of the classes of the privatives and the negatives of the medi- evals: these Brentano related to an ens reale; and thereupon he concluded. His final remarks once again relate to his critique of ordinary language, and to the dangers that arise from the substantialization of nouns: a matter which he had already discussed in On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle. A polemical note is struck here against certain developments in the theory of intentional reference, and in particular against Husserl’s phenomenology and Meinong’s theory of objects.44

Brentano declares:

If one wished to make a complete survey of the entia rationis, one would have to go into the great varieties of locutions which make words the subject and predicate of propositions which do not refer to real things in and of themselves. One would have to show how each of them is related to the linguistic expressions which express the same thought in such a way that names of real things become the subjects and predicates. Naturally this variety of locutions arises from complications in our thinking. They make possible abbreviated discourse which is highly advantageous. The whole of

42. Brentano 1995a, 346.
43. See Chapter 7.
44. On the various types of fictions – states of affairs, judicative contents, propositions-in-themselves, objectives, and so on – see Brentano 1977b, Part Three, a group of writings produced between 1905 and 1916 and sent variously to Marty, Kraus and Franz Hildebrand.
ordinary language is so much under their influence that we could not possibly give
them up without giving up the use of that language completely and resolving to invent
an entirely new and extremely unwieldy language. Even in discussions such as the
present one we cannot avoid continually making use of such locutions, locutions
which could tempt the unwary into believing that there are non-things to be affirmed
in addition to things. Even in the modern period a number of such non-things have
been spawned by people who are constantly accusing others of psychologism. They
imagined they were enriching science by their many weighty discoveries. Gegen-
standstheorie or, as they called it, Phenomenology, was proclaimed to be a special
science entirely independent of psychology. They revived the error of Plato and the
ultra-realists like William of Champeau with certain modifications, by ascribing a
being to universals as universals […] The alleged discoveries of things which have
not originated from experience do nothing but disclose the flaws in their own psychol-
ogy, which is incapable of analyzing the pertinent concepts and showing their true
origin.45

Even at the end, therefore, Brentano adhered to his initial position: the
importance of a psychology from an empirical standpoint as the basis for
development of a theory of knowledge and of a scientific metaphysics.

Ultimately for Brentano, therefore, that which exists in the strict sense is
only the psychic act of the concrete presentation in the actual present: that is
to say, there exist only things in the sense of temporal-spatial-qualitative
actual processes, and this contention confirms the close connection between
his psychological and metaphysical analyses. Thus explained is the founda-
tional role of psychology in metaphysics and ontology, and therefore the often
successful attempts by Brentano and his pupils to create psychology laborato-
ries in which theorizing was flanked by experimental research.46

4 THINKING AND SPEAKING

From the early 1900s onwards, Brentano did not merely manifest a new
reistic and nominalistic emphasis in his theory, doing so in accordance with a
progressive and inexorable detachment from the non-real; he also increased
his output of critical reflections on ordinary language. One of the most inter-
esting aspects of this critique – which Brentano developed in concomitance
with his analysis of the nature of the judgement, and with this the idea of

45. Brentano 1995a, 367-68. There is evidently a mistake in lines 11-12 of the quotation, where Phenom-
enology and Theory of Objects are identified with each other.
46. The two branches of Gestaltpsychology – those of Berlin and Graz – can be traced back to Brentano’s
theories through the teachings of his main pupils. See Smith 1988; Albertazzi, Libardi, Poli 1996a; Al-
bertazzi, Jacquette, Poli 2001a.
revising traditional logic – concerns the relationship between the functions of the act of intentional reference and ordinary language: or in other words, between theory of knowledge (i.e. for Brentano the doctrine of correct judgement) and linguistic expression.

The debate, which involved all Brentano’s pupils and gave origin to Marty’s philosophy of language (so much so that one may legitimately talk of a ‘Brentano-Marty theory of language’), to Twardowski’s reflections on the content and object of presentations, to Meinong’s and Martinak’s analyses of language, and also to some of Husserl’s Logical Investigations, some years later received systematic treatment in Bühler’s Sprachtheorie (Theory of Language).

Brentano’s analyses of language are also interesting in that they have a bearing on some of the themes that characterized the linguistic turn of the twentieth century and engendered analytic philosophy. Yet it would be entirely mistaken to read Brentano in analytic terms – apart from anything else because of his constant suspicion of ordinary language due, as we have seen, to what he considered to be its inherent unreliability. Conversely, Brentano’s view on semantics, because of its close correlation with psychology and the idea of its essentially metaphorical nature, displays a certain similarity with the assumptions of modern cognitive semantics.

Nor, for that matter, did Brentano ever show any great enthusiasm for modern formal language. The formal turn shifted the central concern of logic from thought or reasoning (i.e. a theory of knowledge) to the content of their linguistic expression; and with the rise of formal logic the separation between logic and psychology consisted in the abandonment of any notion of intentionality in the analysis of judgments.

On the contrary, as we know, Brentano’s theory of inherence established a close dependence between psychic phenomena and language. And this, as we have seen, had significant consequences for the development of a new notion of copula: Brentano distinguished, in fact, between a primary ontological use of the copula, which appears in phenomena of inner perception and a secondary, linguistic use of it in the expressions of natural language.

Correspondingly, Brentano maintained that judgements as psychic phenomena always have an existential character relative to the object of the presentation, whereas judgements as linguistic phenomena may also have predicative or synthetic character, affirming or denying the properties of the entire object of presentation.

47. Marty 1908.
48. Meinong 1899; Martinak 1901.
49. Bühler 1934.
50. See Albertazzi 2000.
To sum up the themes of the Appendixes to *Psychology* II and *Psychology* III, which are also treated in Brentano’s writings and letters of the early 1900s, the metaphysical presuppositions that directly influenced his critique of language can be seen as deriving from:

1. The theory of *quasi-relatives*.
2. The theory of *temporal* modes of presentation.
3. The difference between *object* and *content* in presentation and judgment.
4. The theory of *attributive synthesis*.
5. The theory of *inherence*.
6. The theory of *double judgment*.

For each of these points, in fact, one can find a counterpart in Brentano’s theory and in his critique of language.

## 5 OBJECT, CONTENT, OBJECT SIMPLICITER

The development of Brentano’s theory of intentional reference by his pupils gave rise to a series of misunderstandings which greatly irritated him. And as we have seen in the above-cited letter to Marty on the concept of ‘immanent object’, he frequently found himself forced to reiterate the fundamental tenets of his theory.

As Kraus emphasised in his Introduction to the 1924 edition of *Psychology* I, Brentano was especially irked by Husserl’s phenomenology and by Meinong’s theory of objects:

Enough has been said to indicate the extent to which Brentano’s ‘descriptive psychology’ (‘*Psychognosie*’) is echoed in Husserl’s ‘Phenomenology’ and to certain extent, too, in Meinong’s ‘Theory of Objects’. But it also clearly demonstrated certain differences. Unlike Husserl, Brentano recognizes no ‘ideal, timeless, general objects’ to which true being is to be ascribed; and unlike Meinong, he acknowledges no objects which are ‘subsistent’ yet ‘non-existential’. For him Husserl’s ‘*Wesenschau*’ is a fiction as soon as it claims to be more than the forming of more abstract, simplified and generalized concepts. It becomes a mere fiction as soon as it accepts real entities which can never be individuated or specified – *in specie specialissima* (the most specific species).

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It is of the utmost importance that we should be clear about the term ‘object’. When it is used to mean the same as *thing* or *real*, it functions as a term having a meaning of its own – it is autosemantic. In this case it refers simply to what we comprehend by the most general concept that we can obtain by abstraction from perceptual data; and Brentano treats it as equivalent to the expressions ‘entity’ and ‘thing’. But when ‘object’ is used in constructions such as ‘to have something as an object’ it has no meaning of its own (although the construction as a whole has a meaning which can always be conveyed by the expression ‘to have something before the mind’), it is synsemantic. We can illustrate the equivocity and the occasionally synsemantic function of ‘object’ by pointing out the equivalence of two sentences, ‘I have something, i.e. a thing, as object,’ and ‘I have something, i.e. an object, as object’. In the latter sentence, the first occurrence of ‘object’ exemplifies the autosemantic use of the term, the second the synsemantic. Taken as a whole, the sentence is equivalent in meaning to, ‘I am thinking of a thing,’ ‘A thing appears to me,’ ‘A thing is a phenomenon of mine,’ ‘A thing appears to me objectively, or as given, or phenomenally, or immanently.’ Some equivocity, therefore, is unavoidable unless one quite definite use of the word ‘object’ is adopted. The Theory of Objects has failed to create the necessary terminological and conceptual clarity here; and Phenomenology too, entirely overlooks the fact that in such constructions the meaning of ‘object’ is dependent upon other words. This failure to take account of the synsemantic nature of the word ‘object’ is characteristic, however, not only of those lines of thought which have evolved from Brentano, but of contemporary philosophy in general – I am thinking of Rickert’s ‘object of knowledge’ in particular.

Just as disturbing as the complete failure to note the synsemantic character of ‘object’ in cases where we speak of ‘intentional or psychic object’ is the failure to distinguish between this sense of ‘object’ and Brentano’s ‘object simpliciter’ or ‘thing’.52

The polemic, albeit couched in very different tones, also involved Brentano’s faithful follower Marty in the early years of the twentieth century. At issue was the existence of the contents of predicative judgements: a conception with which Kraus found himself in sympathy.53

Marty could not completely agree with the extreme theses put forward by Brentano in the last years of his life; nevertheless, they induced him to revise of many of the ideas that he was about to set out in the second volume of his *Untersuchungen zur Grundlegung der allgemeinen Grammatik und Sprachphilosophie* (Researches on the Foundation of Universal Grammar and Philosophy of Language): a book, unfortunately, which never saw the light of day.54 The distinction between autosemantic and synsemantic terms – which

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derived from Aristotle’s distinction between categorematic and syncategorematic terms – was in fact drawn by Marty.

Over the years, Marty and Brentano continued to discuss the classification of psychic phenomena, the spatial and temporal continua, the modes of presentations and questions of language, albeit with diverse outcomes. For example, in his last years, Brentano attributed reality only to the metaphysical and the physical parts of consciousness (in contrast to the theses of the 1880s), so that all the parts related to the properties of objects become entia rationis, abstractions or linguistic fictions (ficta cum fundamento in re). As we saw earlier, the same intentional object becomes a fictional, synsemantic entity on the basis of the individual substance of whoever has some kind of intentional presentation. For his part, however, at the ontological level, Marty affirmed the existence of states of affairs as the objective contents of utterances, and of the correlates of acts relative to existential judgments. Marty called states of affairs 'judgment-contents' (Urteilsinhalte) whose function is to ascribe truth: a judgment is true, according to Marty, if its corresponding content exists – that is to say, if the judgment and the content of the judgment correspond.55 In this respect, Marty could not accept Brentano’s extreme nominalism of language. Moreover, according to Marty, the content of judgment stands in relation to the object and not to thought because its objectivity entails an existence which is independent of thought, so that we have contents of judgements only in the case of true judgements.56 Vice versa, propositions in the sense of ideal units of meaning do not exist, because in Marty’s general grammar they are directly excluded intuitable essences like those of Husserl’s pure grammar, which had aroused Brentano’s ire and Kraus’s polemic.57

Moreover, although Brentano substantially agreed with Marty’s theory, he could not accept the ontological status that Marty attributed to the contents of true judgements. One of the immediate consequences of Brentano’s reism, in fact, was that the majority of the terms of language are of syncategorematic nature, because they refer to contents of the presentation given indirectly, and therefore to fictional entities. Brentano wrote thus to Marty in 1906:

I have spoken at length with Bergmann58 about your view that what there is includes not only things, but also the being, or the non-being, of things, as well as a legion – indeed an infinity – of impossibilities […] We are not considering the question whether there are contents of judgment qua contents of judgment. We want to consider rather whether there is something subsisting in and for itself, which, under

56. Marty 1908, 404.
57. See Husserl 1970, 5th Logical Investigation, § 45.
58. Hugo Bergmann.
certain conditions, may become the content of a judgment, and indeed of a correct judgment. Since one can judge with correctness that there is a tree, then (according to the theory) that there is a tree may become the content of a correct judgment. And this being of the tree is itself something which is. Similarly there would have to be the non-being of a golden mountain, the impossibility of a round square, and such like, where this little word ‘to be’ is taken in an entirely strict sense.

But, according to my view, we are here confronted only with a figure of speech, which leads to the fiction of new beings and which so deceives us with respect to our psychological activities that we believe we are judging affirmatively when in fact we are denying something. Of course, a person may say that, in imagining, he has had ‘the impossibility of a round square’, or the like, as an object of his thought. But he is not thinking about it; he is thinking only of signs which are meant to be surrogates. He is counting on there being no errors in the final result, as does the mathematician who makes use of absurd fictions – for example, negative quantities, unities divided by multiplicities, irrational and imaginary numbers, polygons with an infinite numbers of sides, etc., etc. In this way the ens linguae becomes the ens rationis, i.e. becomes a fiction cum fundamento in re, a fiction which, although erroneous, is so firmly related to truth that it may help in leading us to the truth.

The difference between our views is considerable.59

Brentano’s views also grew increasingly extreme as a result of his parallel analyses of the nature of the modes of indirect presentation, and of the types of presentation. Thus, until the end, he continued to maintain that in language there exist names that per se do not express any psychic phenomenon, and that there exist several syncategorematic expressions (letters of the alphabet, syllables, articles, pronouns, oblique cases, adverbs), whilst categorematic expressions are only names expressing a presentation, or a psychic phenomenon, of the type that often serves as a predicate in the classical categorical proposition. Only those things that fall under the concept of the real or ‘thing’ provide an object for psychic relations. In a dictation of 1914 Brentano was still expressing his ideas in these radical terms:

‘Thing’ is a name that is so general that it is impossible to think of anything else but things. It is only of things that one may properly say that they are or are not, that they have been or have not been, that they will be or will not be.

Use is also made of the expression ‘an entity’ (ein Seiendes) for ‘thing’, though not without equivocity. Examples: man, animal, body, spirit, four-dimensional topoid, people, horseman and horse […] atom, half an atom, thousandth part of an atom, a judging, a willing, a judging and willing, a judging and a willing.

Every true collective of things is a thing, and every true part of a thing is a thing.60

59. Brentano 1977b, 82-83.
Again:

‘Thing’ is the most general of all names. It denotes that which one can always make
the object (Gegenstand) of one’s thought.
Every plurality of things is to be nominated a ‘thing’.
Likewise every part of a thing.61

However, no object is represented in its complete individuality; it is so
always with a greater or less amount of generality. Brentano reaffirms:

Hence, no object (Gegenstand) is presented with all its individual characteristic notes;
it is always presented with a certain (greater or lesser) generality. In other words,
there is no unity of concepts (in the sense of Platonic ideas) and the language that sug-
gests this assumption to us operates by fictions. What sense does it therefore make,
one may ask, to distinguish whether one is dealing with a thing in itself (Sache selbst)
or only with the concept of this thing (Sache) in thought? Does some justification for
this distinction still remain if we assume that it is not possible to think of anything
other than things (Dinge)?
Answer: it does remain valid and needs only to be understood correctly. Often, we
cannot predicate anything of what it is that we have as our object (zum Gegenstand)
when thinking, because in reality one cannot say that it is; and only something that is
can be identified in recto with something. We have it for object (zum Object), never-
theless, and there is nothing to prevent us from describing our thinking according to
what its object (Gegenstand) is. Thus, for example, I recognize myself as someone
who thinks something ‘in individuo’, and again as someone who thinks in species or
in genus, and I also distinguish other levels as I approach closer to thought with full
determinacy. Instead of correctly saying ‘a thinking of something universally’ we also
say ‘a thinking of the general concept of something’, and then we further distinguish a
thinking of the concept of genus, or more briefly the thinking of a genus, from a think-
ing of a species, etc. All these connections of words are true names which have equal
standing with the words ‘a thinking of something’. But the words ‘concept’, ‘genus’
and ‘species’ used in them are not true names: they function only synsemantically. In
any case their substantival form may suggest the fiction that also these substantives
name something, but this is only something other and not things (Dinge). If this fic-
tion is accepted, the necessary consequence is that these pseudo-objects (Pseudo-
Gegenstände) are conceived as unities. Thus, for example, we speak of the concept of
the triangle, or in brief of the triangle. Instead of saying ‘an equilateral triangle with
unequal angles is impossible’, we voluntarily opt for the positive phrase and say that
the equilateral triangle is equiangular. We render ‘man’, ‘hydrogen’, etc., the subjects
of propositions.62

62. Brentano 1956, 43-44.
From a linguistic point of view, the only true name (echter Name) is a thinker, while the other terms, as genera and species, are necessarily synsemantic. Abstract names are linguistic fictions, although they are used in a meaningful linguistic whole. If it is only things that can be presented and translated into proper names, it is not possible to talk of a new layer of being for pseudo-objects: which, as Brentano observed, thus collapse into mere linguistic entities or *ficta cum fundamento in re*.

However, Brentano did not deny that abstract terms and metaphor play a crucial role in language. Having reconstructed the fictitious origin of abstract terms in the realm of descriptive psychology, he now showed that their synsemantic, grammatical essence derives from use and linguistic convenience. In the class of names, for example, *abstracta* perform an important function, doing so for example in the formulation of scientific theories. Brentano observes that if a definite understanding of *entia rationis* is to be arrived at, grammar may be of use in analysis of the multiplicity of linguistic locutions: locutions which, moment-by-moment, assign to terms the role of subject and predicate. From this point of view *linguistic fictions* can be defined as *products of the synthesis of presentations*, of the linking together of presentations that takes place *in the attributive mode*. These fictional formations resemble assumptions in so far as there is a judger who judges, although a judgment in the strict sense does not in fact occur. Thus the doctrine of non-real objects, seen as deriving from the fictitious character of most linguistic terms, explains the multiple ways in which we ‘have’ things for objects.

6 FICTA CUM FUNDAMENTO IN RE

One of the major outcomes of the Appendixes to *Psychology* II is that light was shed on the ontological meaning of the copula within existential judgments. Brentano had neither the time nor the occasion to develop the theory; furthermore, he was convinced that the presentation made by his pupil Hillebrand was largely defective.

Predication as employed within natural language is different from existential predication in the sense with which Brentano uses the expression: natural linguistic predication is essentially homonymous and metaphorical, because the main function of natural language concerns the pragmatics of communication; a topic that, within the school of Brentano, was developed by Anton Marty.

One of the main sources for analysis of Brentano’s theory of language is *The Doctrine of Right Judgment*, a volume edited by Mayer-Hillebrand and published posthumously in 1957. In the first part, *Von den Gedanken und
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ihrem Ausdruck in der Sprache (On Thought and Its Expression in the Language), Brentano expounds his conception of language, which he defines as an instrument used to communicate thoughts and to which linguistic expression is connected through the association of ideas.63

Language, however, has also a rhetorical force whereby it arouses a certain thought in the hearer or has him or her assume a certain point of view.64

Generally speaking, the purpose of language is to express (Ausdrücken) our psychic phenomena, our presentations, judgements, feelings and decisions.65

This conception can be correlated with Brentano’s other characterization of language as a thematic unity, by which expression he referred to the fact that the communication of a content from addressee to addressee takes place through the judgmental whole, whose parts in syntactic concatenation have only synsemantic value; i.e. their significance only arises from the relevant judgmental whole.

Hence a series of devices are necessary for communication, such as the employment of abstract terms or of different forms in complex series of sentences. The complexity of psychic acts, unitarily present in every moment of consciousness, finds in the diachrony expressed by words a form of compression or ellipsis which reduces complexity and gives rise to linguistic events.

However, according to Brentano, language is not immediately a product of thought – as argued, for example, by both Humboldt and the theoreticians of Völkerpsychologie, Steinthal and Wundt – and nor is communication its sole purpose. Language evolves without a pre-established plan, owing to the plurality of subjective points of view which intervene, and owing to the unreliability of its functional constructions regulated by homonymy and synonymy. It is therefore impossible to use grammar, which Brentano had coincide with ordinary language, and hence with linguistic use, as the basis for constructing the rules of logic. Indeed, attempts to do so had introduced numerous errors into psychology, logic and metaphysics.

Brentano also pointed out that that it was precisely the ease with which language gives rise to ambiguity that had prompted the idea of constructing a formal language, from Leibniz’s characteristic universalis to the more recent attempts by Boole, Jevons and De Morgan.

It is worth quoting a long extract from The Doctrine of Right Judgment on the nature of homonymy because it highlights the continuity of Brentano’s

63. Brentano 1956, 24-25.
64. Brentano 1956, 88.
65. Brentano 1956, 35.
Aristotelian analyses, and because it is closely connected with Marty’s investigations, as well as exemplifying the trenchancy of Brentano’s rest theses with regard to the classic problems of traditional philosophy. Furthermore they contain in nuce a cognitive approach to the nature of metaphor. Brentano writes as follows:

Aristotle recognized that equivocation (Äquivokation) is an extremely important source of errors, and he thoroughly investigated the matter. Also scholasticism is to be granted particular credit for discovering the various types of homonymy. There are ambiguities of names and of syntax (of the linguistic expression of judgements).

Equivocations can be divided into the following classes.

– Omonimon apo tiches. Random homonymy. Examples are: tap/cock (Hahn), ball/dance (Ball), castle/padlock (Schloss), cancer/crab (Krebs). It may happen that a noun has several meanings among which there is no internal relation, so that in general they are difficult to exchange one with the other […].
– Omonimon kat’analoghian. Homonymy by analogy. In this case there are relations among the meanings; an analogy exists; that is, an equivalence of relationship exists between the various meanings. Metaphors, so extraordinarily common, are almost all based on analogy […] Almost without exception, expressions that refer directly to sensory perception have alternative metaphorical meanings: clarity, transparency, obscurity, to illuminate, to take an overview, to disregard (absehen); harmony in a family, discord in a group; tasteless behaviour, sweet words, bitter love, harsh (sauer) work, hard punishment, firm will, warmly recommend, heated (heiss) combat.

The verbs of movement are particularly rich with metaphorical meanings: put forward (vertreten), advance (vorbringen), carry through (durchführen), supervene (dazukommen).

There are then metaphors taken from particular occupations: take the helm, steer a course, overshoot the mark.

It is interesting that in many languages the expressions for soul or spirit are derived from wind or breath: spiritus, anima, psyche. Sometimes the shifts from the original to the derived meaning are so numerous that it is no longer possible to establish the original connection, so that an omonimon kat’analoghian becomes omonimon apo tiches.
– Omonimon pros en (kai mian physin). Homonymy through relation. Here the noun has a meaning in the strict sense while its other additional meanings stand in some (variable) relation with the object (Gegenstand), which is the cause/effect relation of the constant accompaniment of the sign and what is indicated (bezeichnet) and similar. In other words, all the other meanings relate to the principal meaning (eis) in some way. Aristotle adduces the example of the word ‘healthy’.

Healthy organism, … colourful […]

From the linguistic point of view both types of homonymy are very important, for they are among the main causes of a word’s change of meaning. Omonimon pros en is particularly interesting in this respect because it may give rise to extraordinarily far-reaching changes. A word may initially have a fundamental meaning a and a collateral meaning b, perhaps because this is the cause or the sign of a. Now the collateral mean-
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ing b may too have a collateral meaning c, but in such a way that it can no longer be recognized that b itself is already a collateral meaning.

Thus it may happen that c still links with b, but no longer with a. […]

– Oomonimon kat’exoochen. Homonymy by type.

In this case, something that serves well as an example of the corresponding type is designated with the name of the type. Thus Homer is called ‘the poet’, Kant ‘the philosopher’, Socrates ‘the sage’.

– Homonymy due to a broader and narrower meaning of the same noun.

The pronoun ‘idem’ has a broader and a narrower meaning. In the narrow sense of the word it designates ‘identity’, in the broader one a certain similarity, which may even be superficial (the soldiers all wear the same jacket). One may perhaps assume rightly with J.S. Mill that the hidden source of errors in the Platonic theory of ideas is confusion between the narrower and broader senses of the word ‘oautos’. When I say of two things (Dinge) that they have the same colour, and when I give to the word same the sense of strict identity, it is easy to think of a reality underlying those things, and that both those things have the ‘same’ quality only by virtue of their participation in that reality […]

– To scholastic logic we owe the discovery of equivocation through multiple supposition. Every word, besides its relationship with the thing nominated may have other relationships as well, so that it can suppose in multiple ways […].

– Homonymy due to attributive syntax: for example, false money, burnt house, deposed king. To this category belong all cases which involve modifying determinations.66

Apropos of onomatopeia, which concerns one of the most important concepts of Marty’s philosophy of language, that of innere Sprachform (inner linguistic form), Brentano observes in a note that:

Also immediately comprehensible expressions like onomatopoeias arise through an obvious change of meaning: ‘drum’ being an example. By homonymy of the type just discussed, also the instrument by which the noise is produced can be designated by the expression ‘drum’. One may ask whether, after a change of meaning of this kind, the previous meaning is abandoned. In general, the following happens. For each change of meaning there is a stage in which both meanings coexist: receding and emerging are slow processes. The figuratively (bildlich) derived meaning becomes increasingly dominant, and the original one only occasionally crops up again. This latter meaning, which in reality is the first, has been called by W. Humboldt the inner [linguistic] form (die innere Sprachform). When occasionally during the use of a word in its derived meaning the original one reappears, it is said that the inner form is still alive. Finally, it may have entirely disappeared but be revived due to certain causes. One such cause may be the combination of an expression with another refer-

66. Brentano 1956, 67-72. The topic of equivocity due to attributive syntax was subsequently given specific development by Twardowski.
ring to the same inner form, so that both the original meanings reinforce each other. For example, rapid progress. Another means is that of contrast. When images which do not fit together are united in a discourse, the original meaning is evoked and it is perceived as the source of disturbance.  

These long quotations reveal that the essential components of Brentano’s reist theory with counterparts in his linguistic analysis are the following, to be shortly explained:

1. The threefold classification of psychic activities is matched by a threefold form of linguistic expression.
2. Corresponding to the real, as the object of presentation, is the autosemantic name.
3. The negation of abstract or unreal entities also influences the number and the nature of the semantic categories.

As to the first point, language has essentially three functions, according to Brentano:

1. The noun stands in relation to the act of presentation, in the sense that naming something is to present something and in doing so notify something (gibt etwas kund).
2. The noun stands in relation to a content of presentation, which means that the noun signifies something and refers to a concept (bedeutet und hinweist).
3. The noun stands in relation to the object of presentation, which it names (nennt).

Language is structurally ambiguous because an act of presentation is never able to present an object in all its complexity; it can only present that object in one of its aspects or in one of its parts. In reality there exists only someone who presents the object to him/herself in more or less determinate manner, and this explains the formation of ordinary language structures that in the course of time consolidate themselves as ellipses, metaphors, and so on. These structures, in fact, express the plurality of indirect references and therefore relate to the functions of indicating and referring, where the gap between the apparent grammatical form and the real logical form underlying the direct

68. Brentano 1956, 47.
69. Brentano 1956, 47.
reference is manifest. Hence it follows that most of the terms of language are synsemantic, that is, do not have direct reference.

It is interesting to consider how Brentano’s theory of the threefold function of the act was developed by his pupils, because the modification of the terms by those various authors, and even by the same author at different times, consisted in a series of conceptual shifts which culminated in Bühler’s theory. A case in point is Twardowski, who in 1894 used the terms Kundgeben (to make known), Erweckung (to arouse) and Nennen (to designate) to refer to the threefold action of the act.

What, then, is the task of name? Obviously it is to arouse in the listener a certain content of a presentation. Someone who utters a name intends to awaken in the listener the same mental content which appears in himself; when someone says: ‘sun, moon and stars’, he wants those who listen to think, just as he does, of the sun, of the moon, and the stars. But in wanting to arouse in the listener a certain mental content through the utterance of a name, the speaker finds this content in himself and is thus presented with the same thing with which he wants the listener to be presented. In this manner, a name already fulfils two tasks. Firstly, it makes known that the user of a name is presented with something; it signifies the existence of a mental act in the speaker. Secondly, it awakens in the listener a certain mental content. It is this content which is the ‘meaning’ of a name. However, this does not as yet exhaust the functions of a name. It has a third function, namely, the function of designating objects [...] Accordingly, the three functions of a name are: firstly, to make known (kundgeben) an act of presentation which occurs in the speaker; secondly, to arouse (Erweckung) a mental content, the meaning of a name, in the person addressed; thirdly to designate (nennen) an object which is presented through the presentation meant by the name.70

Vice versa, Marty’s 1908 usage was Bedeuten (to mean), Aufdecken and Nennen.71 Meinong’s 1894 use, and also Martinak’s of 1901 one, was instead Ausdruck, Bedeuten, Nennen.72 Meinong wrote as follows:

That language is precisely this, namely ‘expression’, is a fact that amongst other things also means that it makes the speaker’s clearer, and naturally not only the act of presenting in general but also its determinations of content. But what the speaker wants to ‘say’, or better that of which he wishes to speak, is not what the words ‘express’ but rather what they ‘signify’, which is not the content but the object of the presentation.73

70. Twardowski 1977, 9-10.
71. Marty 1908.
72. Meinong 1894.
73. Meinong 1899, 35-36.
Chapter 6: Ficciones

To be noted in particular is the progressive shift in these various authors exhibited by the terms *Kundgeben* and *Ausdruck*. They are often used synonymously, but one sometimes observes a switch from the prevalent use of one term to the prevalent use of the other, as in the case of Bühler (1918; where the emphasis is on *Kundgabe*, *Auslösung* (triggering), *Darstellung*); then 1934: where it is on *Ausdruck*, *Appell* (appeal), *Darstellung*). An essential role in this change is performed by the idea of *language* as re-presentative function.

In the case of the pair *Kundgabe-Ausdruck* in particular, corresponding to the semantic shift is a change of emphasis on the processing stages of information – that is, from latter’s *linguistic* expression to its communicative value – so that the transition from a psychological set-up to a linguistic one progressively gained ground in the linguistic turn of the twentieth century.

As regards Brentano, his reist conclusion that corresponding to the *real* as the object of presentation is the *autosemantic name* had the consequence of restricting the number of semantic categories. Now that existence had been denied to every type of abstract or functional entity, there was apparently no longer room for an autonomous substantival category (apart from ‘a thinker’): Brentano’s theory would now only admit synsemantic names.

7 A FURTHER DEVELOPMENT:
SEMANTIC CATEGORIES

Language creates a prejudice against noticing (i.e. against the explicitness of inner perception) because the name for a certain fact - the analogue to evidence in certain emotional activities, for instance - is lacking. Metaphors usually make up for these expressive shortcomings of language. A correct psychognostics, in Brentano’s sense, therefore poses the question of how the phenomenal qualities of the intentional objects are deposited in language.

How can a natural language be constructed from the perceptual continua of contents which present themselves in the twofold guise of fusion and/or dis-
Immanent Realism

continuity, of pleasantness and/or unpleasantness? This should come about via constant transition between adjectives and nouns, or better between adjectives and substantivized adjectives, in actual perception, which thus constitutes the real and proper speculative grammar of the language. Husserl developed a similar argument in his theory of the semantic categories of adjectiveness and substantiveness, which constitute the profound structure of predication in that they refer to what is perceptively recognized as whole and parts, substratum and its determinations, in the actual duration. Brentano assumed a more radical point of view by turning to reism.

In Brentano’s terms, if we wish to restore the multiplicity of expressive forms to the original form of the presentation of objects, all expressive forms, even the most complex of them – like actives and passives, optatives, conditionals, imperatives, future forms, etc. – must be reduced to the simple declarative form of the recognition of something that exists here and now; that is, even before making the categorical statement that A is B or the existential statement that AB is.

The categories of adjectiveness and substantiveness, in particular, constitute the structure of original predication because they refer to perceptive contents of empirical reality; that is, to the way in which objects are originally present to the consciousness. Whereas in the linguistic proposition the perceptive contents subsequently perform the function of subject and predicate, the adjectival-substantival nucleus of perceptive objects simply denotes the fact that there exists a law of mereological dependence between the perceived phenomenal whole and its parts, between its dynamic development and their modes of connection.

The difference among diverse perceptive objects therefore arises from the manifold connections among the parts of the whole. Consequently, at the existential level the presentation and recognition of an object, before an ontological status is attributed to it (i.e., whether it is a thing or a quality), may occur originally, in the presentation, in both adjectival and substantival form. I can in fact see the bright red (adjectival) of a rose-bush before I notice the individual roses or the bush (substantival). And in this case the red is the figure, while the roses provide the background or are simply the existential bearers of the original perceptive content. Likewise I may see the trembling (the qualitative movement) of leaves before I notice the trees and the branches which bear the leaves moved by the wind.

Linguistically, the adjective plays a leading role in the expression of perceptive content. The adjective, in fact, determines or modifies the whole, it depicts it as present or absent, as determinate or indeterminate, as of this or

77. See Husserl 1936. On this see Albertazzi 1996b.
Chapter 6: Ficciones

that type. Forms of inferential predication like ‘Socrates is seated’, ‘Socrates is white’ or ‘Socrates is dead’ are morphologically none other than this: firstly, they refer to the mode in which a whole is present to consciousness (for example, ‘white’ in this case is a qualifying adjective); secondly, the role of intentional modification is assigned to the adjective.

From a categorial point of view there are substantially three types of modification:78

1. Modification of the terms into subject and predicate.
2. Modification by contrariness or elimination.
3. Modification based on a double judgment.

As we know, descriptive psychology, in its original formulation, distinguishes among act, object and content in the presentation. In short, in a presentation we are primarily directed towards an object, and we are secondarily aware of this intentional direction. All of which constitutes a single psychic phenomenon. For example, we present an object (a horse) to ourselves which is modified once it has been presented and correlated to the act of presentation (presented horse).

In the primary consciousness the object (horse) is not modified as regards content because it is set in relation to the subject. Conversely, in secondary consciousness, the act becomes aware of an object thought in a certain way; hence the object is modified in its content.

Moreover, it cannot be said of the presented horse that it is in the strict sense: in fact, it is an object even if no corresponding horse exists independently of the presentation. The being-object is merely the linguistic correlate of what the perceiver actually presents to him/herself.79

Adjectives are essential for determination of the meaning of the content of the reference object because they perform a function of indication or of qualitative deixis. More specifically, adjectives serve to determine or modify the whole to which reference is being made.

A determinant attribute is an adjective which determines, supplements or completes the meaning of a term, examples being ‘red’, ‘beautiful’, ‘old’, ‘appetizing’, etc. Determinant adjectives therefore perform a categorematic function.

A modifying adjective is instead one which substracts something from the type of noun being referred to: for example, ‘apparent’, ‘preceding’, ‘so-

78. See Poli 1993b.
79. Here, contrary to Höfler, Brentano once again claims the Aristotelian origin of his conception of feeling (aisthesis), which assumes form (eidos) without material (hyle) in keeping with his theory of 1874.
called’, ‘false’, ‘dead’, etc. are cases of modification by negation. In fact, a ‘dead’ king is not a king, a ‘false’ friend is absolutely not a friend. Modifying adjectives therefore perform a syncategorematic function.

Again: a past note or a seen colour are not the objects of normal presentation like actual notes or colours. ‘Been’ and ‘seen’ are modifying determinations of the object of presentation because, in this case, the note is a part (distinctional) of the past note only in the weakest and most extended sense. By means of modifying determination the object becomes a part of the correlate of the act of presentation.

There are then types of modification which are only apparently similar to those just described, for example ‘painted landscape’ or ‘thought horse’. In this case, although a ‘thought horse’ is not a horse, the similarity with the concrete horse is preserved; and the same applies to a ‘painted landscape’, which although not a landscape is immediately recognized as such.

The difference between these two types of modification lies in the diverse aspect of the whole, which is once again specified by the adjective. In the case of ‘dead king’ the reference to the matter is preserved; in the case of the ‘painted landscape’ it is reference to the form that is preserved. Both cases, however, involve types of natural predication ontologically founded in the first instance on objects and their qualities, and only subsequently on qualities of qualities (or better, properties of properties). In the case of ‘painted landscape’, in fact, the whole presentation on which it is based consists of a landscape which is recognized, and by the mode in which it is recognized, as a painted landscape. Grammatically, the whole is transformed into a double judgement: this is a landscape, it is painted. It seems, thus, that the adjective performs the ontological role of replacing the type of primary material of the whole (the object of the presentation) with a type of secondary material (the content of the presentation). Morphogenetically, the adjective also seems to be the prime constitutive factor of language.

The ontological range of the adjective is not restricted to the determination or modification of the whole of presentation. This first function concerns, so to speak, the morphological description of the whole: we thus say that such-and-such object is a deckchair, a blue pen, a missed opportunity, a dream fulfilled, a completed journey, etc. We must not forget, however, that what we perceive as static form is nothing but the product of more or less transitory formative processes.

80. See Brentano 1982; Twardowski 1894; Marty 1928.

81. See Brentano 1982, I.2. § 3. Modification concerns both the act and the correlate (which are fused together), and the correlate can in its turn be differentiated into parts of parts.
Thus, if we conduct *morphogenetic* analysis of the whole, and therefore take account of the dynamics of the phase of actual intentional presentation, the role of the adjective (i.e. of the various content aspects of the object) becomes even more crucial, because it expresses the *dynamic qualities* of the forms of the perceptive contents. In this sense, the adjective is *morphogenetically the root of the expression* which resides in the expressive qualities of the stimulus pattern.

In normal circumstances, in fact, we assume that the objects of our perception are *bodies*. If we wish to be more sophisticated, as Brentano was, we transpose this state of affairs by saying that a certain set of qualities are connected to a *bearer* of some kind, which constitutes the conventional concept of *thing*.

On the basis of these considerations, is ‘a thinker’ still a substantival category? The outcomes of Brentano’s analyses of continua and his revised table of categories would suggest that it is not.82

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82. See Chapters 7, 8.
Chapter 7

Continua

1 THE CONTINUUM AND INNER PERCEPTION

The analyses conducted in previous chapters have shown that Brentano’s descriptive psychology, in all its ramifications, always maintained a twofold valence between *theoretical* and *empirical*. In the last years of Brentano’s life, these two aspects merged into a metaphysical theory which on the one hand constituted a philosophical variation (in effect, a reversal) of Aristotle’s position on the problem of substance and accidents, which was due to specification of the concept of *thing*, while on the other it maintained the scientific, empirical and experimental thrust of the Appendixes to *Psychology II* and the various texts collected in *Psychology III*.

Brentano’s definitive theses on metaphysics, moreover, were closely connected with his *elaboration of a theory of continua* which in many respects broke new ground. Unfortunately, development of the theory was abruptly halted by Brentano’s death, and all that remains of it is a series of preliminary outlines.¹

It will be recalled that Brentano’s previous analyses, starting from *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, had led him to conclude that:

1. The only really *existing* entities are the *things* given in evident manner by inner perception.

2. Intentional presentations are concrete *spatio-temporal structures* of psychic energy; they act firstly as *pointers* towards phenomenal appearances like colour, sounds, odours and tactile perceptions (the ‘physical phenomena’), and secondly towards higher-order psychic objectuality of other kinds.

3. From the point of view of actual presentation in the moment-now (*Jezt*), we immediately perceive not ‘objects’ – which in Brentano’s late theory became synsemantic entities – but ‘aspects’ (characteristic notes) or at least ‘strings of events’ (like rotating discs).

¹. Brentano 1988c. This chapter is based on Albertazzi 2002a, b. I thank Benjamins for permission to reprint parts of that text.
4. The ground of these phenomena is proximal space – that is, the visual, auditory, tactile, graspable sensible, *phenomenal space* (*Sinnesraum*) of our everyday experience. We characterise phenomenal space through our sight (shape, size, position and movement), touch and kinaesthesia (shape, size and distance), hearing (direction of sounds) and olfaction (direction of odours).

5. The intensity of sense qualities is a function of the extensive parts of the phenomenal space.

Conflated in these final writings are thus:

1. The multiple senses of being in Aristotle.
2. The nature of the assimilative process, from Aristotle to psychophysics.
3. The distinction between physical phenomena and mental phenomena.
4. The doctrine of intensive and extensive qualities.
5. The theory of parts and the whole.

These various themes merge into a theory of continua which outlines what we may call an ‘empirical geometry’ of inner perception. In this geometry the concept of *direction* – which characterizes the intentional presentation – is still fundamental but receives further specification as the *constitutive element of perceptive forms*.2

If we are to understand what truly constitutes an act of intentional presentation, we must know the nature of the perceptive structures of the phenomenal appearances that manifest themselves from the point of view of their foundations as well: whence derived Brentano’s theory of the continua. Nothing, therefore, could have been more distant from the abstract ‘mentalis’ for which the theory of intentional reference was criticised in the second half of the twentieth century. The analysis of existential judgments showed that in appearances (due to phantasia) there is neither a propositional content nor a belief (doxa). Rather, it was a theory constantly connected, at its first level, with the analysis of subjective perception in the various sensory fields.3

Brentano’s conception of continua was part of a neo-Aristotelian theory of physics put forward in various forms by authors of the period, mainly of Ger-
man culture. It bore similarities with, but also diverged from, the theories of Herbart, Ueberweg, Lipps, Mach, Helmholtz, Blumenfeld and Hillebrand, and it gave rise to phenomenological and/or gestaltist analyses by Husserl, Bühler, Selz, von Allesch and, later, by Musatti. All these authors, in fact, evidenced the grounding of continua in the world of perception.4

One of the characteristics of neo-Aristotelian physics was that it displayed features which were more synthetic geometric than algebraic or analytical. It was a geometry which we may call empirical and intrinsically subjective because it was based on the perception of forms by an observer.5

2 ROOTS

It was mainly at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth that the problem returned, in new guise, in the debate on the foundations of geometry and in attempts to arithmetise the continuum. During the same period, the problem of the continuum also attracted the interest of psychologists and philosophers, among them Brentano.

The concept of multiplicity or the concept of dimensionality in its various versions pertained to a scientific milieu that combined geometry, the physics of nature, experimental psychology, and metaphysics, and whose protagonists were physicists (W. Weber, Fechner, Helmholtz), philosophers (Lotze, Mill, Ueberweg, Brentano, Husserl, Erdmann), mathematicians (Cantor, Riemann, Felix Klein, Hilbert, Poincaré, Pasch, Veronese) and psychologists (Wundt, Stallo). Most of those scientists, indeed, had a multidisciplinary competence in various ambits of research.

At the end of the twentieth century the continuum was analysed, for example by Cantor, as a particular type of infinity and as something which could be constructed from elements.6 In the same period, theorems were developed (for example by Peano) which undermined the prima facie natural idea of dimension and which showed that the cardinality of the points of the three-dimensional space of a two-dimensional surface is the same as that of a one-dimensional line (these theorems were obtained at the cost of destroying the connections of proximity among points). Aristotle, however, denied that a continuum can be composed of points.7

4. Herbart 1806/1908; Ueberweg 1851; Lipps 1897; Brentano 1988c; Husserl 1983; Bühler 1913; Selz 1929; Musatti 1926; von Allesch 1931; James 1950.
7. See Bell, forthcoming in Axiomathes 2005, 1.
Furthermore, Aristotle’s conception of nature was based on primitives and conceptual categories different from those of modern classical physics. And they were primitives and categories which also differed from those employed to develop the formalisms available to us today. For example, *movement* played a prime role in the Aristotelian conception of perceptual continua.\(^8\) This was not the objective movement of the laws of Newtonian physics, but rather the real *qualitative phenomenon* of movement (alteration) as it appears in the various perceptual fields, in the change of *place* by objects, or even in cases of so-called apparent movements. As we have seen, these elements of Aristotle’s theory were components of Brentano’s thought throughout his lifetime.

The Aristotelian theory of continua sprang from a conception which subsequently comprised those aspects of *phenomenal experience* which yield the intuitive concepts of *consecutive*, *contiguous* and *continuous*. Specifically:

1. ‘consecutive […] is that which does not present any intermediate of the same kind between itself and what is consecutive to it.’ (*Physics*, V: 3, 227a: 1);
2. ‘contiguous […] is that which, besides being consecutive, is also in contact.’ (*Physics*, V: 3, 227a, 6);
3. ‘continuous […] is a particular determination of the contiguous […] when the limits of two things, by means of which the one and the other touch, become one alone.’ (*Physics*, V: 3, 227a: 11-12).

*Figure 1.*

![Diagram](image)

Note that, for Aristotle, in the case of two contiguous objects which become one *continuous* object, the *boundary* between the objects belongs to both of

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\(^8\) An idea defended also by Helmholtz and Hildebrand.
them. That is to say, there is a coincidence of boundaries, and this is a concept which conflicts with that of ‘approximation’ in the mathematical continuum.\textsuperscript{9} Besides the three concepts just outlined (consecutiveness, contiguity, continuity), in other passages Aristotle adds a further one: that of the solidarity which comes about when the parts move in the same direction as the whole – of which an example is provided by a rotating disk. Put in modern terms this is the ‘common fate’ movement which falls under the laws of perceptive organization formulated by Wertheimer.\textsuperscript{10} Besides their Aristotelian origin, Brentano’s theories on continua were also influenced by those of Ueberweg, who developed an empirical conception of perceptual space which Brentano must have found highly congenial, given his previous analyses in Descriptive Psychology, Untersuchungen zur Sinnespsychologie and the Appendices to Psychology II and III.

To Ueberweg we owe elaboration of the following notions in particular:

1. \textit{Space} as a homogeneous continuum of places able to divide itself and to extend itself indefinitely from any whatever part that a body may occupy, and in any whatever direction that it may move.

2. \textit{Points} as indefinitely small spaces.\textsuperscript{11}

Firstly, it is worth noting that this analysis does not start with ‘point’ as an undefined concept. Instead, it endeavours to give the notion systematic conceptualisation within the framework of straight line, plane, surface and three-dimensional space. Secondly to be stressed is the concept of homogeneity, which concerns the visible appearance of perceptive space and thus primarily the constant transformation of objects in the visual field according to how they appear from different perspectives.

On these premises, the point of departure for an empirical theory of continua is the following: in perceptual experience, the identifying, separating or fractionalising of ‘space’ by visual bodies takes place through the perception of movements, or in other words, through the modification of distance and position from the perceiver. When we see a moving body, something is altered as it moves and something else remains unaltered in the field. Therefore, movement is primary in an empirical geometry, and it is the place (Ort) which is altered in movement.\textsuperscript{12} When a body moves, something in the per-

\textsuperscript{9} Provided that a logic is adopted in which the excluded middle does not apply.
\textsuperscript{10} Wertheimer 1923; Eng. tr., 78.
\textsuperscript{11} Ueberweg 1851; Brentano 1988c; Husserl 1983.
\textsuperscript{12} This point also underpins the figure-ground scheme in Gestalt psychology: in fact, what is given in the perceptual field as ‘figure’ is normally ‘what is in movement’. See Koffka, 1935. See also the case of induced movement in Duncker 1929.
ceptual field is modified by virtue of its movement and something remains the same, so that a division, a separation, occurs. A rotation, for example, is the movement of a stable spatial configuration of which one or more elements remain immobile. Moved bodies may occupy another place, passing through successive places to do so, because the places are homogeneous. The places occupied by a moving body follow each other with indefinitely small differences through locations, each of which is not distinguished in its form by its immediate predecessor, so that the alteration of the place of the body in movement also proceeds through infinitely small differences and, perceptually, appears to be smooth. If we unify its various trajectories, we have a continuous set which is homogenous in itself. Hence, a magnitude that can be increased or reduced by non-discrete differences is called ‘smooth’.

From these preliminary considerations Ueberweg derived his empirical ‘theorem’ that there exists a continuum of places homogeneous in itself and able to divide itself and extend itself infinitely from any part whatever that a body can occupy.13 This continuum is open in all directions14 and as a homogeneous series of positions (Stellen) it is called ‘space’.

The fundamental properties of perceptual space are therefore homogeneity, continuity and unboundedness.15 A finite fractionalized part of this infinite space is called a ‘geometric body’. Consequently, there does not exist, perceptually, a simple non-extended spatial element like the mathematical point, which instead can only be fictionally ‘assumed’ in the imagination. Empirical and descriptive analysis only recognises ‘the indefinitely small space’ – that is, the progression of the division.16 A crucial feature of the theory is, then, that a geometrical point is only an idealised location. Moreover, perceptual points have an intrinsic structure. From a perceptual point of view, in fact, a ‘point’ is a location with different possible directions: points may have parts and coincide with parts, exactly as parts may coincide among themselves.

The totality of all the ‘points’ (infinitely numerous) – a totality consisting in one or more continuous forms which can occupy a position in the continuum, and which satisfies a certain condition – is called the continuum’s ‘geometric locus’. The outermost element of a spatial form is its boundary (Grenze). In an empirical geometry of perceptual space, therefore, a boundary cannot be something stable (because in this case it would still be divisible into

13. Brentano also envisaged smaller and smaller parts, in continua, that can be distinguished ad indefini-tum. See Brentano 1981b, 115.
14. Brentano later discussed this aspect under the heading ‘plerosis’ (see below).
15. Riemann and Klein had already underlined the difference between ‘unbounded’ and ‘infinite’. I owe this remark to J. J. Koenderink.
16. An indefinitely small part of the continuum was, for Brentano, the condition of its boundary. See Brentano 1981b, 56, and below. See also Chapter 8.
an outer and an inner form because of the infinite divisibility of space). It is an aspect, and precisely the aspect where the perceptual object ends. Thus the concept of boundary, which as the outermost element identifies a perceptual form, is the fundamental fact about phenomenal space. The points and lines that delimit a surface are examples of the bounding of perceptual space. Moreover, boundaries are never given in isolation: they are always part of larger spatial forms, as Brentano too would later maintain. Boundaries have an inner and an outer side, as evidenced, for example, by the phenomena relative to figure/ground organisation in perception.

Ueberweg’s theory and the various above-mentioned theories have a number of features in common. They do not always draw a clear distinction between the physical and the perceptual type of continuum, although this is an ontological ambiguity common to all the discussions of continua (also mathematical ones) conducted at the end of nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, and even today. More generally at issue were the nature and the laws of psychophysics that provided the basis for the notion of continuum. This was one of the questions at the centre of Brentano’s inquiries, and it is a question still unresolved in contemporary science.

The main criticism that Brentano brought against the mathematical theories of continua of his time, and in general, was that they drastically reduced the ‘extend- edness’ (Extensität) of perceptual phenomena to ‘quantitative metric extension’ (Ausdehnung) and sought to construct geometry from algebra. Brentano’s position thus highlighted some crucial nodes in the question of the continuum, among them the nature of perceptual space-time, the problem of the ‘inner’ aspect of psychophysics, which Fechner left unresolved, the problem of measuring perceptual phenomena (again, what do we measure, the act, the object or the content?), and finally the problem of how to model phenomena correctly.

One aspect to bear in mind, therefore, is that an empirical theory of continua for Brentano is prima facie a descriptive theory of phenomenal continua as they appear in the various perceptual fields. In fact, in Brentano’s theory, it has also a metaphysical valence. In principle, they lie at the basis, but are not identical with, the continua of abstract mathematical theory. Mathematical theories of continua, in fact, make use of a preliminary series of operations of abstraction and idealisation through symbols which do not pertain as such to a foundational analysis of the primitives of perception.

Brentano inherited from Ueberweg in particular the distinction of the continuum into that which is continuously many (kontinuierlich Vielem),17 for example a spherical body extended in space, and continuously manifold (kontinuierlich Vielfaches), as the mid-point of a spherical body in rotation. The matter can be put as follows: the different points of a radius of a rotating disc seem to be subject to a greater or smaller continuous multiplicity of spatial
determinations. Perceptual space is thus given by a series of locations (indefin-

itely small parts) placed in a relation of proximity.\footnote{Brentano 1981b, 56-57.}

Instead, authentically Brentano’s is the idea that the treatment of percep-
tual continua deals with certain features of the physical continuum which
support them but which are distal stimuli in that they never come directly into
contact with the psychic world, only doing so indirectly via the modes of the
intentional presentation. For this reason, the above-mentioned distinction
between what is continuously many and continuously manifold also concerns
the bearer of the intentional reference, the ‘thinker’ as the ultimate metaphys-
ical entity of Brentano’s metaphysics (see below).

\section{The Intuition of the Continuum}

The main texts for Brentano’s analyses of perceptive continua are *The
Theory of Categories*, published posthumously by A. Kastil in 1933, and espe-
cially *Philosophical Investigations on Space, Time and the Continuum*
published posthumously in 1976, with added notes by Kastil and edited by S.
Körner and R. M. Chisholm, even if the various dictations are interconnected.
Methodologically, in this chapter I shall deal mainly with the text specifically
concerning the theory of continua, and in the following chapter with the texts
relative to the theory of categories.

Thorough treatment of Brentano’s theory of continua requires a number of
preliminary specifications to be made. Its point of departure, as Brentano
writes, is the fact that:

\begin{quote}
All our concepts are either taken immediately from an intuition or combined out of
characteristic notes [Merkmalen] that are taken immediately from an intuition.\footnote{Brentano 1988c, 1. Translation slightly modified.}
\end{quote}

This also explains Brentano’s criticism of the mathematical theories of
continua developed by Dedekind, Poincaré and Cantor. These he considered
inadequate, or at most he attributed to them the status of models or, on the
basis of his recent analyses of language, of epistemological fictions. Brentano

\begin{quote}
17. Brentano specifies further that a multiplicity is not a plurality: we cannot in fact conceive the continuum
as a discrete plurality of numbers, a point with which many physicists would agree today. As we shall
see, we can conceive it as a continuous multiplicity (Vielem), or better as a continuous multiplicity of
boundaries. The boundaries in their turn do not exist in and of themselves as real (ein Reales), but are
real in so far as they contribute to the reality of the continuum. Brentano 1981b, 55, and below. See also
Chapter 8.
\end{quote}

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had certainly read Poincaré’s *Science and Hypothesis* and probably also his *The Value of Science*, and he discussed Cantor’s paradox in *The Theory of Categories*. Both scientists had failed, according to Brentano, to recognize that it is possible *to intuit* a continuum – and especially Poincaré, whose extreme empiricism induced him to deny the possibility of the intuition of continuous time.

Brentano comments thus on these theories:

The idea of continua of *various degree of completeness* seems also to be incompatible with the true solution to the problem of *constructing* the continuum. If one raises all the rational and irrational fractions between 0 and 1 to some power, then one obtains precisely the series with which one started but with a certain displacement, and the same holds where all members which are either rational or irrational are themselves raised to a certain power. In this way the magnitudes of the distances between fractions appear not to be determined by the magnitudes of the fractions. (Poincaré’s two orders of continuity recall the two powers of Cantor. Yet the fact that there exist infinitely small magnitudes of a higher order cannot be regarded as a demonstration of a higher power, indeed the points of a surface for example are supposed to be of the same power as the points of a line, etc.)

(How, according to Cantor, is one to relate univocally the totality of irrational points on a line to the totality of all its points, and how is one to relate the totality of transcendental irrational points to the totality of algebraic irrationals?)

Proceeding in this way, we should have to ascribe to the concept of continuity an origin in operations of thought both artificial and involved. This seems unacceptable from the very start, for how could this concept then be found in possession of the simple man or even of the immature child? And further, how dubious it appears to suppose that the halvings and other divisions have been executed to an actual infinity, that they have been brought to completion, just because one can assume without absurdity that they have been executed beyond any arbitrarily determined limit. It is not to be denied that one is here accepting something simply impossible […] One sees that in this entire putative construction of the concept of what is continuous the goal has been entirely missed; for *that which is above all else characteristic of a continuum, namely the idea of a boundary in the strict sense (to which belongs the possibility of a coincidence of boundaries)*, will be sought after entirely in vain. Thus also the attempt to have the concept of what is continuous spring from the combination of individual characteristic notes distilled from intuition is to be rejected as entirely mistaken, and this implies further that what is continuous *must be given to us as an individual intuition* and must therefore be abstracted there from.

Once again, on the basis of the results of his previous investigations into the nature and number of the properties of phenomena (from *Descriptive Psy-
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Brentano develops a qualitative Aristotelian theory of phenomenal continua and of place due to a contact between parts.

The continuum which he discusses and analyses is in fact the continuum that, prima facie, appears in the various perceptive fields given in actual presentation and its parts.

The features of the continuum that Brentano describes are therefore the following:

1. It is an intuitive concept.
2. It relates to the appearances of the phenomenal world, that is, to the contents of concrete and actual presentations.
3. It is characterized by direction, homogeneity and smoothness.
4. It derives from experience or from characteristic notes drawn from perceptive experience, not from high-level mental operations which make use of abstract symbolizations.

Let us take one of the basic concepts of the geometry of continua, that of ‘line’. In this regard Brentano observes that:

An intuition of a line, for example, can never be built up out of what is without extension. Were this the case, it would follow – to point out just one of the absurd consequences – that a smaller line could be brought into coincidence with a larger, since as Cantor has shown and as all mathematicians now teach, the points of a smaller line can be set into mutual one-one correspondence with those of a larger line, those of one half line, for example, with those of the whole. It is clear that, if the line consisted in its points, then the lines themselves would be brought into coincidence through the bringing of their points into coincidence piece by piece, which is impossible. And also the following has to be considered: geometry teaches that a line that is halved is halved in a single point. The line $a b c$ therefore in the point $b$. And further, that one is able to lay the one half over the other, for example, in such a way that $cb$ would come down on $ba$, the point $c$ coinciding with the point $b$, the other end coinciding with the point $a$. According to the doctrine here considered, in contrast, the divisions of the line would not occur in points, but in some absurd way behind a point and before all others of which however none would stand closest to the cut. One of the two lines into which the line would be split upon division would therefore have an endpoint, but the other no beginning point. This inference has been quite correctly drawn by Bolzano, who was led thereby to his monstrous doctrine that there would exist bodies with and without surfaces, the one class containing just so many as the other, because contact would be possible only between a body with a surface and another without. He ought, rather, to have had his attention drawn by such consequences to the fact that the whole conception of the line and of other continua as sets...
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of points runs counter to the concept of contact and thereby abolishes precisely what makes up the essence of the continuum. It is therefore not possible that the concept of contact, as we all possess it, can be won from the formations manufactured by Poincaré. Indeed we would certainly not possess it at all, were it not given to us in some phenomenon or other through sensation or reflection.22

Thus, Brentano’s dictations on the continuum continued the analyses of Descriptive Psychology and Researches in Sense Psychology, furnishing further specification of the nature of the objects of presentation. In Descriptive Psychology Brentano had shown that locality, quality and lightness are the fundamental characteristic notes of the objects of visible space: for example, two blue patches of the same lightness differ from each other in that they occupy two different spatial places (localities).23 Thus, in the case of an extensive blue-coloured surface, i.e. of a homogeneous mass filling a space in continuous manner, Brentano observes that:

its parts [of the homogeneous mass], like the part of a blue surface, are all the same in quality, but differ from each other spatially. In respect of place, there are infinitesimal differences; every specific difference [i.e. very absolute spatial kind] exists only as a punctiform boundary, and its nature is determined in part by that which is bounded. This is why the spatial nature of a point differs according to whether it serves as a boundary in all or only in some direction. Thus, a point located inside a physical thing serves as a boundary in all directions, but a point on a surface or an edge or a vertex serves as a boundary only in some directions. And the point in a vertex will differ in accordance with the directions of the edges that meet at the vertex. Thus coinciding points may be said to differ with respect to their spatial nature, with the result that it will not be absurd to say that one of them is blue and the other red.24

In the case of two spots of colour covering a space, if we exceed the boundary of noticeability, we are no longer able to apprehend the two coloured areas in their respective positions.25 In these writings of Brentano, it is above all the analysis (begun in Descriptive Psychology) of the parts of the whole that requires further elaboration, because particular properties like direction or velocity are now attributed to parts (see below).

The following passage, written by Brentano in 1914, clearly shows the manner in which his theory of continua weaves together his investigations conducted in immediately previous years: in particular, those on the differ-

23. See Chapter 3.
25. Brentano 1988c, dictate ‘On what is continuous’ (1914), 1-44.
ence between intuitive and abstract presentations, on the three-dimensionality of the objects of presentation, and on the temporal modes. Brentano writes:

Thus I affirm once more, and with still less contestability, that the concept of the continuous is acquired not through combinations of characteristic notes taken from different intuitions and experiences, but through abstraction from unitary intuitions.

One does not need to search longer, either, for the intuitions at issue, since, as I dare to assert and shall attempt to prove, it is much rather the case that every single one of our intuitions – both those of outer perception as also their accompaniments in inner perception, and therefore also those of memory – bring to appearance what is continuous. Thus in seeing we have as object something that is extended in length and breadth which at the same time shows itself clearly as allowing us to distinguish a front and a rear side and thus as characterised as the two-dimensional boundary of something extended in three dimensions. And since this continuous something presents itself to us who see as being our primary object, we see also at the same time and as it were incidentally, our seeing itself, that is, we are conscious of ourselves as ones who see, and we find that to every part of the seen corporeal surface there corresponds a part of our seeing, so that we also, as seeing subjects, appear to ourselves as something continuously manifold. And still more, what appears to us first and foremost is rest and motion; so also persistence and gradual change appear to us as primary qualitative objects. This happens in that, whilst certainly in our perceptual presentation of the primary object we are never able to present the same place filled with two qualities simultaneously, still we are able to present it as filled with one quality as present, with another as most recently past, and with yet another as further past, whereby the transition from present to further past takes place in an entirely continuous manner. Thus once more we appear to ourselves, in seeing phenomenal qualities following each other in a temporally continuous way or in seeing them persisting continuously in time, as something that is continuously manifold.

Given, therefore, that what is continuous is present in every intuition, the whole question as to the origin of the concept seems to have been dealt with in the simplest way. We have after all seen that this concept is gained not through any intricate process of combination, but rather in an immediate fashion through simple abstraction from our intuition.26

Having emphasised the extremely fragmentary form of the texts constituting the *Philosophical Lectures on Space, Time and the Continuum* and those of *The Theory of Categories*, we may now examine the following individual features of Brentano’s continua, grouping them thematically as (i) Extensity, (ii) Multiplicity, (iii) Boundary, (iv) Plerosis, (v) Multiformity, and (vi) Teleiosis.

As mentioned, Brentano distinguishes between phenomenal extendedness (Extensität) and geometric extension (Ausdehnung). Falling within the extendedness of perceptive continua, in fact, are also perceptive illusions, the phenomena of amodal perception, the phenomena of asensory perception, stereokinetic phenomena, and even the phenomena of transparency.

Extendedness is a feature of actual perceptive phenomena: that is to say, it concerns the structure and the forms of filling of presentations by the sensory modalities, of which, according to Brentano and research on the psychology of sense, there are essentially three:

1. Colour
2. Sound
3. Quality of contactile sense (Spürsinn) (touch, taste, olfaction).

As already noted, according to Brentano, and contrary to Lotze, the intensity of sensations derives from its extensity, in the sense that it is reducible to the oppositions between full and empty, and between light and dark. Brentano consequently does not consider intensity to be a characteristic note of sensation. Instead, sensation consists of:

1. Quality, and lightness/darkness and saturation
2. Place (i.e., Sinnesraum), and individuation on the basis of the impenetrability of qualities.

According to Brentano, therefore, every place in the space of the senses can be filled by one single qualitative instance (i.e. by sound, colour, or quality of contactile sense), so that the intensity of sensations therefore depends on the greater or lesser fullness of the phenomenal space, given that this space is proportional to the density of the places filled by the sensations themselves.

Brentano’s reduction of the intensity of what is sensed to sensory extensity carries a number of consequences. For example, according to Brentano, in the case of variations in the intensity of a phenomenon, what we perceive is not the same phenomenon with different degrees of completeness, but rather different things with the same degree of completeness. Thus, a sound heard as a continuous variation of intensity, or a colour seen as progressively fading away, are not the same sound or the same colour. They are instead different entities given in different ways in relation to their different locations in phenomenal space (in this case of sound or colour).

The aspects of metaphysics highlighted by Brentano’s theory of continua are in particular the relationship between substance and accident and the
existence of the parts and the whole. These aspects are closely connected with the distinction between primary and secondary continua, and with the concept of boundary.  

Continua, according to Brentano, are above all multiple. A first general distinction to be drawn is that between primary and secondary continua.

Primary continua are uniform (homogeneous) and endowed with constant direction and velocity. In particular, the primary continua consist of all differences of place, time and space.

Secondary continua are co-extensive with the former but heterogeneous, marked by different kinds of boundaries, and with different degrees of direction and velocity.

Moreover, time is a primary continuum with respect to space, and space is primary with respect to the secondary continua. As we have seen, according to Brentano and following Ueberweg, space as a whole is the homogeneous series of positions filled by qualitative instances which can be constructed according to structural laws, that is, according to the system of places.

For the perceptive field to be endowed with organization, the stimulation must not be homogeneous: in other words, qualitative discontinuities must occur. It is only with the perception of heterogeneity and discontinuity, in fact, that a localized surface can be perceived at a certain distance from the observer and as separated from him/her by an 'empty space'.

An example of the multiplicity of continua and the phenomena that derive therefrom is, according to Brentano, a square moving along a line, where the movement of the square is a secondary continuum of the primary continuum of space. Other examples of secondary continua at a different level of perceptive complexity are a redness extended on a surface, a body in movement, or a thought that unfolds in time.

Space comprises partial continua which consist only of certain positional phenomena: spatial perceptive forms, for example, are partial continua.

A further difference between the temporal continuum and the spatial continuum is that time is a continuum which exists only in its boundary, the moment-now of actual presentness. Vice versa, space exists in all directions as possibility of location, of presence, and of simultaneous order in perceptive phenomena. One part of space thus becomes the place of the phenomena currently under observation in the intentional presentation:

27. See Chapter 8.
28. See Chapter 5 on the modes of direct and indirect presentation.
Chapter 7: Continua

These considerations induce Brentano to affirm that:

1. In the primary continua, length is given by the magnitude of transition from one ‘point’ to another, with no change of degree, and with constantly different ‘surrounds’. The primary continua are therefore uniform and possess constant velocity and direction.

2. The secondary continua instead manifest change of direction, with different degree, intensity and velocity.

On the basis of these premises, in an essay of 1912 published in Philosophical Investigations on Space, Time and the Continuum with the title of ‘The Continuum’, Brentano also criticises Einstein’s position, arguing as follows:

Between that which is primarily continuous and that which is secondarily continuous there are significant differences of which we should not lose sight of. I emphasise in particular the fact that, in the case of primary continua, there is a certain pervasive and necessary uniformity which is only exceptionally present in the secondary continua. In the case of motion, the change of place is now rapid, now proceeds almost imperceptibly, and now is at complete rest (which, as the extreme case of deceleration, physicists would consider to be still a case of motion) so that the temporal change underlying the motion and the state of rest is devoid of any increase or decrease in its state of variation. This has long been recognized, and it is only today that this evident truth has come to be confused by Einstein. According to Einstein, in the passage between two temporal points there are times of considerably different lengths. Our common sense, which in this case is the evidence itself, raises its head in violent protest. The controversy continues to rage, but this would certainly not happen if closer consideration were made of the distinctive nature of the primary continuum compared to the secondary continuum. If there were times of different lengths between two points in time, then between two points in space there might also be two lines of different lengths, and the method of geometry to establish the congruence of triangles through the coincidence of their surfaces would entirely lose its validity. Yet the method is not invalid, because the multiplicity of the points present in the lines and in the spatial surfaces, like the multiplicity of moments in a stretch of time, belongs to the primary continuum.29

The critique against the theory of relativity, of which Brentano makes only passing mention, was carried forward by Kraus, in particular in his Offene Briefe an Albert Einstein und Max v. Laue (Open Letters to Albert Einstein and Max v. Laue) of 1925;30 but it was also a matter of debate among Marty,

30. See Kraus 1925. Einstein was unaware of these writings, despite Brentano’s presence in Zurich in 1916.
H. Bergmann and Einstein himself, all three of whom frequented the Prague *Circolo del Louvre* at that time.\footnote{See H. Bergmann 1929.}

Regardless of the validity of Brentano’s criticism of Einstein’s theory of relativity – which given his progressive blindness he could only have known imperfectly and moreover in one of its first formulations, probably that of 1905 – what should be borne in mind when examining these dictations, besides the fact that they were only preliminary reflections, is the pioneering nature of the investigation and Brentano’s adherence to a perception-based theory of continua.

The problem of concern to Brentano was still that of the relationship between an *external psychophysics* and an *internal psychophysics* – or in Aristotelian terms, the problem of assimilation – which had always constituted the core of his theory of intentional reference and of his descriptive psychology. From this point of view Brentano analysed the nature of continua on the basis of their appearance in the actual presentation, with all the complications which that endeavour entailed.

Historically, moreover, the relationship and connections between Brentano’s metaphysics and the physical and mathematical theories of the time are worth noting. Also in this case, a documented and critical reconstruction of the matter would be desirable, and even more so of the relationship between the metaphysical and mathematical approaches of other thinkers of the period, Cantor for example, or Brouwer, whose theories seem in many respects more compatible with Brentano’s.\footnote{Poli 2003.}

According to Brentano’s theory of continua, and contrary to Aristotle’s position, *existing in act* are not only continua but also their *individual part*: this acquires its specific character through the *mode* of its belonging to the continuum.

Brentano writes:

The boundary contributes to the existence of the continuum. This case of the boundary differs from that of the part: the boundary is nothing by itself and therefore it cannot exist prior to the continuum; and any finite part of the continuum could exist prior to the continuum […] No boundary can exist without being connected with a continuum. Therefore the continuum is also a *conditio sine qua non* of the boundary. But there is no specifiable part, however small, of the continuum, and no point, however it may be the boundary, which is such that we may say that it is the existence of *that* part or of *that* point which conditions the boundary. We might express this fact by saying that an indefinitely small part of the continuum is a condition of a boundary.\footnote{Brentano 1981b, 56.}
Perceptively, therefore, boundaries *never exist in isolation*. In perceptive reality there are no points, lines or surfaces as entities in themselves, *isolated from the field* and from the *surround* in which they are manifest. We may draw on Ueberweg’s theory to exemplify the layering and embeddedness of continua thus: a ‘point’ is the inner boundary of a ‘line’, a line is the inner boundary of a ‘surface’, and a surface is the inner boundary of a ‘solid’ (which is also Poincaré’s argument).

Brentano puts it as follows:

We can distinguish continua which exist only as boundary of some other continuous thing from those which belong as boundary to no other continuous thing. The line and the surface supply familiar examples of the first. A time can serve as an example of the second, and a body, too, may be considered as belonging to this class, although we shall see later that there appear to be objections to this idea. If something continuous is a mere boundary then it can never exist except in connection with other boundaries and except as belonging to a continuum which possesses a larger number of dimensions. Indeed this must be said of all boundaries, including those which possess no dimensions at all such as spatial points and moments of time and movement: a cutting free from everything that is continuous is from them absolutely impossible. And this allows us to grasp very clearly the topsy-turvy character of the above mentioned attempt at construction of the concept of the continuous through interpolation of fractional numbers, where every fraction is supposed to have existence without belonging to a series of fractions.

Boundaries, and among them also continuous boundaries, can be distinguished also however as inner and outer, as for example the mid point of a solid sphere is a inner boundary, a point on its surface an outer boundary, and the same holds also of the top point of a cone. Thus also every surface which divides the sphere in two halves is an inner boundary, the surface of the sphere an outer boundary. The distinction is a consequence of the fact that for a boundary to exist it is required to belong to something continuous whose boundary it is, and to be connected with outer boundaries of the same continuum.34

To sum up: boundaries are *non-independent parts* or moments of the continuum which *contain only certain directions*. For example, a straight line contains all the positions or points that, with respect to a given point, show a definite and constant direction and its contrary direction. If we reduce the extension of a line, we obtain a point. In the case of a straight line, then, boundaries belong to both the directions of the continuum.35

34. Brentano 1988c, 10-11.
35. Note that this point set Brentano against Lipps in investigations of the psychology of sense. See Chapter 3.
Brentano notes:

The spatial nature of a thing may vary now more, and now less, with respect to time; but it varies always uniformly in respect to space. When we compare the spatial boundaries of extended things, thus lines and surfaces, we can speak of more or less gradual and even of sudden finite changes of direction, and we can speak of a greater or a lesser degree. Had Aristotle perceived this matter, he would certainly have had no occasion for speaking of the reality of that which is potential qua potential or of incomplete degrees of reality. The direction of a curve which varies continuously is not less actual than the constant direction of a straight line. Nor is the direction of a sharply curved line any less actual than that of a line whose curve is less extreme. It is quite obvious that the direction of a curved line is not less real than that of a line which is straight. It simply has a different direction or, if one prefers, a different form (If the term ‘direction’ were reserved for the straight line, then we would have to say that the changes in the form of the line may indefinitely approximate its direction. Then we could speak of a greater or less approximation. What we would have is similar to what we found in the case of motion and rest).36

Nor does the boundary between the two parts of a broken line consist of a sequence of points converging on a limit understood in a mathematical sense. For an empirical-experimental theory of continua there is only one point in the line, which lies between the two segments and belongs to both segments: there is, in other words, a coincidence of boundaries, because all the incident parts have the same boundary.37

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Consider the case of a coloured line and the point at which the line changes colour, for example from red to blue: according to a neo-Aristotelian theory of continua, the point is both red and blue in the sense that a coincidence of boundaries occurs within it (what Brentano called a case of “plerosis through contact”: see below). In fact, the point as such has no colour: it has the colour of the object of which it is a boundary, as happens in the case of the Rubin vase/profile figure.

Figure 4.

Or consider a rectangle sharply divided into two colours, red and blue.38

Figure 5.

Here, a red line and a blue line coincide, because the redness and the blue-ness covering the parts of perceptual space are superimposed.

The following figure provides an example of the complexity of the role performed by boundaries in actual perceptual wholes:

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38. This figure and the following have been printed achromatically in the text.
Take a grey ring which lies on a rectangle, half on a black surface and half on a white surface. The colour of the ring is relatively uniform, even though, according to the simultaneous brightness contrast, the half of the ring on the black surface should appear lighter than the other half on the white surface. If, however, we separate the two halves by a black thread stretched vertically on the boundary between the two surfaces, simultaneous contrast is immediately re-established. The fact of the matter is that the rectangle’s surface, behind the grey ring, taken as a whole, is unitary and seen as uniform. If we split it into two parts, into two sub-wholes, the two parts acquire a relative independence and the colour changes.

Boundaries and coincidence of boundaries may in principle be indefinite, as demonstrated by the phenomena of perceptual fusion (Verschmelzung) of the different aspects. Once again, the question concerns the negation of the intensive qualities in favour of the extensive ones, a topic which, as we recall, Brentano treated in Descriptive Psychology and then more thoroughly in a paper given in 1896 to the Congress of Munich on ‘Individuation, Multiple Quality and Intensity of Sensible Phenomena’.39

Imagine now a red and a blue chessboard.40

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40. Brentano 1988c, 8-9.
If the spatial extension of the red and blue squares is progressively reduced, we obtain the perception of violet. Between the two stages (i.e. the first stage when we distinctly sees red squares and the second when we sees blue squares) until the moment when the perception of violet arises, there is an
intermediate moment in which the chessboard is perceived as something simultaneously red and blue (think, for example, of a Seurat painting) but not in the same positions. This means that what happens is a superimposition of perceived attributes.

This ‘rendering’ comes about for mainly two reasons: the first is an assimilative phenomenon which occurs when the coloured areas are small but still distinguishable; the second concerns the blue, since the margin that it forms with other colours (generally with all colours, but especially with colours of the same brightness) is not stable but tends to ‘shift’, as in Helmholtz’s ‘flutering heart’ illusion.\footnote{Helmholtz 1867.} It is these two phenomena that produce the impression of movement.

What is continuous here assumes the character of ‘reddish’ and ‘bluish’ and again displays the feature of a coincidence of boundaries. These boundaries are both red and blue, but neither colour is in full ‘plerosis’ (direction).

Brentano writes:

Certainly we cannot distinguish the individual points and boundaries in the continuum that presents itself to us, just as we could not distinguish the individual red positions in the divided chessboard. Yet this does not hinder us in apprehending with complete certainty that boundaries and coincidence of boundaries are numberlessly present in the whole in question. The general character of that which is continuous, like, in the just-mentioned example, the character of that which participates in red and blue and is thus to be referred to as reddish and bluish, remains beyond all possible doubt. Differences in intensity in sensory phenomena of the sort that are revealed for example in the loud and the soft or in strong and weak smells, could also be called in aid to illustrate this law of noticeability. For if we investigate precisely how these differences in intensity are to be conceived, we find that we are dealing with a certain ‘density’ of phenomena in the sensory field. Unnoticeably small parts of the whole may be filled or empty. This emptiness is then manifested in the whole as a kind of weakening or diminishing of the phenomenon. The fact that no particular gap is to be distinguished does not leave room for doubt as to the presence of gaps, in particular as in general.\footnote{Brentano 1988c, 9.}

Brentano’s thesis of the extensity of phenomenal space and his principle of the impenetrability of qualities also induced him to deny the existence of intermediate colours and to affirm instead the existence of mixed ones. Colours other than the fundamental ones are therefore considered to be mixtures of the latter: hence, orange, violet, and so on, are perceived as such because the fundamental colours are present within them in spatial phenomenal particles below the threshold of perception.

\footnote{Helmholtz 1867.} \footnote{Brentano 1988c, 9.}
This is therefore a further case of extensive magnitudes, and in particular of a *gradual disappearance of extensive parts*, although it should be borne in mind that these are parts of the *sensible field*, not parts of the space of the physical world. In short, once again, this is a matter of the greater or lesser density of the *phenomenal manifestation* in the intentional presentation.

In this regard, while commenting on a dictation in *The Theory of Categories*, Kastil observes:

Thus if the two colours, red and blue, are alternated with each other in the noticeable parts of sensible space, then the whole is perceived as violet, hence as reddish blue, and within this whole both red and blue or pure red. If one of the two colours were removed from the visual field and replaced with empty (but not black) places, the resulting quality would have what is called diminished intensity. If both the filled and empty portions of the field were large enough to be noticed, we would perceive a clear juxtaposition of filled and unfilled places; we would not be misled into assuming that we are dealing here with any so-called intensive magnitude, or a magnitude that has no parts. Only because the individual parts are imperceptible and because all parts together produce the total impression of a less intense colour, do we have the illusion of a special kind of magnitude without parts, that must be distinguished from extensive magnitude. And so in fact, the so-called degrees of intensity pertain to extensive magnitudes which are divisible into parts. They pertain in other words to the greater or lesser density of a given appearance (below the threshold of noticeability of local differences).43

From the observation of the coincidence of boundaries in phenomenal space there also derives the important consequence that points, as the smallest parts of spaces, may themselves have parts.

The problem is closely connected with the idea of *movement* in Aristotle and his definition of it as *the realization of that which exists potentially in so far as it exists potentially*, and therefore as an imperfect or *incomplete entelechy*. According to Brentano, however, Aristotle’s conception of motion is not exhaustive. He comments:

Every motion has not only a certain speed (a characteristic that is to some extent accounted for by the more or less incompleteness of entelechy), but also a certain *direction*. Consequently one motion differs from another not only with respect to its momentary where, but also in respect to its whence and whither. By contrast, in the case of rest we have nothing to do with any whence or whither – unless we take these terms in an unusually extended sense and characterize the place where a body is as the one whence and whither it is. Obviously, *direction* must enter into the definition of motion.44

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The inclusion of the concept of the direction of continua in Aristotle’s conception of motion is therefore, according to Brentano, an improvement on that conception.

In continuation of the above passage Brentano writes:

This leads us to think of the spatial determination of a stationary point, as well as that of a moving point as a limit in respect to its temporal existence. In the case of rest, this limit exists within a continuous series of equal spatial determinations; in the case of motion, it exists within a continuous series of infinitesimally varying spatial determinations. In either case, the successive spatial determinations are causally connected series. That which is at rest remains at its place; that which is in motion changes from place to place – from a thing that is at one place to a thing that is at another place […]

It is clear, then, that in the case of motion we are dealing, not with degrees of actualization of a spatial determination, but with the actualization of a determination of an essentially different kind. It is not merely that the place of a point is characterized more definitively when it is at rest and less definitively when it is in motion at any given speed; rather, the two characterization are essentially different, despite their similarities. The nature of a boundary or limit is determined by the nature of the continuum to which it belongs.45

In other words, a single spatial determination is sufficient in the case of something at rest. Vice versa, in the case of something in motion, a multiplicity of determinations is required, but this is not a matter of a difference in the degree of reality. Brentano continues:

When a homogeneous mass fills a space continuously, its parts, like the parts of a blue surface, are all the same in quality, but differ from each other spatially. In respect of place, there are infinitesimal differences; every specific difference [i.e. every absolute spatial kind] exists only as a punctiform limit, and its nature is determined in part by what which is delimited. This is why the spatial nature of a point differs according to whether it serves as a limit in all or only in some directions. Thus, a point located inside a physical thing serves as a limit in all directions, but a point on a surface or an edge or a vertex serves as limit only in some directions. And a point in a vertex will differ in accordance with the directions of the edges that meet at the vertex. Thus coinciding points may yet be said to differ with respect to their spatial nature, with the result that it will not be absurd to say that one of them is blue and another red. (Similarly it is not absurd to say that there is something which now begins or ends, or that instead of it another thing had existed previously or now begins to exist. But it is absurd to say that the thing both exists and does not exist at the same point in time.).46

In short, direction (plerosis) plays a fundamental role in phenomenal continua. Perceptual continua display a direction, as a property of boundaries, which depends on the continuum that the boundary in question delimits (or, at higher level of complexity, the number of continua involved in the percept(s) and/or in the field(s)). According to Brentano, there may be fullness of direction, or otherwise, in which a boundary is connected with a continuum. Greater or lesser direction means that there are more or fewer directions in which a boundary is connected to a continuum. The direction of continua, in other words, coincides with its ‘liberty of movement’ or degrees of freedom.

Consider the following example:

Figure 8.

The figure shows that there can be direction of the central point internally to the sphere, direction of the individual points on the circumference, and so on; and then direction of the radii, of the diameter, of the circumference, with the difference that the direction of the central point is total (in the sense that the point can move in all directions), while the direction of the individual radii, or of the diameter, is limited. Moreover, every point on the circumference is wholly limited as to its freedom of movement.

Direction, like any multiplicity variation, admits of a more and of a less in the sense that it may be wider or more limited, and may have greater or smaller numbers of directions in the sense that degrees of freedom increase. Hence, from a perceptual point of view, as Brentano observed, the direction of a point of the interior of a cone – i.e. the directions in which it can move – is wider than that of a point on its surface; the direction of a point on its surface is wider than that of a point on its vertex. And also the direction of the vertex is wider, the less the cone is pointed. The question is of metaphysical importance because it relates to the concept of what is being in the proper sense. As Brentano writes, presenting a very modern idea:
No point can be anything detached from the continuum; indeed no point can be thought of apart from a continuum. When I think of a tip of a cone, I am thinking of one of the parts of the cone, one which has no other parts above it; its magnitude is left undetermined so that it can be thought of as smaller than any given part. The same is true of temporal extension. No point in time can exist separably, detached from any earlier or later point. And instead of saying that there is a temporally unextended point, it might be accurate to say that a temporally extended thing exists with respect to a point [\textit{ein Zeitlich Ausgedehntes bestehe einem Punkte nach}].

Other examples of the direction of continua are provided by coloured discs. For example, consider a non-rotating coloured disc divided into four quadrants: green, blue, red, yellow.

Brentano started with the questions of whether or not the ‘medium point’ is detachable, and of its colour, if any. According to Brentano, the medium point is divided, as he puts it, into a fourness of points, by which he means that the point is simultaneously green, blue, red and yellow.\textsuperscript{48} Which also signifies that the medium point is \textit{not detachable} from the continuum to which it belongs, because there is coincidence of points.

Consider also the mid-point of a disc and suppose that some of the quadrants of the disc are removed.

\textit{Figure 11.}

As each quadrant is removed, the \textit{direction diminishes} and the \textit{point becomes a boundary in fewer dimensions}. Here the medium point has $1/4$ \textit{direction} of the dark grey point of the dark grey quadrant.

\textit{Figure 12.}

\textsuperscript{48} Brentano 1988c, 16.
Take two crossing oblique lines: the point of their coincidence phenomenally splits into two and pertains to both the two lines.

*Figure 13.*

This obviously recalls the development of the theory in Wertheimer’s laws, in this case of *good continuity*.\(^4\)

More generally, direction influences the degree of grouping into perceptual units: in fact, elements that differ by 180˚ are not strongly grouped; by contrast, those that differ by only 45˚ produce strong grouping.\(^5\)

*Figure 14.*

Much more complex, though evident, examples of the role of direction in perception are phenomena of amodal completion (as Helmholtz himself remarked), where the direction of the contour of the occluded figure changes, or phenomena of texture segregation based on the orientation of the texture elements arise. The same holds for phenomena of *figure/ground* organisation.

49. Wertheimer 1923, En. tr., 83.
50. See Palmer 1999, 259.
The direction of continua also plays a major role in edge discontinuity. This consists in a sudden change in the direction of a contour, as is apparent in the corners of a square.\textsuperscript{51}

The perceptive points may also coincide with the parts, exactly as the parts may coincide with each other. In the case of a red disc, for example, the median point of the disc is also the point of origin of the various individual radii. Consequently, Brentano concludes, every point of a two- or three-dimensional continuum is an infinite (and compressed) collection of distinct points. It is for this reason that a geometrical or mathematical point is an idealized place. For the points have an intrinsic structure: indeed, from a perceptive point of view, a point is a place with different possible directions.

Boundaries, moreover, as already mentioned, may be external and internal. To understand this difference, consider the median point of a disc, and then a point on its circumference. Internal and external borders are of crucial importance in the formation of perceptive patterns. In fact, according to Brentano, the boundaries of the primary continua (space and time) are all internal. Vice versa, external boundaries are only identifiable in the qualitative filling of spatio-temporal structures according to the nature of internal presentation. In other words, discontinuity always arises and appears from an underlying spatio-temporal continuity. Examples are a region of space coloured in two different ways, or an object which starts from a state of rest to move from right to left.

Brentano’s analysis of the nature and role of perceptive boundaries leads him to distinguish further types of continua; for now, besides primary and secondary (multiple) continua, he distinguishes multiform continua as well; a further distinction which can be clarified by considering some examples of the boundaries of these latter type of continua. Examples of internal boundaries are the points on a disc which are boundaries in all directions. Consequently, an internal boundary is full to the maximum extent when it is a boundary in all the directions of the continuum which it connects. Conversely, an external boundary is such because it connects to a continuum in only some of the directions possible. Moreover, an external boundary is always connected to a discontinuity, and it is always a boundary between two secondary continua based on a primary continuum. Examples of external boundaries are points and lines on the surface of the disc, or a corner or a vertex, which are boundaries only in some directions and are made up of elements consisting of diverse parts.

A multiple boundary is every type of boundary of a secondary continuum: for example, a region of space consisting of detached squares placed one after

\textsuperscript{51} See Palmer 1999, 290.
the other in a continuous sequence. A multiform boundary is the boundary of a continuum which is unitary (not multiple) but variously differentiated: that is, constituted by non-independent parts or moments: for example, a seeing a region of space, a hearing, a thinking something in the actual moment.

In a dictation of 1914, On What is Continuous, Brentano points out that not even Aristotle had clarified the distinction between multiple and multiform when inferring a spatial extension of the sentient subject from the spatial extension of sense objects. He then goes on to comment:

The consideration of what is given when someone who momentarily presents to himself a temporal continuum could have kept him [Aristotle] from this false conclusion. It is not necessary that every part of the intuited continuum should be intuited by some corresponding part of the intuiting continuum. Indeed it can be shown that such is excluded by the unity of consciousness. If he who intuits a continuum should himself be a body, then, just as in a red surface the redness is repeated in every part and point, so the whole unified consciousness must apply to each and every part and point of the intuiting body. Aristotle however did not merely err in that he took insufficient account of the peculiarity of what is continuously manifold as opposed to what is continuously many. He also failed properly to conceive the continua themselves, in that he did not conceive them as unities which can just as well be described at the same time as pluralities. He believed, rather, that no unity can ever be a plurality, but rather that a unity is potentially a plurality and a plurality is potentially a unit.

The distinction between continuously many and continuously manifold does not properly obtain in relation to what is spatially continuous as it does in relation to what is temporally continuous. The spatially continuous is always continuously many. But still, one should not of course leave out of account the peculiarity of what is temporally continuous: that it exists only in one of its boundaries. One might suppose that this would in fact exclude entirely the existence of plurality, yet this is not the case in virtue of the two-sidedness of the temporal plerosis. Moreover there comes into consideration in regard to the temporally continuous not only that which exists but also that which is to be accepted or acknowledged as factual in other temporal modes.52

The last remarks remind one of the thesis of unity of consciousness presented in Psychology I. Thus, according to Brentano, whatever thing intuits a continuum is itself a continuous multiplicity (Vielfaches) and not a plurality (Vielem).

A good example of a multiform continuum is the one which originates from the acts of perceptive presentation: for instance, two places which are not consecutive and are independent of each other may be perceived together. An example of a multiple temporal continuum is a series of sounds in

52. Brentano 1988c, 34.
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sequence, while an example of a multiform temporal continuum is a melody or
the simultaneous perception of that sequence.

With respect to Brentano’s theory of continua, therefore, psychic acts or
intentional presentations – the foundations of his descriptive psychology – can
be defined as:

1. Multiform continua.
2. Topical continua (existing in all their parts).
3. Continua composed of homogeneous and connected parts.

Accordingly, the inner perception of an object takes the form of a multiform and temporally continuous continuum because of the temporal modes in
which the spatial qualities manifest themselves in accordance with the process
of original association (proteraesthesia). 53

Indeed, inner perception is the locus of original intuition of continua (rela-
tively to spatial and temporal objects) which unfold as perceptions of
themselves qua multiform continua. Brentano’s reflections on continua therefore
form the basis of a metaphysical theory founded on proprioception.

Perceptive continua also have a ‘teleiosis’ (velocity), which is the fullness
or otherwise of the velocity of qualitative change of continua and also influ-
ences their perceptive form. Velocity, then, expresses the change and
variability of perceptual form. Generally speaking, elements that move in the
same way in perception tend to be grouped together according to the law of
common fate. 54

To understand in detail what is meant by the characteristics of this primi-
tive, consider two concentric circles around a common fixed centre. The
curvature of the inner circle has less intermediate spatial loci to pass through
than has the curvature of the outer circle, i.e., it has more velocity.

Brentano illustrates the fact that the nature of a continuum is conditioned
and determined by the distinctive properties of the continuum with the follow-
ing example:

Consider a rectangle which passes by infinitesimal transitions from red to blue. The
red line with which it begins would differ in colour from the red line with which a uni-
formly red rectangle would begin. The colour of the red line could also be varied by
varying the length of the violet rectangle. 55

53. See Chapter 5.
54. See Palmer 1999, 258.
Consider next the case of a rectangle which changes in colour from left to right, from black to white, but instead remains unchanged in its colour from top to bottom.

In this case, observes Brentano:

That which is spatial manifests differences in degree of variation. It has a variable teleiosis (velocity of change), only in relation to its fourth dimension, as a boundary of what is three-dimensional, not however in relation to the way things stand within those three remaining dimensions in which the body presently exists. This is similar to the way in which one can speak of a complete teleiosis in the vertical dimension in the case of the colour-rectangle varying in the horizontal direction while remaining constant in the vertical, even though each vertical line manifests an incomplete teleiosis in every point in so far as it is a boundary in other directions. Hence a body does in fact have the character of a primary continuum in the three dimensions in which it presently exists.\textsuperscript{56}

In this case, from left to right the rectangle has lesser velocity at every point, like the boundary in other directions. Vice versa, the rectangle has full velocity from top to bottom (which is what Brentano called “variation of plerosis”).

This is a case of an increasing velocity which, if we draw an oblique line from left to right, phenomenically gives rise to a curved line which is alternately black and white. A similar example is obtained, in perception, if we simply light up a transparent sphere. Its luminance, in fact, decreases very rapidly as it moves downwards.

Another example concerns the velocity of the radii of a coloured disc. Consider a homogeneous red disc. Its radius $R$ is perfectly red.

\textsuperscript{56} Brentano 1988c, 25.
Then take another disc, divided into two parts, red and blue. As Brentano writes:

Suppose a coloured disc varies regularly from one radius to another, in that, after proceeding through one semicircle, it has passed from pure red to pure blue and then again from pure blue back to pure red. Would then every radius manifest from the centre to the periphery completely the same colour nuance, or one that somehow varied? One seems commonly to be of the opinion that for every radius the colour-nuance is the same from the centre to the periphery; and therefore one calls, e.g., one of the radii pure red and another pure blue. However, a more careful investigation shows that this opinion is marked by contradictions and that it does not take account of the fact that every boundary, because it exists only in the context of the continuum to which it belongs as boundary, must itself show up differences in reflection of differences in this continuum. Hence red, as the beginning of a slower or faster variation towards blue, cannot be red in the same perfection; and still less can it be as perfectly red as in the case where it belongs as boundary to a uniformly red surface. And thus also too, a body is not at a place with the same perfection or completeness when it is passing through it slowly or quickly as when it is at rest.57

In the second case, then, the red radius forming the boundary between the red and the blue semispheres is not as perfectly red as the radius in the red semisphere because it is a boundary beginning in variation toward blue.

Now consider the segment separating the differently coloured parts of the disc. According to Brentano, the teleiosis at the median point is greater than it is at the point on the circumference, because the variation from red to blue is slower on the circumference than at the median point of the disc. Hence every radius of the disc, as the boundary of what is variable, is subject to a difference of variation.

Again according to Brentano, as far as the velocity of a continuum is concerned, being in a place with greater velocity does not mean being there with a ‘diminished intensity of being’; rather, it means being in that place in a specifically different mode. This, obviously, is a consequence of his theory on the sensible qualities.

It is worth noting that some intuitions of Brentano’s theory of continua have been confirmed (or given rise to further analysis) by Gestalt psychology, and more generally by experimental phenomenology, as shown by some of the examples given.

The merit of Brentano’s theory is that it highlights the fact that the complexity of phenomena-in-act in perception derives from the superimposition of diverse continua, multiple and multiform, concomitant with each other, in actual presentness, thereby confirming some of the key hypotheses of Brentano’s descriptive psychology. Moreover, his theory is the first step towards a geometry of cognitive (perceptual) space.

Brentano’s theory of continua was subsequently given dynamic development by some of his pupils. For example, both Husserl and Meinong considered the extensity of continua to be the product of a continuous series of increments (Steigerung) in any whatever phenomenal property, even temporal, of continua themselves. From this point of view, every incremental series becomes a total continuum, so that every actual extension is a part (or section) of the incremental series of phenomena in a particular perceptive field (for example, the series of the pitches of sounds versus the series of their intensities).

Characteristic of all incremental phenomena, moreover, is the transposition of forms and the fact they can be related to the opposition and continuous transition between light and dark in all the sensible fields. The problem of the homogeneity and the heterogeneity of sensations thus reduces to their lightness or darkness in analogous sense – an outcome of the Researches in the Psychology of Sense – so that the lightness of tastes, for example, corresponds to the lightness of temperatures, etc. Experimental analyses based on these
theories have been conducted mainly by Benussi, Selz and Bühler, who thus laid the bases of intermodal perception analysis.

Events following the Second World War dispersed Brentano’s cultural legacy. Moreover, the dominant paradigm after the 1930s prevented its reappearance. Nowadays, however, analyses conducted in various sectors of contemporary science, that of vision for example, have resumed issues examined by Brentano – for example, the nature of visible space – in similar terms.

In this regard, the analyses that come closest to Ueberweg’s and Brentano’s conception of perceptive space have been those by Musatti, a pupil of Benussi’s. Musatti believed that the general principle of homogeneity governed all perception, and it was to this principle that he ultimately related all the various factors analysed by Wertheimer. Specifically, according to Musatti, spatial shapes constitute themselves in the perceptual world in a manner such that the elements unified in a formal complex have a specific qualitative homogeneity.

More recently, a Brentanian development of the analysis of forms has been conducted by Koenderink, whose theory of homology fields emphasises that one of the fundamental features of such space is a constant shifting among qualitatively different perspectives of the same object (a cube, for example) and among different objects according to ‘family resemblances’ (those that enable us, for example, to pass conceptually from the animal species to the human species via the construction of imaginary animals like the satyr or the Minotaur).59

At the basis of this original analysis of visible space is the notion that by symbolizing the different perspectives of an object in the visual field as circles, and the transitions among the different generic perspectives as lines, it is possible to describe the qualitative visual potential of objects.50 In other words, the theoretical core of Ueberweg’s geometrical proposal, which Brentano developed in his theory of continua, more than being an historical curiosity, correctly intuits the complexity of the space of intentional presentations.

Chapter 8

Reverse Aristotelianism:
The metaphysics of accidents

1 THE BIZARRE DISTINCTION

In the light of the foregoing discussion, and on the basis of the texts available – and therefore with a certain degree of caution – we may now address a number of concluding questions on Brentano’s thought.

Firstly, in what way, in Brentano’s final writings, did the theory of intentional reference – filtered through his theories of the indirect modification of the temporal modes of presentation, parts and the whole, the existential judgement, his reist theory of the contents of presentation, and his theory of continua – come to constitute an original metaphysics, albeit one existing only in outline form? Secondly, do these outcomes give rise to a theory of consciousness or, more in general, to a descriptive theory of intentionality? Thirdly, does the evolution of Brentano’s thought call into question his original theory of inner perception set out in *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, or is the world still, so to speak, represented from within? Finally, does the concept of act so distinctive of Brentano’s descriptive psychology now acquire sharper definition?

As we seek to answer these questions we may again draw upon a series of writings – this time those edited in 1933 by Kastil and published under the title *Kategorienlehre (The Theory of Categories)* – although they must obviously be read in conjunction with Brentano’s other writings of the period.

Once again, the framework for the multitude of cross-references in these final dictations, which sum up large part of Brentano’s previous investigations, is Aristotle’s thought – Brentano’s interest in which therefore spanned the extremely long period from approximately 1862 to 1916. The dictations from 1907 onwards, but especially those of 1914 to 1916, constantly return to the problem of the diverse meanings of being in Aristotle, and they again analyse the doctrine of the categories that so exercised the young Brentano.1

The central theme of these dictations is what Brentano termed the ‘bizarre distinction’ between being in the strict sense and being in the extended sense,

1. See Chapter 2.
between *existence* and *being*. Moreover, as already pointed out, the set of Brentano’s dictations in the last years of his life require constant intertextual cross-referencing.

For Brentano, what is distinctive of being in the strict sense, or in the proper sense, is *existing*; and that which exists is an *individual*, something *fully determined*, which therefore does not coincide with the ‘one’ in Aristotle’s sense. Contrary to Aristotle, in fact, Brentano argues that there exists a *science of the individual*:

The term *Universal* has been opposed to the term *Individuum* (one might also say *Individualisatum*) (Individualized). This same extended distinction is also made with reference to thinking. Thus one may contrast universal and individual things which are objects of thought. A person is said to have an individual as an object of his thought when he thinks of something in a way which is not completely determinate but which is sufficiently so that only one thing can correspond to it. And we also say, of things that exist in the strict sense, that they are individuals.\(^2\)

Existing is not a specification of being, as Bolzano maintained, adopting the interpretation put forward by Suarez to the effect that being is only a particular section of that which is possible.\(^3\) What exists for Brentano are individuals, and therefore also things, collectives, and parts of things and of collectives, substances and accidents. The concept is easily exemplified by thinking of an appearance in the perceptual field, and of its parts, which are perceptual unities as well. As Brentano writes, pertaining to being in the strict sense are:

- every individual thing,
- every multiplicity [*Mehrheit*] of things,
- and every part of a thing.

Every multiplicity of things is a thing and every part of an individual thing is a thing. If someone conceives something in individual terms, then one conceives a thing. And if someone conceives something in general terms, then one is also conceiving a thing. Among things in the strict sense, then, are every substance, every multiplicity of substances, every part of a substance, and also every accident. Every accident contains its substance as a part, but the accident is not itself a second, wholly different part that is added to the substance. The same is true of a multiple accident, which extends a substance in different ways but does not add anything entirely new to it. And the same applies to multiple accidents of the second or higher order. In one sense the accident is a thing other than the substance; but in another sense each is predicated of the other. One must guard against misconceiving the distinction. If the substance is predicated of an accident, then the predication asserts not that substance and accident are identical, but that the accident contains the substance. If the accident

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is predicated of the substance, then the predication asserts that the substance is contained in the accident. The subject is not wholly the same thing as that of which it is the subject; yet the predicate is not strictly a second thing existing alongside of the subject; it would be a second thing in the strict sense only if it did not contain the first as a part.4

As we have seen, Brentano’s theory of existential judgements identifies the subject and its determination in the present mode (SP is) of the actual presentation. It therefore emphasises the primary, ontological, role of the copula, that is, of being in the strict sense.5 The judgement correlated to the actual presentation (SP is) makes no differentiation between theme S and rheme P, between ‘that of which something is said’ and ‘that which is said about it’. As we know, for Brentano the form and matter of the judgement are a whole. This is the crux of the entire question and of Brentano’s revision of Aristotle’s metaphysics, because it casts severe doubt on the predicative view of being.

In this manner, therefore, Brentano’s analysis of predication and his theory of continua combine to identify being in the strict sense with that which is now, given in the present mode, and in inner perception, in the intentional presentation of a multiple and multifarious boundary: the thinker.

Perhaps we can say that the concept of being in the proper sense coincides with the concept of that which is now or present. But everything that is now or present is a temporally extended thing which is now present with respect to one moment after another.6

Everything that is now is temporally present. It would be absurd, for Brentano, to hypothesise a momentary existence devoid of temporal extension.

He writes:

If we ask, ‘What, then, is there in the strict sense of the word?’ the answer must be: ‘That which is accepted or affirmed in the modus praesens.’ More precisely: ‘Whatever there is, in the strict sense, is a thing which is to be correctly accepted or affirmed in the modus praesens.’ For nothing other than a thing can be correctly accepted or affirmed in this way. Indeed, nothing other than a thing can ever be correctly rejected or denied. For only things, and nothing else, can be object of thought (whatever the temporal mode may be). For the name thing is the most general of all names; it is so general that it designates whatever falls under any other concept.7

5. See Chapter 5.
What, though, does Brentano mean by thing? This is indubitably a complex concept, the interpretation of which has always been problematic, for it apparently comprises an ambiguity. Suffice it to consider the copious correspondence between Brentano and Marty on the matter in the early 1900s, part of which has been edited by Mayer-Hillebrand and, as already mentioned, published as *The Detachment from Unreal*.

Brentano has the concept cover corporeal things (i.e. things spatially and qualitatively located), universals (the same things as the things in which they are present), and temporal things. He writes:

A metaphysical theory may begin with the following explication of words: By *that which is*, when the expression is used in the strict sense, we understand a thing; for example, a body, a mind, or a topoid of more or fewer than three dimensions. A part of a body or of a topoid may be also called a thing. And so a number of things taken together may be also called a thing. But it would be wrong to suppose that the two parts of a thing taken together constitute an additional third thing. For where we have an addition the things that are added must have no parts in common. Thus we may say, for example, that a triangle has three angles, but not that it has three pairs of angles: angles A and B form a pair, as do B and C, and also C and A, but each of these pairs has a part in common with each of the others.8

The concept of thing, moreover, does not coincide with the concept of physical body in the classical sense, but rather, at least in the first instance, with the concept of *bodily substance*. Brentano observes that substances as such belong to the objects of our experience and are by no means given to us *a priori*. Outer perception presents us with bodily [körperliche] substances which are specified in many different ways, and differentiated between two lines, of which one can be called spatial and the other qualitative. Ascending these two lines from the specific to the more general, we arrive at the concept of corporeal as being that which *is* in some manner or other.

Once again, in the background to these dictations is Brentano’s rejection of the doctrine of intensive qualities, a legacy from his studies in *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* and *Descriptive Psychology*, and his reaffirmation of the principle of indiscernibles, which he set out in *Researches in Sense Psychology*. A point to be constantly borne in mind when reading these dictations, therefore, is that the space of outer perceptions is the space of the senses, not the space of classical physics, whose real places are filled by determinations which remain transcendent and which can only be associated with the measurable effects that they produce. As Brentano had constantly argued since 1874, ‘physical’ phenomena are for us nothing but ‘the objects of inten-

tional reference’. They are therefore objects internal to the field of the presentational continuum:

Those who have accepted the traditional doctrine [of intensive qualities] have failed to say that we are here concerned with magnitude in an extended sense of the term. But if there can be said to be magnitude in an extended sense, this is because of a relation to magnitude in the strict and proper sense – i.e., to magnitude that is divisible into equal parts. Thus, the so-called intensity of motion is related to the length of time and to that of the distance that is covered. The intensity of a sensible quality is a function of these magnitudes: those of the spatial parts of the sense that are filled by the quality and the amount of space that would be filled if there were no unfilled gaps or empty places between those parts.9

As regards his theory of substance and accidents, and in justification of his critical position on Aristotle’s theory of specific differences, Brentano suggested a distinction between specific homostoichetic differences (or monostoichetic ones related by subordination, like ‘coloured thing’ and ‘red thing’) and specific heterostoichetic differences (or pleiostoichetic differences of the same genus or same individual, like ‘direction’ and ‘velocity’). On the former distinction Brentano writes:

Let us consider an example – an individual red dot whose localization at \( L \) distinguishes it from another red dot at \( O \). Were the first dot to be transformed into a blue one it could still be located at \( L \), but having being altered qualitatively it would not longer be the same individual dot. The determination ‘red’ contains the determination ‘spatial’; the determination ‘located at \( L \)’ contains the general determination ‘qualitative’. Consequently, by ascending from the concept red thing to the concept colored thing and from the concept colored thing to the concept thing that is qualitatively determined, we reach the simple concept of corporeal thing, that is to say, the concept of a thing which is spatial and qualitative. The individual is thus subsumed under one genus in respect of the two proximate specific differences.10

In other words, outer perception presents its objects as individuated, spatially impenetrable and localized objects in which there occurs a simultaneous presence of perceived qualities. Moreover, accidental determinations are connected by subordination to substantial differences, while substantial differences are often connected to each other. Affirming the existence of a thinker, as Brentano repeated almost obsessively in his dictations, means affirming the existence of a thinking something.

The problem of accidental and absolute determinations was central to Brentano’s entire doctrine from his earliest writings onwards. In the light of his theory of continua he now writes:

What distinguishes a relative determination from an absolute determination? The answer is this. Whenever one thinks a relative determination *in recto*, then one also thinks of something *in obliquo* at the same time. Thus, one who thinks of a person seeing is also thinking *in obliquo* of something colored that is thus seen. If that which is thought *in recto* is a relative determination of real significance for some substance, then the correlative attribute can be a mere *denominatio extrinseca*. For example, the correlative of that which is thinking is that which is thought, and nothing is changed in the thing by reason of its being thought; indeed, the thing need not even exist in order to be thought. The same holds for the agent which is correlative to the patient. Nothing changes in the agent insofar as it is active, and a thing that produces lingering effects need not exist at all when these effects are produced. And this is why the correlatives here are *denominationes extrinsecae*.¹¹

On the basis of the considerations Brentano disagrees with Aristotle on another point, namely that things may fall under several different *summa genera* because there cannot be a multiplicity of overlapping direct specifications.

His analysis of the object of intentional reference and its parts, in fact, induced Brentano to develop a specific criterion for the individuation of being which differed both from the formulation given to it by Avicenna and Leibniz (individualization of the general idea in a particular individual) and from that of Thomist origin (specific type or singular and concrete spatio-temporal existence).

For Brentano, the principle of individuation of an entity – as it intentionally exists – consists in what distinguishes it in content from other things that fall under the same concept in which it can be thought. For example, what marks off the *red* from the *coloured* cannot be thought: it is in this difference, therefore, as regards quality, that the individuality or haecceity of the entity in question consists. In other words, the concept of *red thing* contains within itself the concept of *coloured thing*.

I may subsequently specify a *coloured thing* as a *red thing*, a *coloured thing* as a *two-foot-long thing*, then consider a *two-foot long thing that is coloured and flavoured*, and also *red and sweet*, and so on, thus obtaining a series of specifications which range from a *species specialissima* to a *summus genus* which cannot be generalized further. By rejecting Aristotle’s claim that one and the same individual cannot be defined by means of diverse proximal

differences of the genus under which it falls, therefore, Brentano affirms that the concept of ens reale – or thing – is the only summus genus.\textsuperscript{12}

Moreover, Brentano’s theory of substance, his theory of continua, and his theory of intentional reference are different facets of the same metaphysical problem, given that red thing, red and coloured thing, and so on, contain a spatial determination, a qualitative localization and a temporal determination. They are therefore elements of the presentational continuum already analysed in Descriptive Psychology.\textsuperscript{13}

In Brentano’s final dictations, the analyses conducted in Psychology II and III, which marked the shift to the reist phase of his thought, induced him to concentrate (i) on the characteristics of the parts of things (therefore on the parts of the entia realia), and in particular (ii) on the characteristics of their fictitious parts.\textsuperscript{14}

As regards the former aspect – the characteristics of the parts of wholes – according to Brentano, and in opposition to Aristotle, although a whole without parts cannot exist (it must have at least one part), a part can be just as actual as the whole. Vice versa, the existence of a part does not necessarily imply the existence of the whole. Specifically:

Among the things that have parts, there are certain wholes which are not composed of a multiplicity of parts. Such a whole would seem to be a thing which is such that one of its parts has been enriched but not as a result of the whole acquiring a second part. One example of such an entity is a thinking soul. When it ceases to think it remains the same soul. But when it starts to think again, no second thing has been added to that entity which is the soul. What we have here, then, is not like what we have when one stone is laid alongside another or when we double the size of a body. In the latter case, the enlarged body is made up of two things, one of which is the added part and neither of which contains the other. By contrast, the thinking soul contains the soul essentially (sachlich), just as the specific difference red contains the concept color conceptually. This fact is readily misunderstood. Thus one has been led to say that the actively thinking thing is added to that thing which is the soul. All so called abstract terms, it would seem, are rooted in this fiction. But the thinking activity conceived abstractly is just as little a thing as a contemplated man or the future king.\textsuperscript{15}

The relations that distinguish the part/whole relationship of things therefore have one-sided separability (as in the case of the red/colour relation, or of thinking about and simultaneously desiring a friend) or mutual separability (as

\textsuperscript{12} Brentano 1981b, 29.
\textsuperscript{13} See Chapter 4.
\textsuperscript{14} Brentano 1981b, 51ff.
\textsuperscript{15} Brentano 1981b, 47-8.
in the cases of bodies and collections where every part is separable from the others). As regards the second aspect – the characteristics of the fictitious parts of things – Brentano observes:

There are other mistakes that arise when words that function in our ordinary language as grammatical names are taken to be names in logical sense. Apparently some words came to be treated as names because it was assumed, erroneously, that certain *entia rationis* were actually *parts* of things. Thus the parts of a definition are distinguished from one another, and it is sometimes that they are ‘logical parts’ of the things that fall under the definition.\(^{16}\)

When we engage in categorization, for example, and designate a cat by referring to its ‘feline nature’, what we are actually referring to is a ‘part’ of the individual animal; when we refer to the cat as a ‘mammal’, we are instead referring to a ‘part’ of its feline nature; when we designate it as ‘vertebrate’, we are referring to a ‘part’ of its animal nature; when we designate it as ‘corporeal’, we are referring to its organic nature; when we designate it as ‘substantial’ to a ‘part’ of its corporeal nature; and so on. Moreover, mammal, vertebrate, and so on, are not *parts* in the *strict sense* of the individual thing: they only demonstrate that several concepts can be associated with one word (cat). Brentano thus shows that the conceptual description of a whole – whether this is an object of the space of the senses or a mental construct – is *not given by the sum* of its individual definitional parts but rather by the *specific mode of their relation* or connection. From this it obviously follows that no universal *is* in the strict sense.

The question of the *relation* between a whole and the various types of its parts – as put forward in Brentano’s critique of Aristotle’s contention that none of the parts of an actual thing can be itself an actual thing – also has a close bearing on the question of the continua, and with particular regard to the concept of ‘boundary’.\(^{17}\)

According to Brentano, whilst we cannot conceive a continuum as an infinite *discrete plurality* (*Mehrheit*), we can certainly conceive a continuum as a *continuous multiplicity* (*Vielheit*), and in particular as a *continuous multiplicity of boundaries*.

Brentano writes:

Indeed we can conceive it as a continuous multiplicity of boundaries. The boundaries do not exist in and for themselves and therefore no boundary can itself be an actual thing [*ein Reales*]. But boundaries stand in continuous relation with other boundaries

\(^{16}\) Brentano 1981b, 52. See Chapter 6.

\(^{17}\) See Chapter 7.
and are real to the extent that they truly contribute to the reality of a continuum. This
can be demonstrated by the angle of a tangent of a circle: when it is multiplied by the
continuous multiplicity of the length of one-quarter of the circumference, it is exactly
equal to a right angle. (Just as there are unnamed numbers, so there are unnamed con-
tinuous multiplicities which stand in precise relations of magnitude to one another).18

The problem raised by the notion of the continuum as a _continuous multiplicity of boundaries_ is the following: is or is not the boundary a part of the
continuum? According to Brentano there are two different cases involved
here, for the boundary is nothing to itself and therefore cannot exist previously
to the continuum of which it is the boundary, while every finite part of the
continuum may exist previously to the continuum itself.

He explains as follows:

No boundary can exist without being connected to a continuum. Therefore the contin-
um is also a _conditio sine qua non_ of the boundary. But there is no specifiable part,
however small, of the continuum, and no point, however near it may be to the bound-
ary, which is such that we may say that it is the existence of _that_ part or of _that_ point
which conditions the boundary. We may express this fact by saying that an indefinite
small part of the continuum is a condition of the boundary. But such a statement
would not clarify the matter and it could not be itself understood apart from the
account that we have given.19

The boundary therefore does not coincide with the concept of ‘part’, and
the condition of its existence is not the actuality of the series but an _indefi-
nitely small part_ of the continuum itself. In the case of the temporal and
spatial continuum, for example, the indefinitely small parts consist respec-
tively of temporal moments (chronoids) and parts of space (topoids). Obviously, a concrete act of presentation always comprises a _multiplicity of qualities simultaneously covering a spatial location in a duration_, a point
already made in _Psychology_.20

Brentano’s analysis of the parts of the wholes of presentation thus merges
with the reflections of the last years of his life on velocity and direction of
continua, because a boundary can be such in one or more directions, and dif-
ferences of direction (place or quality) indicate the differing degrees of
existence, while a change in the velocity of the continuum also causes a varia-
tion in the velocity of the boundary.21

20. See Chapter 4.
As we saw, Brentano exemplifies his theory of continua just outlined with a rectangle which changes from red to blue through infinitesimal transitions, where he shows that the colour of the initial red line of the rectangle can be varied by altering the length of the purple rectangle. As regards objects at rest and in motion, he writes:

A point that is at rest cannot be said to be here in the same sense as that in which a point in motion can be said to be here. And in the latter sense, the nature of the here would also depend upon the speed and direction of the moving point, and in particular upon the circumstances whether these are constant or whether they are varying continuously. It is only by reference to such facts that we can understand the following situation without falling into contradiction: the different points of a radius of a rotating disc would seem to be subject to a greater or to a smaller continuously multiplicity of spatial determinations; yet they are all subject to the same continuous multiplicity of temporal determinations.22

Brentano affirms again in these writings that differences of velocity and direction pertain directly to the boundaries of the continuum. For example, the quantum of blue in a dot increases or decreases to the same extent as does the quantum of its spatial nature. In the same way, the direction of a curve which constantly varies is no less actual than the constant direction of a straight line. The difference between the two lines therefore consists only in their different directions, or in other words, in the different forms perceived.

According to Brentano, not only substances but also accidents comprise a part/whole relation, in the sense that the accident (as in the case of the boundary of a continuum) contains the substance as its part. Moreover, just as a substance can be the subject of an accident, so an accident can be the subject of another accident, in a progressive superimposition. It is precisely this that happens in intentional reference:

Consider someone to whom something is presented [eines Vorstellendes]: this accident, qua someone to whom something is presented, will have a substance as its subject; and if now it accepts or acknowledges that which is presented, then this accident may itself be subject of one who is believing. At least this is true in certain cases – provided that the presentation and the acknowledgement are not cases of secondary consciousness.23

In other words, the concrete intentional reference consists of a multiple and multiform continuum which unfolds from an initial accidental whole which has within itself its substance as its part. This is a complete reversal of

Aristotle’s position. In Brentano’s metaphysics accidents are wholes and substances are parts of the accidental whole. Substance is that part of the accidental whole that individuates the accident: specifically, it is the ultimate subsisting part – the part that subsists without itself containing any part that subsists. From the point of view of continua, substance is defined as the bearer of the variations in velocity and direction that pertain to the boundaries as modes of their unfolding. The point is important, because it shows a way to have direct access to consciousness as a whole, however definitively given under the perspective of proprioception.

2 THE ACCIDENT OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The concept of ‘act’ – which had also characterized the development of Brentano’s empirical psychology – always performed a double role, psychological and metaphysical, in his thought. Moreover, the concept was never made entirely clear, probably because of this twofold valence.

It will be remembered that the definition given by Brentano in 1874 apparently comprised an intrinsic ambiguity, of which he himself was aware. Firstly, the concept of the unitariness of the psychic phenomenon is problematic, owing to the presence of the intentional act’s two objects of reference and of its double direction. Secondly, according to Brentano’s theory of immanence, the primary object of the intentional reference cannot exist outside the mind, but at the same time the intentional act never produces, in the mind, the occurrence of an ‘object qua object’, that is, a thought of an object or a thought object. The perception of something red, for example, is always caused by a cause external to the intentional reference. The specificity of the intentional reference, however, consists precisely in the relations that the smallest noticeable differences have one with respect to the other, a factor of qualitative nature which is given in inner perception. As Brentano affirmed in Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint, each barely noticeable increase in sensation is not equal; it is only equally noticeable (of which, by the way, there is today quite a large body of psychological evidence). From this point of view, sensorial qualities perceptible at a location of the space of sense constitute the elements (jnd) of superimposed parts of the whole of consciousness.

In the light of subsequent works and of the outcomes of Brentano’s doctrine of the categories, the intentional reference is thus specified as simultaneity of specific homostoichetic differences subordinated and related.

24. See Chapter 3.
one to the other which constitute a real unitary accident. In other words, the act of intentional reference presupposes the existence of an ultimate subject (psychic substance) which grows modally through accidental determinations. Brentano writes:

The simultaneous relation to the primary and secondary object is certainly given in one and the same accidental activity; similarly, we find that the relations involving the mode of presentation, of judgment, and of emotion are combined in a unitary way. With any change in our thinking in one respect, the whole of our thinking would have to become different at the same moment; yet the way the thinking whole is related to his subject is invariably the same. But that the whole simultaneous consciousness in fact constitutes one unitary accident is apparent from this fact: it is encompassed by a unitary secondary consciousness without which an evident comparison of the parts would be impossible […] As mentioned above, in our mental life we often experience a change as a result of which certain attributes fall away without being replaced. A person who hears and sees, ceases to hear while continuing to see; a complicated thought occasionally supervenes upon a sense perception and then ceases, with no other thought taking its place. In such cases we are dealing with the simple subtraction [Entfall] or addition [Hinzutritt] of determinations. Now, since every determination would belong to the definition of the whole, an individual would be fully given – with or without the determination – and it would have all that is needed for complete determination. But this is impossible. If a logical determination of the individual could fall away, and if it were not replaced by another positive determination, then what would remain would be, not an individual but only a universal. This is what happens, for example, when I subtract the qualitative difference from the concept of that which is red retaining only that which is colored without replacing it with another positive difference – say blue. In our case, this would imply that a man who hears and sees would be divested of individuality if he merely ceases to hear. This consequence is avoided only if it is acknowledged that he remains individually the same as one who sees after he has ceased to hear. The determination as one-who-hears contributed nothing to his individuality. And similarly for the converse. It is obvious that this person who sees stands in a different relation to this person who hears than he does to some other person who hears. The difference between one who sees and the one who hears are entia realia which are partly but not wholly different, whereas in the latter case we are dealing with two wholly different entia realia. In the former case the part common to both is the subject, i.e., the substance.25

On the basis of this explanation, can one conclude that Brentano’s descriptive psychology yields a theory of consciousness or a descriptive theory of the psychic substance?

The question is also important because Brentano is often referred to in the literature as ‘the philosopher of intentionality’. However, as I have already

pointed out, there is no theory of intentionality in Brentano, only a theory of intentional reference. The final outcomes of his theory of categories may further specify why doing so in reference to the relation between outer perception and inner perception.

We know that inner perception does not present the self as individuated. Consequently, also devoid of individuation is the ultimate subject of our thinking (the psychic substance). Presented as individuated, vice versa, are the objects of outer perception, i.e., appearances, and in this case the ultimate subject is given with its *species specialissima*, that is, *spatial determination*. Brentano states, however:

We have said how we arrive at the general concept of being by comparing all our objects of thought with each other, and then finding that it is in respect to this concept that all these agree. We find the general concept of substance by comparing the objects of outer perception and thus arriving at the general concept of the spatial. The spatial [*das Örtliche*] is that which underlies what is qualitative and which appears as its ultimate subject, providing the individual differences by means of its own ultimate specific determination. But to arrive at the general concept of substance, we must also compare the sphere of inner perception. Here, we found, that which is thinking is the subject of that which is desiring. But we are not justified in saying that it is the ultimate subject; what was certain was only that here as elsewhere there must be an ultimate subject for without it there would be no individuation in reality.\(^{26}\)

In the case of the perception of something red, once again the subject of the coloured thing is the spatial thing entirely specified and determined in its determinations. Moreover, the characteristics of both outer perception and inner perception induce us to presuppose a substance which comprises both spiritual and corporeal substances. However, outer and inner perception cannot be separated from each other, because the intentional reference is an indivisible whole.

Once again, distinguishing the substance in the accident (the fact that if I see something red, the relative determination presupposes a substantial determination, that of space) should not be confused with distinguishing the most universal attribute in one that is more specific, namely the distinction between genus and species. Brentano writes:

Consider, for example, how we distinguish the red and yellow components in the color orange and how we apprehend the chromatic quality in the latter. Or consider how, in the impression of a complex odor, we distinguish the presence of a simple odor, on one hand, and the general character of the olfactory impression, on the other. Also in sensation of taste we apprehend both the general character which they share

\(^{26}\) Brentano 1981b, 191.
with other tastes, and the presence of various simple sensation such as those of smell, temperature and touch. One who notices red and yellow components in orange, apprehends different ultimate species; also one who, in the red-that-is-here [im hierseiendes Rot] distinguishes that-which-is-here-as-such [das Hierseiendes als solches] from that-which-is-red-as-such. By contrast, when which-is-spatial-in-general is distinguished by which is red, we distinguish not two ultimate species, but a generic concept which, unlike the concept of the colored, is not a genus of red. Similarly when, in the accident that-which-is-thinking, we distinguish the subject of this accident, we do not distinguish a second species specialissima. What we distinguish is a genus under which the accident does not fall, but which is as inseparable from the concept of the accident as is the concept of that which is spatial from the concept of that which is red. This concept of that which is spatial is that which, in its ultimate species, imparts individuation to that which is red and is modally encompassed in it.27

But the spatial thing does not exhaust the concept of substance, because even if the inner perception presents me to myself as a non-individuated thinker, judger, hearer, desirer, etc., it also permits the distinction of a subject of each of these things perceived simultaneously that is modally contained in them: namely, that real part which remains always the same despite the varying – and perhaps the ceasing – of the various modes of presentation.

On comparing the ultimate subject of the inner perception (‘being thought in general’) and that of outer perception (‘spatial substance’), Brentano views that latter as a species of the former, which is therefore the most general concept of substance conceivable. Nevertheless, we cannot speak of consciousness in the substantive sense, or of an Ego in the strong sense, owing to the constant change of what is in becoming. In any case, the definitive argument by Brentano is not that the substance provides the foundation for its accidents and their individuation as well: it is rather the contrary. The moment-now is the only existing entity in so far it as is a boundary which instantiates the primary temporal continuum. Missing this point means misunderstanding Brentano’s entire undertaking to reform the Aristotelian table of categories.28

3 A NEW TABLE OF THE CATEGORIES

Kastil’s table of categories, which is given at the beginning of the third part of The Theory of Categories, shows the outcome of the theory of inner perception, by specifying the intentional act as a passive affection.

28. Which is the case of Smith, for example: see Smith 1994, 82.
**Chapter 8: Reverse Aristotelianism**

**Inherent accidents** are those which inhere in the subject and do not need the constant activity of a causal principle in order to remain there (for example, the qualities of a body or the emotional and intellectual disposition of the soul). They divide between:

1. Those that consist in a transformation.
2. Those that do not consist in a transformation [e.g., acts of consciousness).

The latter are distinguished according to the ultimate genus of the effect (thus acceleration, which is a transformation with respect to place, is categorically different from change of colour).

Vice versa, **passive affections** are those which require the constant activity of a causal principle in order to remain in their subjects.

Contrary to Aristotle, in his table of categories Brentano distinguishes accidents thus:

The passive affections are accidents which are not supported by the subject alone, but require for their persistence the causation of an active principle. This class includes all thinking – thus all seeing, hearing, sensing, desiring; we think a thing only as long as we are moved to the thinking [...] In other cases, however, the efficient or moving cause is noticeable only in an entirely general way, so that the passive affection has merely the character of being produced by something or other. This seems to be the case with seeing, hearing, and other sensation. It is not correct to say that we are acted upon by the primary object of perception. The primary object is different from the cause of the sensation though its appearance is simultaneous with this cause.29

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As for *undergoings*, Brentano distinguishes these into two types. Some imply a further outcome, different from them, but which is produced in causing them: examples are acceleration, every motion from one place to another, and every form of acquired virtue. They can therefore be more properly defined as *transformations* in which the generation of one thing is simultaneously the destruction of another, where the former ceases to exist suddenly or gradually. Transformations always involve a shift from a *specie specialissima* to the one closest to it and which belongs to the same proximate genus.

The transformations that concern these types of undergoings, and their interaction, display features of great interest from a metaphysical, I would say emergentist, point of view when Brentano states that:

Different materials found in the organic world are capable by reciprocal interaction of turning themselves into new homogeneous bodies [...] having entirely different powers and properties.30

Undergoings of the second type are the affections real and proper, like the intentional acts which differ from the ones discussed because, according to Brentano, nothing in our thought is a transformation. The occurrence of an intentional reference, in fact, does not entail that the sentient subject undergoes an alteration, because this is merely a matter of a cognitive modification – one due, moreover, to an external cause.

The passive affections also belong among the *relative accidental determinations* of the modes of the intentional reference: those, that is, which are *thought in obliquo* beyond that which is thought *in recto*. For example, whoever thinks *in recto* of one who is thinking as one who is thinking also thinks *in obliquo* of something which is the object upon which the first thinking is directed.

The accidental determinations divide into two classes:

1. The passive affections.
2. The comparative determinations.

In regard to the former Brentano writes:

Of the passive affections one says that the subject suffers or undergoes them. Thus, for example, the one who is seeing undergoes the seeing. Common to them all is that they stand in relation to something active and are kept in being by its influence. Other relative accidents involve relations of entirely different types. Before discussing them in greater detail, let us ask whether the passive affections themselves do not

exhibit different modes of predication. This no doubt must be answered in the affirmative: passive affections which involve a transformation and thus lead to a product of work \([zu\ einer\ Werke\ führen]\) belong to the substance in a way that is different from those which do not. In the latter case what is produced exists in that which as such undergoes the passive affection. An instance of the first class is locomotion, of the second any sensation, thought or desire.

Within the first, the modes of predication seem further to differ whenever the transformations they produce are not of the same genus ultimum. Here, again, the affections cannot be predicated in the same mode of the same ultimate subject.

As for the passive affections which do not produce a work, we know from experience that they neither are nor suffer transformations. (This is perhaps evident a priori) Their coming into being is a simple beginning, their generation is not the corruption of a contrary, and their passing away is a simple cessation, not a corruption which takes the form of the generation of something else. This is the case, for example, when a person begins to see or ceases to see.

All passive affections which do not result in transformations are known by experience to belong to the relative attributes in two ways. They are not entirely related to a cause, but they are all instances of thinking, and the presentations of them \(in\ recto\) are linked with presentations \(in\ obliquo\) of that which the person thinking thinks, whether he merely thinks of it or also affirms or denies it, loves or hates it.\(^{31}\)

The most important features of the affections is their experiential origin, as Brentano had specified in his analysis of Aristotle’s \(De\ Anima\), and reaffirmed in his theory of continuum.\(^{32}\) Brentano says:

That hearing and thinking are passive affections is not inferred analytically from our ideas of them; it is ascertained by experience. This is why Aristotle says of intellective thinking that we are led by analogical inference to regard it as a passive affection similar to sensation. And so, one who predicates thinking of a subject need not to be aware of predicating a passive affection. Nevertheless thinking is such an affection, and for this reason what the copula here links with the subject is something related to the subject in the way peculiar to passive affection, and not in the way of (say) an inherent property \([einer\ Inhärenz]\) […] One could ask whether, in analogy to the accidental passive affections, there cannot be also substances which subsist only by being continually produced and re-produced. There is no doubt that such a possibility cannot be ruled out a priori. If so, what would we have to say about substances that passively preserve themselves in being? Would they, to the extent that they are produced, be burdened with an accident which may be included, say, among the passive affections? By no means. Rather, such a substance would be identical with what is passive as such, just as thinking is identical with that which passively undergoes the thinking […] But perfect and complete knowledge of the substance would itself con-

\(^{31}\) Brentano 1981b, 172-73.

\(^{32}\) See Chapter 2.
tain knowledge of the substance to which it is related, and so, here too, one would have no right to speak of a *denominatio extrinseca*.33

Finally, the affections are always accompanied by the inner perception of the self, as specified in *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, in the sense that affection is implicitly contained in everything that we note in ourselves.

As said, belonging among relative determinations are also comparative determinations. For example, when we say that something is brighter than something else, we may imply that it is so now and that it was some time ago; we may imply that it is brighter than it would be if it were pure red, for example. It is evident that comparative determinations involve several different objects in their reference. In the last case mentioned, for example, the intentional reference is constituted in the following way: I deny that there is pure red, and I think *in obliquo* of a pure red thing and compare the thing thought *in obliquo* with that which I characterize as brighter. In some way the comparative relations are similar to universals but they lack further definiteness.

A particularly interesting case arises when one has the intuition of a continuous movement or of a spatial extension: that is, when there is a continuously manifold [*Vielfaches*] of accidents. This relation belongs among neither the intentional nor the comparative relations; nor can one ascribe to an ultimate subject the intuition of each temporal or spatial boundary. In this case, the ultimate subject has the entire intuition and each of its parts and boundaries as its own accidental determination. Moreover, every boundary is intuited as belonging to something continuous of which it is the boundary. Therefore, it is not necessary to postulate a particular mode of predication for the relation of belonging involved in accidents which are continuously manifold.

4 **ELEMENTE DER (INNEREN) PSYCHOPHYSIK**

Despite the fragmentariness of Brentano’s final writings, and despite his method of inquiry itself, which eschewed the construction of all-inclusive systems, his *oeuvre* is the consistent development of a series of problems addressed in his early works – *in primis* the problems of the categories and of the psyche – which on the basis of his critique against Fechnerian psychophysics led to the writing of *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*.

Chapter 8: Reverse Aristotelianism

As pointed out earlier, there are substantially four psychophysical lines of inquiry:

1. Analysis of the relationship between the external stimulus and the psychic phenomenon (Fechner).
2. Analysis of the relationship between the external stimulus and the physiological reaction (the so-called inner stimulus) (Weber).
3. Analysis of the relationship between the physiological reaction and the psychic phenomenon (Lotze).
4. Analysis of the relations between the previous three cases (the programme of so-called external and inner psychophysics, never brought to completion).³⁴

Brentano had worked on the inner versant of psychophysics, the area of inquiry which forced Fechner to resort to investigations of esoteric type, and he sought to furnish it with a descriptive analysis. He writes:

All judging proceeds according to psychological laws, just as physical events proceed according to the laws of nature. But this does not mean that the course of real events conforms to psychological law.³⁵

It will be remembered that Fechner had defined the concept of differential threshold or ‘just noticeable difference’ (jnd) as the minimum increment or intensity that needs to be added to a stimulus for it to be noticed that the new stimulus is different.

Brentano’s inner psychophysics instead views the quantum of information conveyed by the intentional presentation as given by a indefinitely small part of the continuum which is qualitatively noticeable (i.e. by qualities covering a location in the space continuum and in the present modus). The locations in themselves are indiscernible, however, because they are too close to one another to be distinguished perceptually.

Then, according to classical psychophysics:

1. There is a causal relationship between stimulus and perception.
2. The increase in the stimulus necessary to produce an increase in the sensation stands in a constant ratio to the total stimulus.

³⁴. See Chapter 3.
3. Our sensations are given compositionally by a sum of the units of sensation (jnd).
4. The correlation between the constant increase of the stimulus and the unity of sensations is determined by a law of psychophysical connection between soul and matter.36

Of these assumptions Brentano retains that of the existence of a causal relation at the basis of the intentional presentation and that of a correlation between soul and matter. Vice versa, his crucial points of difference in respect to classical psychophysics are reaffirmed and further clarified as follows:

1. Phenomena of intensity are not representable only by something intense.
2. Qualitative or psychic factors intervene.
3. The sensation of the difference of sensations is not the difference among sensations.
4. What remains constant is the ratio between variation in the stimulus and variation in the sensation.
5. Overall, psychic substance cannot be measured.
6. The units of sensation (jnd) of external psychophysics are replaced with units of inner presentation which are indefinitely small parts of the perceptual continuum, that is, perceptively noticeable parts (jnp) localized and qualified at a different level of superimposed accidents.36

Brentano concludes as follows his investigation of substance, temporal and in constant change, in relation to the superimposed nature of the continua:

Everything that is, is present. It is therefore temporal and subsists as the boundary of something with one-dimensional temporal extension. When it comprises determinations other than temporal, these are in retrospect secondary from the point of view of continuity, and they have complete or incomplete velocity: an example is something that continues to exist uniformly when, besides continuous temporal change, it also undergoes another subsequent continuous change, for instance when it is a point that continues to change regularly or irregularly. Consider also a continuous variation of colour or of some other sensible quality in time. As a discrete unit, even as a discrete multiplicity, a set of things may be present and temporally enduring in both complete and incomplete teleiosis, sometimes regularly, sometimes irregularly, according to its individual parts.

36. According to Purghé, a further fundamental assumption is that there exists a single inner scale on which all the sensations deriving from external stimuli can be arranged. See Purghé 1997, 23.
That which holds for a discrete multiplicity also holds for a continuous multiplicity. This we note for example in the spatial as such, and in that which, though it is spatially extended, has another determination as well, so in a body, inasmuch it has length, breath and depth, and inasmuch its mass is that of gold. In this last relation it is constantly in full teleiosis.

We may now enquire whether the spatial as such is to be included among the primary or secondary continua.

One thing is clear: namely that, in retrospect, the spatial which is temporally extended has the character of the secondary continuum, whether it can be thought of in movement or at rest. When it is at rest it is in complete teleiosis as far as its temporal dimension is concerned; when it is in movement, it is in incomplete teleiosis, sometimes regularly sometimes irregularly, according to direction and velocity, and in relation to some or all of its parts. 37

Consequently, according to Brentano, there is nothing spatial which is not also temporally extended. Moreover, as regards the dimensions of the spatial (length, width and depth), these are not contiguous but simultaneous. They subsist inasmuch as they pertain to something temporally extended. Thus, we recognize as being four-dimensional the temporally extension to which length, width and depth pertain as three-dimensional boundaries, and as having the character of secondary continuum only in respect to one of its dimensions. Also this four-dimensional extension may be in regular or irregular, complete or incomplete, teleiosis. Brentano clarifies the concept with the example of a regularly rotating three-dimensional cube:

The cube’s velocity of movement is greater on its surface than at its centre. The character of the secondary continuum is thus made clear. The length of time will be decisive for the magnitude of the continuum in its temporal dimension. This is the same on the periphery and in a half-radius circle which is concentric to it. If this were a case corresponding to the three other dimensions, then its magnitude would be nil, because these are simultaneously given internally. It is not nil, and it always corresponds to the magnitude of the spatial length, whether the cube rotates more rapidly or less rapidly or is even at complete rest.

It might be objected then when the cube is rotating, there is less difference between the centre and a point on the surface than when the cube is moving, because in the strict sense the determination of place (Ortbestimmheit) is not the same in the case of rest and of motion, and it varies according to velocity and direction. Thus, the difference between a point on the surface and a point at the centre is greater in the case of rotating movement than in the case of rest. Here it needs only be repeated that one should speak, not of a greater difference, but of two differences which, because they are not homogeneous, cannot be reduced to one alone by addition. Only one [difference] is given as such through the ultimate specific differences

of the spatial; the other pertains to another series of the differentiation, which is also clearly shown by the fact that the difference in teleosis intersects with the difference in the temporal differentiation. One could first divide the localized in rest and in movement, and then what is found here and there, rather than the other way round. Thus the distance between a point on the surface from the centre in the case of rest and motion is the same, and also the length of the radius remains unchanged.38

In the case of a presently existing body, therefore, the primary and secondary character of a spatial continuum is manifest as extended in three dimensions. Moreover, because it is temporal, it belongs as a three-dimensional boundary to something four-dimensional and temporally extended, although, according to each of its dimensions, it has the character of a primary continuum.

This applies not only to bodies but also to lines, flat surfaces and points, which may subsist in the present: for example, observes Brentano, when a constantly diminishing body finishes with the space of a surface, line or a point, or vice versa when a constantly changing body begins with one of those boundaries. In effect, there subsists a zero-dimensional spatial in relation to a one-dimensional or two-dimension spatial. For example, if we consider a body not only as actually existing in its three dimensions but also in reference to its persistence as temporally extended, we must say that it is a four-dimensional existent which is the primary continuum in respect of its three dimensions but the secondary continuum in respect of its fourth dimension, in that it possesses all these characteristics. As regards the velocity of the boundaries, because the primary continuum has constantly the same velocity, one must conclude that the same applies in the case of a body in relation to its three dimensions, so that the velocity varies only in relation to the fourth dimension.

Should one wish to measure psychic phenomena at the perceptual level, one must therefore inter-relate the various layers of the intentional presentations in the various types of continuum, whose units of representation are initially given by chronoids and topoids, these being emergent dimensions in the space-time (i.e. points, instants) of physical measurement. Benussi’s entire experimental enterprise, for example, and large part of Bonaventura’s, can be viewed as an attempt to analyse the constitutive structures of this primary level of perception.39

Turning to the continuity of Brentano’s thought with Aristotle’s, even in Brentano’s final writings intentional reference preserves two complementary aspects distinctive of Aristotle’s De Anima. The first is that of passivity, which places the intentional reference in a causal relation with that which pro-

38. Unpublished dictation of 26.01.1916 (E24231)
duces the affection, the stimulus, and does not persist beyond it. On this point Brentano affirms: Brentano did not have the time to develop a thoroughgoing inner psychophysics and therefore to construct a theory not only of topoids and chronoids but also of coloroids, olfactoids, tastoids, and so on, or in other words, all the minimum perceptively noticeable units (jpn) representative of the multiple and multifarious continua that form the overlapping unitariness of an act of presentation. On the basis of Brentano’s knowledge and his previous works, we may suppose that Hering’s theory of unique colours could have been the basis for defining the minimum perceptive units of the colour continuum. The unique colours (red, yellow and blue), as primary colours structuring the field of phenomenal visible space, constitute the only group of complementary colours in which all the components are pure and therefore exclude the other two. The reciprocal relation of the unique colours produce a two-level stratification, or three absolute colours and three balanced mixes (blue and orange, yellow and purple, blue and orange). By contrast, still today it is extremely difficult to find an analogous stratification in the fields of taste and olfaction.

Every thought is the reverse side of a physiological phenomenon; it has as its basis a psycho-physical movement. A thought, however simple it may seem to be, is thus actually something very complicated or, to speak more precisely, it is something which presupposes very complicated relations.

The second aspect is activity, in the sense that the intentional reference does not arise from the transformation of something into something else: aspects relative to the phantasia, for example, are still elements of activity independent of the stimulus.

Passivity and activity are two complementary and simultaneous aspects which do not necessarily obey the psychophysical law of equality between action of the stimulus and psychic reaction, on account of the difference clearly drawn by Brentano between quantitative magnitudes and (qualitative) perception of those magnitudes.

The cause of sensation is obviously not the primary object of the intentional reference, for this is an effect of the stimulus modified by the modes of the presentation in the inner perception. In accordance with his doctrine of 1874 Brentano writes:

When we see something red or feel something warm, we cannot take it for granted that there actually is something that is red or warm. We do have good grounds for the assumption that a set of vibrations or some other physical process, of which we have

40. Brentano 1987a, 58.
no intuitive concrete idea, acts upon our sense organs and causes our sensations. Such a process could be said to underlie what is red or warm in appearance by being its precondition.41

Can, therefore, Brentano’s theory of the categories tell us something more specific about the relation between psyche and body?

According to Brentano, both bodies and psyches are substances, but the ultimate substance is only the psyche, given that in the realm of physical phenomena we never come across an absolute accident. This is also why Brentano’s table of categories does not include the categories of possession, position and quantity – or what à la Aristotle configures that which is spatially extended. Vice versa:

The psychical domain provides us with many examples of absolute accidents which exist in other absolute accidents.42

What, therefore, are the metaphysical implications of intentional reference within the architecture of Brentano’s thought?

As regards the nature of the material world, Brentano adheres to the doctrine set out in Psychology I that we are unable to say anything precise about it. For the sensible qualities (inherences) do not correspond to transcendent objects, and the only evidence in our possession is furnished by inner perception. In other words, we cannot affirm, in the proper sense of the term, the existence of any material object; we can only progressively approach the certainty of its probability on the basis of experiential considerations, viz.:

1. Every thing in becoming is temporal and continuous, so that an infinite becoming can be considered unlikely.

2. One can identify constant circumstances which give rise to a presumption of the continuity of the continuing occurrence of events.

The reality of the transcendent world therefore necessarily ensues from indirect knowledge arising from judgements based on probabilistic reasoning.43 Brentano writes:

Helmholtz is certainly correct to maintain that in the majority of cases we note (bemerken) no causation, that is, we are not able to know the cause. And this, from the

42. Brentano 1981b, 96.
physiological point of view, induces him to argue that no reliance can be placed on the certainty of the general causal law if our conviction in its regard must be founded inductively. However, although our experience does not show us causation, this is not to say that it does not show us anything in favour of the hypothesis of causation. For it would require no more than a regularity in the succession of events, which is to be traced back in infinitely more insignificant manner to the existence of causal laws than to the existence of randomness, on the assumption of which just as indefinitely more irregular events would be possible.

But whilst a causation is often not perceivable, for us it is enough that which is in fact given, i.e. that there is nothing in the world of experience in whose existence a temporal continuum cannot be discerned [...] Assuredly, everything that becomes, becomes in time, so that there is no absolute causal becoming.44

In 1915, in one of his last dictations, Brentano puts forward Lord Kelvin’s theory of vortices and magnetic fields as a plausible hypothesis, conjecturing that:

the aggregate mass of matter constitutes a single stationary corporeal substance which, like Lord Kelvin’s homogeneous fluid, would be shot through with certain particular accidents corresponding to his vortices. In this case, the laws of mechanics as well as those of physics, chemistry and physiology, would pertain to these accidents and to their change and interaction [...] in place of what had been formerly regarded as the substances of corporeal matter, there would be accidents attaching to the single substance, and these would be transmitted from one part of it to another. The laws of mechanics would pertain to the interchange and preservation of these accidents.45

As regards the propagation of light and electricity, for example, rather than conceiving oscillations or displacements of the parts of the substance underlying the rays, one could hypothesise only displacements of quality which can be conceived as divisible in tiny portions. In other words, quality would contain the place as its ultimate subject.

Obviously, our minds interact with the qualities inhering in the unitary corporal substance, which need not necessarily be considered unlimited in length, width and depth as empty space was thought to be. For Brentano, in fact, this is replaced by a finite material substance, immobile and immutable in its position. The boundaries and the mode of this substance, moreover, need not necessarily be uniform, so that it is possible to conceive a cause of its initial state of motion. However, there is little more in Brentano’s published

44. Brentano 1956, 303-7.
dictations on which to base a less fragmentary account of his views on the nature of the transcendent world.

Should we wish to make a concluding comment on Brentano’s philosophical thought, we may say that the prime role in his conception of science was performed not by physics but by psychology. *Psychology*, he wrote, *in so far as it is descriptive, is far in advance of physics*, so that the structure of the intentional reference assumes the role of a sort of *window* for metaphysics.46 This amounts to saying that analysis – empirical, descriptive and experimental as well – of this structure and of the ‘very complicated relations’ that regulate the transition from the outer to the inner versant of psychophysics is also essential for an epistemology that seeks to be ontologically grounded.

46. See Albertazzi 1997c, 2001b.
Chapter 9

Other writings: Ethics, aesthetics and history of philosophy

1  "IN BRENTANO DOMINIERT DIE POESIE"¹

It is the general opinion that Brentano’s theories do not constitute a system, and that they do not do so substantially for two reasons: firstly because events in Brentano’s personal life prevented him, at least in part, from giving systematicity to his writings; secondly because it was not his intention to construct a system in the manner of German idealism. However, this is not to say that Brentano did not seek to reconstruct metaphysics on the basis of a very specific point of view – that of the intentional reference given in presentation and the other classes of psychic phenomena – manifest in all his works. Brentano’s endeavour to give a descriptive psychological foundation to metaphysics is also evident in those of his writings where he deals with ethics, aesthetics, language, and law, and which formed further components of his empirical psychology.

Brentano’s main work on ethics is The Origin of our Knowledge of Right and Wrong, followed in the same year (1892) by The Negative as Object of Poetic Representation. According to Kraus, The Origin of our Knowledge of Right and Wrong was the greatest advance in ethics and the theory of value since Greek antiquity; and even Moore, in a review published in 1903, and in the Preface to his Principia Ethica, acknowledged its importance.² The ethical theory of Brentano and the Brentanists, in fact, circulated as widely in Germany as did that of Lotze and his pupils, although it was harshly criticized by the neo-positivists, Carnap and Schlick in particular.

A further important pseudo-work by Brentano on ethical matters, Foundation and Construction of Ethics containing his lectures from 1876 to 1894, was edited by Mayer-Hillebrand and published posthumously in 1952. Brentano also wrote a series of essays on specific topics: Das Recht auf den Selbst (The Right on the Self) (1893), Über der apriorischen Charakter der ethischen Prinzipien (On the a priori Character of Ethical Principles) (1904), Vom Lieben und Hassen (On Love and Hate) (1907) and Über Gemütsentscheide-

¹ Kraus 1976, 21.
² Moore 1964, 39. See also Husserl 1988.
dungen und die Formulierung des obersten Sittengesetzes (On Emotional Decisions and the Formulation of Higher Ethical Laws) (1908). Finally, a number of ethical issues interweave with theological and aesthetic arguments in others of his writings.

Given that Brentano’s ethical theory was also grounded in his descriptive psychology, the problem of right and wrong linked closely with discussion of the nature of judgements and emotions, which constituted the second and third classes of psychic phenomena. A reading of Brentano’s ethics may therefore usefully begin with his *Psychologies*, in particular its first two volumes. Conversely, Brentano’s lectures on ethics clarify a number of aspects of his descriptive psychology left implicit or undefined in the volumes of the *Psychologies*.

However, Brentano’s best-known work, the one in which his ethical theory is developed most thoroughly, is still *The Origin of our Knowledge of Right and Wrong*, which was originally a lecture delivered at the *Wiener Juristische Gesellschaft* (Vienna Juridical Society) in 1889, on invitation by its president, Baron von Hayek. Brentano’s lecture followed another by Ihering on the ‘sentiment of law’ to the same association. The appendix to the book contains a reprint of a previous article by Brentano, *Miklosich on Subjectless Propositions* – in effect a review – published by the *Wiener Zeitung* in 1883. The relationship between ethical analysis and the philological analysis of impersonal propositions – also mentioned in the preface to the book – once again highlights how Brentano viewed the philosophy of language, the classification of psychic phenomena, ethics and metaphysics as closely interconnected. Moreover, it is well known that, in Vienna, Brentano’s theses on logic and the foundation of ethics frequently attracted the attention of scholars engaged in other areas of inquiry: philologists (Miklosich, von Hartel, Heinzel, Schipper), archaeologists (Hirschfeld), and jurists (Erner).

That ethics formed part of the programme pursued by his *Psychology* was stated explicitly by Brentano:

> These thoughts form a fragment of a Descriptive Psychology, which, as I now venture to hope, I may be enabled in the near future to publish in its complete form. In its wide divergence from all that has hitherto been put forward, and especially by reason of its being an essential stage in the further development of some of the views advocated in my *Psychology from the Empirical Standpoint*, it will be sufficiently evident that during the period of my long literary retirement I have not been idle.

3. See Chapters 5, 6.
Regardless of its specific argument, therefore, *The Origin of our Knowledge of Right and Wrong* was also a development of Brentano’s psychology from an empirical standpoint in that it introduced a more strongly descriptive component. Brentano agreed with Ihering that an innate concept of a natural sanction of law and morality was unthinkable. Contrary to Ihering, however, Brentano believed that he could demonstrate that knowledge of the moral law is possible and that it is part of our psychic faculties. He accordingly set himself the task of showing which psychic activities comprised the criterion for measuring the correctness of our will and appraisal. He wrote:

In order to answer the question satisfactorily we must, above all, inquire into the origin of the conception of the good, which lies, like the origin of all our conceptions, in certain concrete impressions. We possess impressions with physical content. These exhibit to us sensible qualities located in space. Out of this sphere arise the conceptions of colour, sound, space, and many others. The conception of the good, however, has not here its origin. It is easily recognizable that the conception of the good, like that of the true, which, having affinity, is rightly placed side by side with it, derives its origin from concrete impressions with psychical content.6

Once again, therefore, in the ethical field as well, the difference between physical and psychic phenomena presented in *Psychology* I plays its structural role, and given the indubitability and evidence of the psychic content, it follows that specification of the conception of good will be based on the characteristics and modes of the presentation in intentional reference.

As we know, presentations, judgements and moods all originate from concrete impressions, whether they are given via the senses or by means of abstract conceptions. The difference between a presentation of something good and a judgement about it – for example, the difference between the presentation of ‘God’ and the statement ‘God exists’ – resides, according to Brentano, in a second act superimposed upon the initial act of presentation: in the case of the judgement, in fact, there is a second intentional reference to the object which is either accepted or rejected. The argument is borne out by Miklosich’s analysis of impersonal propositions, to which Brentano directly refers. As to the third class of psychic phenomena relative to love and hatred, phenomena of pleasure or displeasure are given in the simplest forms of inclination or disgust, which are present in every simple form of wilful activity.

The classes of the judgement and emotional phenomena, moreover, exhibit an *internal opposition* which is absent from presentations: namely the opposition between acceptance and rejection, and between love and hate. As Brentano points out, this difference is important because:

From this fact follows an important conclusion. Concerning acts of the first class, none can be called either right or wrong. In the case of the second class, on the other hand, one of the two opposed modes of relation, affirmation and rejection, is right the other wrong, as logic has long affirmed. The same naturally holds good of the third class. Of the two opposed modes of the relation, love and hate, pleasure and displeasure, in each case one is right the other wrong.7

Hence, the origin of the notions of right and wrong, and likewise the origin of the notions of true and false, once again resides in the *nature of intentional reference*. We call something *good* when the love relative to it is right: in other words, whatever can be loved by a right love is good in the noblest sense of the word. For example, when it happens that a person emotionally presents a particular object to him/herself, it necessarily follows that this person loves the object in correct manner.

But how do we know that something is *good*, or even that it is better than something else? Does it not perhaps depend on the simple fact that something is subjectively loved or preferred to something else, no matter how this can be justified by the intentional reference?

Brentano replies that, firstly, the fact that the object of a presentation is perceived as good manifests nothing more than a special mode of reference by psychic activity to a content: it indicates, in other words, that with regard to this content we may find ourselves in the *modality* of love (or of hate).

Secondly, as evinced by *Psychology I*, emotions and the phenomena of desire, will, emotional tension, etc., belong to a single psychic class. From this point of view, whenever something good is presented, both these types of phenomena are present.

This means that, although in a second instance a particular content of a presentation may be accepted or rejected, just as it may be evaluated as good or bad, in the first instance, acts of emotional presentation are not acts of knowledge; instead, they simply indicate a mode of intentional reference. Hence, phenomena of emotional reference do not in themselves indicate an ought-to-be, or a loved or hated ought-to-be proper to the object of reference; rather, they are simply acts of love and hate, of *loving* and *hating* something which, as Brentano puts it, is *given internally in objective mode*. What constitutes the emotional phenomenon, therefore, is the *act* of intuitive and evident presentation, not its object.

Chapter 9: Other writings

The danger of giving subjective colouring to an ethics based on a psychological definition of good, and in particular on psychic acts of love and hate, was very evident to Brentano. He also distinguished two different types of pleasure and displeasure relative to a particular object of presentation:

1. A type of pleasure closely connected with habit, instinct and reaction to particular sense impressions, and which differs among species and among individuals.

2. A type of pleasure connected with acts of desiring something good or something bad.

Once again, the feature that differentiates between these two types of pleasure is not the content of the act of intentional reference but the nature of the act itself, which is characterized as either right or wrong.

Besides objects perceived as right and wrong, moreover, there is the case of preference for one type of object rather than another, or the choice between alternatives, which in the light of Aristotle’s analysis of oréxis are also called phenomena of interest. In this case, too, for Brentano the difference between loving and perceiving resides not so much in the intensity or magnitude of the loving as in a different type of emotional reference which belongs to the general class of pleasure and displeasure. In this case, according to Brentano, we have relational acts which cannot coincide even with acts of judgement.

Analysis of acts of preference enables a distinction to be drawn between what is peculiar to the class of emotional phenomenon with respect to the class of the phenomena of judgement. In fact, emotional phenomena have gradations of preference and proximity to goodness.

More generally, in Brentano the ethical concept of good is connected with the concept of value as pertaining not to a specific object or a content of presentation but to a particular type of emotional act of preference or evaluation. For this reason as well, from his lecture to the Vienna association of jurists onwards, Brentano’s theory of the nature of good and value exerted considerable influence on his contemporaries. It was appreciated in particular by proponents of marginalism like Menger, Böhm-Bawerk and Wieser, and it was taken up by certain of his pupils, among them von Ehrenfels and Kraus.8

Brentano’s theory of ethics and value can be summarized as follows:

1. Emotional phenomena have twofold valence, positive (love) and negative (hate).
2. Emotional phenomena can be right or wrong, like judgments. As a consequence, in the case of the correctness of an act of value appreciation given in evident mode, the law of non-contradiction holds as it does in logic: one cannot both love and hate the same object at the same time.
3. Conversely, unlike judgements, the law of the excluded middle does not apply in the case of emotional phenomena because they admit to gradations (more good and less good, more bad or less bad).
4. The correctness or otherwise of emotional phenomena is not determined by a predicative theory of value judgements but by analysis of conscious psychic facts (acts). According to Brentano’s nominalist theory of language, words like ‘good’, ‘bad’, ‘better’ or ‘worse’ are nothing but synsemantic terms.

Another significant aspect of Brentano’s ethical analysis concerns value from the standpoint of the part/whole relation. This analysis was subsequently reprised and developed by Husserl and Moore and it relates to the difference between summative wholes and organic wholes. Brentano argues that a whole made up of goods is better than each of its parts. From this point of view, Brentano’s ethics is not mere a mereological ethics in which the parts are what really matter. Each value whole is a point of arrival which does not require further integration because a part is always a function of the whole.

The second point concerns the relationship between different wholes which are not parts of each other. Brentano states that “One good is preferred to another good which is not a part of it but is equal in every respect to a determination of its parts”. In other words, two value wholes are comparable in respect to the quantity of value only if they are made up of values of the same kind. From this point of view, it is impossible to conduct universal comparison among values, since these are only comparable with respect to a particular region or category of value. A category of value consists of those values that can join together in an organic whole: that is, a whole which is different from the sum of its parts.

Brentano’s ethical theory, however, did not receive the clarification and the thorough elaboration of its principles that it deserved. The same consideration applies to his writings on aesthetics, which Mayer-Hillebrand collected.
and published in 1959 as *Grundzüge der Ästhetik* (Fundamentals of Aesthetics).

The first part of the book consists of a number of writings on psychology and aesthetics (whether they are theoretical or practical disciplines), criticism of the theories of Herbart (the union of aesthetics and ethics) and Fechner (elementarism), and discussion of the *phantasia* as the basis for aesthetic presentation. Also included in this part is a reprint of *The Genius* which was first published by Brentano as a separate study by Duncker & Humblot in 1892.

The second part of *Grundzüge der Ästhetik* deals with the concept of beautiful, examining the nature of an object deemed to be beautiful and its presentative origin – a conception to some extent also shared by Kant, Schiller and Heine, for whom beauty was the form of the *object of psychic intentionality* (*Gegenstand seelischer Intentionalität*). There follows a letter to Christian von Ehrenfels on the concept of aesthetics, and in particular on the concepts of rhythm and unity in multiplicity. The rest of this second part of the book consists of a long series of writings on ‘presentation, value and aesthetics’ and a reprint of another booklet, *The Negative as Object of Poetic Representation*, also published by Brentano in 1892.

Part Three comprises a classification of the arts according to the sensory domains (of which for Brentano, as we have seen, there were three: vision, hearing and tactile sense) and texts on music which resume the topic of prot-eraesthesis and inner perception. Even brief perusal of Brentano’s writings on aesthetics, therefore, corroborates the foundational role for him of descriptive psychology in analysis of the various aspects of reality.

A point of particular interest in Brentano’s writings on aesthetics is his treatment of Fechner (which he repeatedly revised), and in particular his criticism of Fechner’s concept of bottom-up aesthetics (*Ästhetik von unten*). As is well known, as soon as Baumgartner had established aesthetics as an autonomous discipline in the eighteenth century, Kant subsumed it under the notion of *direct experience*, although by this he meant the direct experience of ‘beautiful in itself’. Subsequently, Fechner sought in his *Vorschule der Ästhetik* (Preliminary to Aesthetics) of 1876 to set aesthetics on an empirical footing by devising a system of measurement which used the *direct factors* of aesthetic experience. Brentano discussed Fechner’s theory on the basis of

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9. See Chapter 3.
10. See Chapter 4.
criteria employed in his more general critique of psychophysics (see Chapter Two), and with regard to three considerations in particular:

1. The measurement of aesthetic phenomena always concerns the phenomenal, never aesthetic activity itself, which is the proper concern of psychology.

2. The difference between beautiful and ugly cannot be determined by a deductive procedure which uses experience-based elementary satisfactions set in relation to each other; it can only be directly experienced.

3. The concept of beautiful must be analysed on the basis of the structures of inner perception.

Brentano writes:

When Fechner demonstrates induction by the maximum satisfying rectangle and similar, what one recognizes is precisely the deductive procedure. In itself the matter is of such little significance that it is difficult to talk here of ‘beautiful’. However, even the connection of such elementary conditions – it seems – should include the effect of the most magnificent beauties and allow itself to predict deductively.

I could never agree with anyone who believes this. I would have always to rebuke them for seeking a top down approach, when the real one consists in starting from the bottom and working upwards. Why and how something is beautiful cannot be deduced from elementary satisfactions formed by experience and placed in a certain connection with each other; it should be felt through direct experience. And very little can be achieved, I believe, by reduction to entirely elementary processes of agreeableness, devoid of meaning and imprecisely characterized, such as satisfaction of a triangle. For no preference allows its connection to any other to achieve a more felicitous effect. One rectangle in itself less pleasing than another drawn in more elongated manner, because of the corresponding behaviour of the lines (in a larger whole), may better adapt itself, while the one corresponding to the golden section, if shown in isolation, acts without saying anything.12

According to Brentano, the proper objects of aesthetics are the specific and above all concrete acts to which the concept of beautiful is connected. He continues:

I cannot at all agree that the doctrine of beauty is independent of psychology. The concept of beauty, even when it is considered in analogy to that of truth – that is, as valid in general for all rational beings – like all its varieties originates from the psychic domain. This also holds for the concept of truth and for true and evident

judgements. I therefore think that both logic and aesthetics stand in the same relationship to psychology.

Having conceded this, however, it is not that the concept of beautiful is really and actually analogous to the concept of true. The concept of true has nothing to do with the fact that the truth is effectively knowable to us. The concept of beautiful, in its turn, has nothing to do with the fact that a presentation is effectively real, and perhaps an excellent reality compared to other presentations; rather – at least in the manner in which it is used – it concerns this: the presentation furnished to us that is particularly worthy of value arouses within us something that is real and truly right; furthermore, it also arouses within us a pleasure characterized as right. Consequently, absolutely to be taken into consideration is our psychic uniqueness. The beautiful, therefore, is beautiful only in concrete circumstances. Those who believe that they can analyse it outside those circumstances are deluding themselves.13

Hence, as in the case of ethics, aesthetic inquiry must start with analysis of the nature of the concrete acts of intentional presentation which present us with something characterized as pleasant or right independently of the distinctive features of the two different acts, which should not be collapsed into each other as they are in Herbart: as we have seen, aesthetics cannot be reduced to ethics. Brentano consequently did not disagree with Fechner over the use of a ‘bottom up’ approach, given that he too believed that aesthetics should have an empirical foundation; he disagreed with Fechner because he considered that the point of departure should be, not isolated elementary direct factors, but the complexity of the whole of the object of aesthetic enjoyment in the intentional act.

This different point of departure for aesthetic analysis – the structure of the act of presentation – introduces a second difference between Brentano’s and Fechner’s theories. This difference is once again the priority given to qualitative rather than quantitative inquiry.14

As I have already mentioned, an important aspect of Brentano’s aesthetic theory is its revival of the concept of the presentation of phantasia, which he repeatedly analysed throughout his lifetime from Psychology of Aristotle onwards.15

In Grundzüge der Ästhetik Brentano addressed the theme of the phantasia by conducting, according to his usual procedure, an excursus through the principal theories on the matter and which covered, amongst others, Aristotle, Aquinas, Hume, Bain, Lotze, Johannes Müller, Helmholtz and Wundt. The theme of the phantasia and its importance for aesthetics prompted Brentano

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14. See Chapter 4.
15. See Chapter 2.
once again to examine the difference between proper and improper, direct and indirect, perceptive and psychic presentations. In particular, he endeavoured to provide a description of presentations of phantasia by relating them to other types of presentation. He declared, in fact:

However, nothing of that which pertains to the sensory presentations and the perceptive presentations is called in this manner [a presentation of phantasia], and likewise nothing that is an abstract concept. These are concrete (intuitive) presentations, or what are taken to be such. Hence it follows that they concern more the poetic phantasia (a general artistic phantasia) than the phantasia of the researcher, because it is thought that the formation of intuitive concrete presentations is a preliminary artistic operation.¹⁶

After detailed analysis of the related literature, Brentano comes to the conclusion that presentations of phantasia display the following features:

1. They are presentations in the broadest sense of the term, and therefore constitute a fundamental class of presentations, excluded from which are judgements, affects and will.
2. They are concrete presentations and therefore do not comprise abstract or non-intuitive presentations.
3. They are not perceptive presentations, although they resemble them to some extent because of their concreteness: from this point of view, they are often considered to be copies or depictions of perceptive perceptions.

In short, Brentano concludes:

The fantastic presentation is a presentation akin to, but different from, a perceptive presentation. It warrants the name of presentation of phantasia, the more it resembles a perceptive presentation.¹⁷

Again:

Presentations of phantasia are non-intuitive or improper presentations which resemble intuitive presentations […] The boundary between them is certainly blurred. One may therefore talk of presentations of phantasia when their approximation to perceptive presentations is so close that certain analyses, certain effects and also certain aesthetic experiences connect with them in similar way as they do with intuitive presentations

[...] It follows from this definition that they belong in part to the domain of intuitions, and in part to that of concepts. In both cases, we can properly describe the phenomena (descriptive consideration), but at the same time we must seek to determine their origin and development (genetic consideration). Both of these are questions that pertain to psychology and hence cannot be dealt with further here.18

As in the case of ethics, however, so in that of the presentations distinctive of aesthetic experience Brentano was unable to provide a thorough description of the processes that give rise to the conception of beauty. He was unable to do so, he says, because psychological research was still unable to furnish the information with which to clarify the matter. Brentano took a further step forward in his analysis of these presentations by relating them to the ordering structure of musical phenomena, which he analysed in his writings on music contained in the third part of Grundzüge. Nevertheless, he left the general structure of aesthetic phenomena only broadly delineated; although he did point out that an empirical foundation was required for this ambit of experience as well. Some of Brentano’s pupils, among them Meinong, von Ehrenfels and von Allesch, continued with this kind of aesthetic inquiry; and so did certain members of the phenomenological school, notably Ingarden and Geiger. Psychological research into aesthetic phenomena was conducted by Theodor Lipps and, from the point of view of Ganzheitspsychologie (Psychology of Totality), by Volkelt.19

During his lifetime Brentano concerned himself with numerous other themes, among them the existence of God, the origin of cosmological development, and the immortality of the soul, which is a leitmotif that runs through his entire oeuvre. His writings on the existence of God were collected and published as Vom Dasein Gottes (On the Existence of God) by Alfred Kastil in 1929. As the editor points out, the first mention by Brentano of a cycle of lectures on the existence of God is made in a letter written to Marty in 1871, although the only draft extant dates to 1867; Brentano, however, continued to work on these lectures until 1891.

The first part of Vom Dasein Gottes consists of the lectures delivered by Brentano at the universities of Würzburg and Vienna during the years between 1868 and 1891.

After discussing the significance of the existence of God for theory and practice in the Introduction, in his first lecture Brentano discusses the ontological argument of Anselm and the criticisms brought against it by Hume and Kant, and then goes on to analyse the argument on the basis of his nominalist theory. The second lecture examines arguments against the existence of God.

and then discusses scepticism concerning the validity of derivations of the proofs and Kantian transcendental idealism.

Part Two of Vom Dasein Gottes deals with proofs for the existence of God, examining first the teleological approach and Darwinism, subsequently the hypotheses of blind necessity and chance, and then the rationalist and creationist theories. There follow two interesting discussions of proofs of God’s existence based on the concept of movement (an argument inherited from Trendelenburg which had interested Brentano since his early writings on Aristotle) and on psychological considerations.

The book also contains a dictation of 1915 in which Brentano argues against the hypothesis of chance in theology, and in favour of a necessary creative principle. It concludes with a discussion of theodicy.

For each of these topics, Brentano almost invariably follows the Aristotelian procedure in that he first analyses the conceptions of his predecessors and only then begins his thematic discussion. Although I shall not go into the details of his treatment – which ranges across Darwinism, neo-vitalism, psychophysics and the theory of entropy – it is worth noting that the teleological outcomes of Brentano’s analysis have been variously described as constituting a theism of rationalist stamp. This conclusion is apparently borne out by the selections from Brentano’s Nachlaß which make up Vom Dasein Gottes; but in some passages, especially in Philosophical Lectures on Space, Time and the Continuum, he seemingly embraces pantheist, or at least panpsychistic, conceptions.20 Since there are no analytical studies on this theme, we may summarize it in the following sequence of points. According to Brentano:

1. There exists an ordering intellect which is apparent to us in the laws of nature.
2. This intellect is characterized by constant and infinitesimal change of a substantial nature which comprises the past and the future.
3. To this intellect must be ascribed the features of goodness and will necessary for explanation of the end-directedness of nature.
4. The multiplicity of souls and spatial extension testify in favour, not of a single initial act of creation, but of a continuity of acts of creation unfolding in unbroken sequence.
5. We never have absolute knowledge of the nature of this intellect, and therefore of the nature of space, time and movement; we have only relative knowledge derived from intentional reference and which forms the basis for science.

A second group of writings on theological matters deal in particular with the problem of the spirituality and the immortality of the soul: a theme that had interested Brentano since his youth and which, after his works on Aristotle, was central to *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*. In this case, too, Brentano maintained that any argument in favour of the immortality of the soul must have an *empirical and psychological foundation*.

Brentano criticised both the materialist and spiritualist conceptions of the soul on the grounds of his thesis of intentional reference, and in particular in the light of his distinction between primary object (the coloured, the auditory, the tactile, etc.) and secondary object (the seeing, the hearing, the feeling, etc.). From two opposite points of view, he maintained, materialism and spiritualism are absolutizations of the relationship between the physical and the psychic. As to the theory of psychophysical parallelism in theology, Brentano pointed out that in the modern world this had assumed the guise of either correlativism or the more extreme materialism, according to which states of consciousness come so close to cerebral processes that they appear as shadows alongside bodies (*Schattentheorie*). In other words, according to this theory, even if both processes are real, only physical processes can be considered efficacious or causative. A position of this kind obviously conflicted with Brentano’s theory of inner perception, which considered psychic phenomena to be *activities*. To be rejected as a consequence, according to Brentano, was the form of the materialism of the subject which identified the bearer of psychic phenomena with the brain. An analogous and complementary error was committed by spiritualism, which considered the subject to be a spiritual substance because inner perception does not permit the localization of states of awareness. Consequently, also in his analysis of religious questions from a philosophical point of view, Brentano again argued consistently with the tenets of his descriptive psychology.21

As we saw in the previous chapter, Brentano’s position – also on the basis of his analysis of continua and his mereological theory of the act of presentation – was that whatever is apprehended in actual inner perception is neither a spiritual substance nor a material substance; rather, it is a *thing* (*ein Ding*), or better a knowing, a feeling, a thinking of some kind, unitary and multiform at the same time. This is not a case of the parts of a whole whereby, for example, corresponding to different perceptive acts (auditory, tactile or visual) located in different parts of the brain are three or more ‘subjects’ or three or more ‘individuals’ perceiving different activities. As a consequence, there is no *point-to-point* correspondence between the cerebral mass and conceptual space. The soul, or the subject of psychic states, is therefore a zero-dimen-

sional substance within a universe that does not restrict itself to three
dimensions but in principle admits to the existence of multi-dimensional
topoids. Brentano’s theory thus seems to embrace a pluralistic conception of
the universe, although it is one that starts from an immanentist realist founda-
tion of its apperception in intentional reference.

In the history of philosophy, the thought of Brentano has been classified as
an opposition to Kantianism and German idealism. Brentano himself often
expressed anti-Kantian conceptions, from a historical point of view in general
and with regard to specific issues – synthetic a priori judgements in particular.
His anti-Kantianism has often been asserted on the basis of certain writings on
the history of philosophy collected by Mayer-Hillebrand and published in
1926 as The Four Phases of Philosophy and Its Current State.

The title of the book is taken from a lecture given by Brentano to the Liter-
arische Gesellschaft (Literary Society) of Vienna on 28 November 1894 and
reprinted as the opening chapter. It is followed by further essays written
between 1876 and 1912 on Plotinus (1876), Aquinas (1908), Kant and his proof
for the existence of God (1911-12), Schopenhauer (1911-12), and Comte
(1869), and finally a lecture on presupposition-free research (1901). The book
concludes with some further remarks by Brentano on the first of the essays,
which deals with the four ‘phases’ of philosophy. What are these four phases?

According to Brentano, the history of philosophy, like the history of art,
displays a pattern of alternating rises and falls. This sequence of periods of
lively philosophical interest and correct methods, followed by ones of decad-
dence, can be seen in antiquity, in the Middle Ages, and in the modern age.
Brentano had written a series of specific studies on antiquity – independently
of his strictly Aristotelian ones – which were once again collected by Mayer-
Hillebrand in 1963 with the title Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie
(History of Greek Philosophy).

According to Brentano, after the flourishing of classical philosophy from
Thales to Aristotle, symptoms of decadence became evident and increased
pace with the popularization and trivialization of philosophy by the stoics
and the epicureans, and then by the sceptics and the spread of eclecticism until
the advent of neo-Pythagorism and neo-Platonism. A similar pattern of ascent
followed by progressive decline was apparent in the Middle Ages, when phi-
losophy blossomed with patristics until Aquinas but then began to decay with
Duns Scotus, and thereafter with nominalism until it lapsed into mysticism
with Lullus and Nicolò Cusanus. In the modern age, after the ascent brought
about by Bacon, Descartes, Locke and Leibniz, decadence set in with French
and German rationalism and then, after Hume and Reid, became rampant with
Berkeley, Kant and German idealism.
Chapter 9: Other writings

At issue, however, was not just a re-reading of the history of philosophy. For anti-Kantianism played a major role in the subsequent formation of a Brentano school. Brentano’s anti-Kantianism was defended and emphasised mainly by his ‘orthodox’ pupils, the curators of his legacy, who on more than one occasion allowed it to determine the choice of essays to publish. Kraus, Kastil and Mayer-Hillebrand were declaredly anti-Kantian, in fact, and they cited in support of their position all the passages in which Brentano was openly critical of Kant. As H. Bergmann has pointed out, however, the doctrine of the four phases of philosophical history had “devastating consequences for the school of Brentano”, especially when it was adopted acritically and used for the purposes of internal polemic – for example, against Husserl’s phenomenology or Meinong’s theory of objects.22 Very often, in fact, the disputes that accompanied the development of the theory of intentional reference by Brentano’s most outstanding pupils seemingly reflect a personal polemic carried forward by Kraus. This opinion is shared by Windelband, who considers Brentano’s interpretation (which resembled Comte’s theory of phases) to be a complete failure, and similar criticisms have been brought against it by E. Gilson, Stegmüller and Campos.23

Moreover, Brentano’s anti-Kantianism (which was perhaps directed more against the neo-Kantian version of the critique) had a theoretical grounding, being based principally on the reflexivity or otherwise of the act of presentation, and on the presence or otherwise of a form of judgement also in the first class of psychic presentations. However, a careful reading of the texts in Brentano’s Nachlaß reveals a progressive and conscious shift towards certain of Kant’s conceptions, and in any case it shows that the two thinkers shared a common problem concerning the nature of the space and time of presentative continua. Between the final version of Brentano’s thought and the theses set out in the first edition of the Critique of Pure Reason, in fact, the distance is much less than initially, and it was reduced by a shared psychological foundation. Brentano’s best pupils – Stumpf, Twardowski, Husserl and Meinong – dealt more broadly with the problems of Kantianism.24

On analysing Brentano’s thought as a whole, from its Aristotelian origins to its growing interest in psychophysics, and also considering the range of topics that it covered, it is possible to draw some general conclusions as to Brentano’s conviction of the uniqueness and excellence of psychological science based on philosophical reflection.

According to Brentano, psychology is privileged because inner perception has *direct and evident access* to the objects that it describes. All the other sciences are forced by their nature to *observe* their objects and to form conjectures. But psychic phenomena have an *objectivity* which makes them very distant from any form of psychism that seeks to treat them as simply ‘ideas’ or products of mere introspection. As Passmore has pointed out:

The foundation of psychology, for Brentano, is the fact that we can *perceive* our mental acts, even although we cannot *observe* them. To understand this distinction, we must begin from a Cartesian presumption that in being aware of a ‘representation’ we are simultaneously aware of the act of representing it to ourselves [...] To attempt to *observe* a mental act, however, is to attempt to make it the ‘first object’ of another act – when we talk of observation we presume a distinction between observer and observed – and this, Brentano is quite prepared to agree with Comte, is impossible. Here then, is an important difference between psychology and every other empirical enquiry: in psychology we perceive, in Brentano’s special sense of that word, whereas in the other sciences we observe. The advantage, it might seem, lies with other sciences; but this Brentano categorically denies. The natural scientist, Brentano agrees with Locke, has no direct access to those natural objects which he attempts to describe; anything he says about their ‘real nature’ can only be a conjecture, based on his experience of ‘appearances’. He can ‘observe’ sounds, colours and the like but he can never ‘perceive’ the physical object itself, i.e. he can never be directly and immediately aware of it. In complete contrast, the psychologist, according to Brentano, has an immediate and direct apprehension of the realities which constitute its subject matter; each psychic act perceive itself directly as its ‘second object’ – not as an appearance, not as something from which the real character of the psychic act has to be inferred, but precisely as mental act actually is. That is why, to Brentano as to Hume, psychology stands first amongst the sciences.25

And further:

To Brentano and his disciples, philosophy is science or nothing. They had no patience with Lange’s view that philosophy is a kind of poetry, a large-scale imaginative construction. The philosopher, they thought, should choose a clearly defined problem and grapple with it to the best of his ability. In many ways, indeed, their approach is reminiscent of the elaborate analyses of the scholastics.26

Brentano’s theory, in effect, is a variety of direct realism whose antecedents are to be found in medieval philosophy but which was developed in relation to modern science and in particular to psychology. Brentano’s position has probably best summed up by Tatarkiewicz, as follows:

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Chapter 9: Other writings

At the end of the nineteenth century, Franz Brentano – who was educated in the scholastic tradition – introduced the theory of direct realism to secular philosophy before it attracted many philosophers in the first years of the twentieth century, especially in England and America […] This new form of realism asserted that the mind grasps things themselves directly, that is it comes into direct contact with them; things themselves are present in acts of perception. This was the very view which the philosophy of the nineteenth century regarded as uncritical, peculiar to the laity, one which had been definitively overthrown by the theory of knowledge. But toward the end of the nineteenth century, Brentano revived this view, and now many thinkers in Europe and America began to defend it. In opposition to the intermediate realism of the nineteenth century this direct realism, as it was sometimes called, can be considered the new realism of the twentieth century. For modern philosophy it was a revolution, a departure from the tradition of Descartes as well as Berkeley and Kant; it broke with introvert, anthropocentric philosophy. It rejected what not long ago the majority had held to be the most precious achievement of modern times.27

From this point of view, we can agree in saying that Brentano’s thought has been the starting point for phenomenology, however on a scientific and experimental basis.

Chapter 10

A history of Brentano criticism

1 AN APPARENT LEGACY

Viewed with hindsight, in many respects Brentano belongs to the tradition of Austrian liberalism whose exponents included Mach and Boltzmann. Shared by these thinkers was the endeavour to reform the theory of knowledge in general, and logic in particular, and a scientific conception of the world.\footnote{Sebestik 1984; Morscher 1978; Smith 1994, 8-34.} The mainstream of this tradition flowed through the Vienna Circle, which acknowledged Brentano, Meinong and Höfler among its forerunners. As Neurath recalls, although Brentano started from entirely different premises, he prepared the way for foundational inquiry in logic, mathematics and theory of knowledge. The section of the Vienna Circle’s Manifesto devoted to the history of the movement declared:

The commitment of physicists like Mach and Boltzmann to the teaching of philosophy testifies to the then dominant interest in the logical and gnoseological problems of the foundation of physics. From this fundamental theme also arose the requirement to renew logic; and it was at Vienna, although he moved from an entirely different direction, that Franz Brentano (between 1874 and 1880 professor of philosophy in the theological faculty, and latterly professor in the philosophical faculty) had opened the way. As a Catholic priest, Brentano was well versed in scholastic philosophy, and he undoubtedly drew on its logical doctrine together with Leibnizian contributions for a reform of logic, while he left aside Kant and the systematic idealist philosophers. The appreciation by Brentano and his pupils of the work of scholars like Bolzano and others who sought to give a rigorous foundation to logic became more and more apparent. Alois Höfler stressed this aspect of Brentanian philosophy before a public which comprised, because of the influence of Mach and Boltzmann, numerous adherents of a scientific conception of the world. The Philosophical Society directed by Höfler held frequent meetings on the gnoseological and logical aspects of the Foundation of Physics at the University of Vienna […] During roughly the same period (1870-1882), at work within Brentano’s Viennese group was Alexius von Meinong (subsequently professor at Graz), whose Gegenstandstheorie had a certain affinity with the modern theory of concepts and whose pupil Ernst Mally likewise conducted research in the field of logistic.\footnote{The Vienna Manifesto, translation mine. I have emphasised the problematic aspects of the quotation, since Brentano was not a great admirer of Bolzano, as Husserl instead was.}
However, the diverse provenance of Brentano’s thought in Aristotelian theory and scholastic tradition evidently sat uneasily with the doctrines of the Vienna Circle. Despite the tribute paid by the first two issues of Erkentniss to a ‘bottom up’ Brentanian approach, in the light of the criticisms brought by several leading members of the Circle (primarily Schlick) against Brentano’s philosophy of evidence – criticisms which were part of a more general hostility against metaphysics – one may enquire as to exactly what it was that the first neo-positivists saw as the connection between the direct immanent realism of Brentano’s theory of intentional reference and their physicalist theses. Above all we should ask whether this connection did not conceal a misunderstanding, or even a distortion, even though von Mises, for example, used the most famous of Brentano’s Habilitationstheze as the epigraph for his book on positivism: *vera philosophiae methodus nulla alia nisi scientiae naturalis est.*

The problem consists in the fact that Brentano can be considered the precursor of neopositivism only by vague analogy: that is, on the basis of his constant endeavour to construct a scientific philosophy. Science, however, in Brentanian terms, is not reducible to methodological criteria alone, as the neo-positivists claimed. Regarding this specific aspect of the ‘Brentano puzzle’, Poli observes:

> It goes without saying that the thesis of the alliance of science and philosophy requires a correct vision of both of them. Unfortunately, too many contemporary thinkers believe not only that science and philosophy are reducible to abstractions but also that they are cognitive procedures of isolation, separation or even, as some have claimed, impoverishment and falsification of the overall image of the world. Standing on Brentano’s footing, I will argue the opposite viewpoint. In fact, science and philosophy are higher-order visions; they powerfully enrich our conceptions of the world; they reveal what would otherwise remain hidden; they make comprehensible what would be incomprehensible in their absence.

As we shall see, answering these questions requires wide-ranging examination of the reception accorded to Brentano’s thought, particularly in Poland and the Anglo-American countries, and its repercussions on contemporary philosophy.

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5. Poli 1998b, 8.
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2 FAME AND OBLIVION

One is immediately struck by the contrast between the fame enjoyed by Brentano in his lifetime and the apparent oblivion into which his thought lapsed after the 1930s, with a slight recovery in the 1950s, and then a more recent revival of interest in certain sectors of contemporary philosophy in the 1980s. His ideas, widely discussed during his lifetime and subsequent decades by both philosophers and psychologists, were in various ways incorporated into the works of his pupils. But the scholastic legacy displayed by certain of his fundamental theses contributed to his reputation as an anachronistic thinker (one thinks again of Tatarkiewicz’s opinion). Moreover, the enormous impact of Husserl’s theories have often induced commentators to regard Brentano reductively as a mere precursor of phenomenology. However, as Husserl himself affirms in this respect:

It was Franz Brentano who first opened the trail here, but only through the formal indication of the descriptive uniqueness of ‘psychic phenomena’. He had never overcome the naturalistic prejudice in his psychology and precisely because of this the unique sense of intentional analysis and the proper method of an intentional psychology remained inaccessible to him. The idea of a pure phenomenology however was completely beyond his reach.7

One of the few authors not to have committed this error is Stegmüller, who considers Brentano to be an independent thinker but again views him as a forerunner of analytic philosophy. He writes:

Brentano’s significance for contemporary philosophy is still singularly underestimated. There is a striking disparity between the very great effect he has had on the present day philosophy and the relatively meagre attention paid his teachings in current philosophical instruction and research. For Brentano is a center from which threads extend in the most varied directions […] his method – especially in the study of the logic of language, which he considers the starting point in philosophy <sic!> – bears a remarkable resemblance in many respects to the procedure of present-day empiricism, and particularly to that of analytic philosophy in Britain and the U.S.A.8

As regards the fame enjoyed by Brentano during his lifetime, as we have seen, despite his very few years spent teaching in an official capacity (first as a lecturer at Würzburg and then as professor and Privatdozent at Vienna),

there formed around him a group of outstanding pupils who went on to found their own schools of thought.

Equally important, as we have seen, are the contacts that Brentano established during his twenty-year sojourn in Italy (1895-1916) and which helped disseminate his thought in the early 1900s. In Italy Brentano’s *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* was favourably received by psychologists, and even Croce found it to his liking. The debate surrounding Brentano’s psychology was conducted in the correspondence columns of the Italian journals, and traces of it are also to be found in the Appendices to *Psychology* II. But of particular relevance is the reception of Brentano’s thought in Italy through Vailati’s writings. As we saw, Vailati was especially interested in Brentano’s reform of logic, and for some time he was minded to write a study on the topic, in collaboration with Brentano, who wanted to correct some of the errors committed by Hillebrand. The distinctive feature of Vailati’s interpretation of Brentano’s ideas is its logico-linguistic translation of his descriptive psychology. In August 1900, at the Paris international congress of psychology, Vailati presented the already mentioned paper entitled ‘On the Logical Importance of prof. Franz Brentano’s Classification of Psychic Facts’, in which he performed an *ante litteram* analytic ‘translation’ of Brentano’s ideas, where presentations became ‘definitions’, judgements became ‘assertions which express agreement or doubt concerning the contents of propositions’, and emotional phenomena expressed ‘value judgements’. From this point of view, Vailati is one of the first interpreters of Brentano’s doctrine in an analytical sense.

In Italy Brentano’s classification of mental phenomena also interested Amendola, especially with regard to ethical analysis. The dissemination of Brentano’s ethical theories in Italy, however, was principally the work of Calderoni – again on the basis of an analysis of ordinary language – and Orestano, who helped spread Brentano’s ethics as well as the ideas of Meinong and Ehrenfels.

Moreover, Brentano’s voluminous correspondence – much of which is still coming to light – testifies to his constant contacts, even during the long ‘private’ period of his life, with the leading scientists of his time, Mach in particular. It is also probable that the fame of Brentano’s opinions, with their close affinity to Ultramontanism, aroused the sympathies of the modern-

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It is therefore evident – also in consideration of events in his personal life – that Brentano’s thought met with remarkable success during his lifetime, and thereafter continued to exert its influence through his school. In view of the wide range of Brentano’s philosophical inquiries, we may conveniently divide discussion of the reception of his ideas under the following headings:

1. Catholic theology
2. Aristotelianism
3. Psychology
4. Anti-Kantianism.

The unorthodoxy of Brentano’s religious thought and its proximity to the Ultramontanism inherited from his father, his view of Aristotelianism as a possible re-foundation for theology, his rejection (together with Döllinger, Ketteler and Hefele) of the doctrine of papal infallibility, and more generally his personal affairs, made Brentano an awkward annoyance to the Catholic Church. Not only was the connection between theology and Aristotelianism propounded by Brentano, but it was taken up and developed by his pupils: it appears, for example, in the work of Schell, and particularly in his essay *Die Einheit des Seelenlebens aus der Prinzipien der aristotelischen Philosophie (The Unity of the Life of the Soul)* published in 1873. However, the affair – from both the historical and (especially) conceptual points of view – has yet to receive thorough reconstruction, and we can only rely on the information provided by biographies and occasional essays.\(^\text{15}\)

As regards the specifically Aristotelian themes addressed by Brentano,\(^\text{16}\) subsequent developments of his thought based on the results of experimental psychology have induced some authors to set it in opposition to its twentieth-century treatment at the hands of, for example, Heidegger. It is well known, in fact, that Heidegger’s interest in Aristotelian ontology was aroused by his reading of Brentano’s *On Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*, his ‘first guide through Greek philosophy’ in his youth, and that he shared with Brentano a unitary conception of being. The outcomes of Heidegger’s inquiries were very different, however, for he identified the ontological meaning of being as being-as-true, which was an entirely different conception from Brentano’s. Heidegger’s change of perspective was partly due to the influence of Schelling and Hegel, two thinkers very distant from Brentano, whose theory was

\(^{15}\) Münch 2004.  
\(^{16}\) George 1978; Krantz 1988.
certainly not hermeneutic but scientific, and as such permeated his thought until what I call his experimentally-based metaphysics.\textsuperscript{17}

Although the legacy of scholastic philosophy in Brentano’s thought has almost been taken for granted by commentators, it warrants closer examination. The classic studies on the subject are those by L. Gilson in the 1950s, while Brentano’s Thomist inheritance has been variously stressed by Stumpf, Spiegelberg, Marras, Landgrebe and Breton.\textsuperscript{18} More recently, specific aspects of the question have been examined by Hedwig and Leinfellner-Rupertsberger, who trace the origin of Brentano’s concept of intentional reference to Aquinas and Occam.\textsuperscript{19} Almost entirely lacking, however, is a complete reconstruction of the influence of medieval thought on the theory of intentional reference. Once again, scholarly attention has instead concentrated on its subsequent development by Husserl.\textsuperscript{20} As for Brentano’s treatment by his school, and what he himself called the ‘evolutionistic development’ of his thought by his pupils, there are two aspects that require comment.\textsuperscript{21} The first concerns the publication of Brentano’s works by his ‘orthodox’ pupils (i.e. Kastil, Mayer-Hillebrand and Kraus). In the editions produced by these pupils, Brentano’s thought is often reinterpreted and presented in anti-Kantian terms. Every original development of Brentano’s theories by his other pupils (the ‘heterodoxes’) – which on more than one occasion displayed affinities with Kant – was attacked as a misunderstanding, and sometimes as an outright betrayal, of the master’s thought. The dogmatic anti-Kantianism of the orthodox pupils – as has also been pointed out by H. Bergmann, who studied in Prague under Marty, Ehrenfels and other Brentanists – was disastrous for the school of Brentano. Besides Bergmann’s essay, the matter has been reconstructed from a critical point of view in articles by Körner, Aquila and Albertazzi which underlined the interpretations of Kantianism by Reinhold, Benecke, Erdmann, Fries, Sigwart, Wund and Trendelenburg which came somewhat close to Brentano’s theory.\textsuperscript{22} Moreover, Brentano’s anti-Kantianism has also been popularized by the emphasis given by his analytic interpreters to The Four Phases of Philosophy and Its Current State, a lecture delivered at the Literary Society of Vienna in 1894. The preface to its publication in the following year concludes as follows:

22. H. Bergmann 1965-66; Aquila 1982; Körner 1987; Albertazzi 1996c, in part. § 6. For a largely objective exposition of Brentano’s thought see Kastil 1951. See also Werner 1930.
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One should especially not misinterpret my real opinion of Kant’s philosophy in those passages in which I deal with this extraordinary thinker. Independently of what I say about his philosophical system, his achievements for the natural sciences, like those of Proclus for mathematics, remain unparalleled.23

A certain role in the popularization of Brentano’s thought has also been played by the distinction between a first Brentano and a second Brentano. The distinction was drawn by Kraus in his introduction to the second edition of Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint of 1924; an introduction which also purveys misleading interpretations of certain fundamental concepts in Brentano’s thought. Kraus again, when assembling Brentano’s writings published in The True and the Evident in 1930, organized them into three sections intended to reflect three successive phases in Brentano’s thought: the initial phase, the transition phase, and a final phase corresponding to the reist period. Brentano, however, had always rejected any such distinction. Then Mayer-Hillebrand, who selected the texts for The Doctrine of Correct Judgment published in 1956, added her own lecture notes to Brentano’s text, as well as interpolating a number of sections (‘clarificatory’, in her view) which reiterated the interpretations put forward by Kraus, thus helping to establish a certain Brentanian ‘orthodoxy’.24 The very unfortunate lack of a critical edition of Brentano works, and the rearrangement and inclusion of some of his works in arbitrarily assembled collections, have therefore given rise to a series of misunderstandings which have affected the spread and reception of his thought.

On the basis of the initial distinction between a ‘first’ and ‘second’ Brentano, subsequent commentators have sought to identify the reasons for a change in his conceptions – this being the case of Chisholm and Smith, for example – whilst the continuity of Brentano’s thought has instead been stressed by, amongst others, Richardson, Aquila, Albertazzi and Szrednicki (who in particular has viewed Brentano’s shift to reism as resulting from his analysis of language).25 With specific regard to intentional reference, Chisholm interprets this in the early Brentano as an ontological relation, so that mental phenomena (which Chisholm takes to be ‘attitudes’) are the ontological bearers of the objects towards which they are directed, even if they are in fact non-existent.26

The best examples of the reception accorded to Brentano’s thought, however, are provided by the developments made to it by his school, despite the

23. Brentano 1988d, 82.
24. See also Mayer-Hillebrand in the edition of Brentano’s The Theory of Correct Judgment.
controversies that accompanied the endeavour. Careful reconstruction of the subsequent evolution of Brentano’s theories shows, in fact, that their direct realism bred Stumpf’s eido logic, Meinong’s ontology, Husserl’s phenomenology, Twardowski’s ‘psychologistic’ theory on contents of presentations, and Marty’s philosophy of language: the widest-ranging survey – both historical and thematic – of these matters is the miscellaneous volume edited by Albertazzi, Libardi and Poli.27 Specific analysis of the thematic developments of Brentano’s thought, moreover, has demonstrated its influence on logic, psychology, the logical-philosophical school of Lvov, ethics, economics, literature, and philosophy of language.28

Furthermore, from the early 1900s onwards, Brentano’s thought spread beyond continental Europe to Great Britain and the United States in the wake of its affinity with British empiricism – which Brentano held in considerable esteem, bolstered by his personal acquaintance with Spencer since 1872 and his correspondence with Stuart Mill.

Analysis of the reception given to Brentano’s thought in Great Britain, where it interwove in part with British idealism and in part with the origins of analytic philosophy, harbours considerable surprises. For many years, the only work by Brentano translated into English was Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong, which came out in 1902, while the translation of Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint did not appear until 1973 (it was reprinted in 1995).

However, this reception, brought about by Stout, involved not only Brentano but also some of his pupils, most notably Meinong and Twardowski. The influence of Meinong on the young Russell and on Moore is relatively well known, and so is Moore’s appreciation of Brentano’s ethical theory.29 Historiographical criticism largely agrees that the spread of the Brentanists’ ideas in Great Britain, and especially their style (of Meinong in particular), was the work of Russell and Moore. It is less well known, however, that Meinong’s thought was introduced into Great Britain by McKenzie, mainly in relation to certain aspects of Meinong’s theory of objects and his theory of value, and that in any case Brentanism was more generally disseminated through the works of Lotze.30

Moreover, the interest aroused in Brentano’s thought, especially at Cambridge, mainly concerned his descriptive psychology, and it was further fostered by the advent in England of Twardowski’s psychology, and whose ontology has a striking similarity with Moore’s and Russell’s theory of

objects. In reality, Brentanist ideas initially influenced two psychologists, Ward and Stout, and only subsequently Moore and Russell, who were their pupils.

Stout had studied under Sidgwick and Ward, and he was also influenced by the thought of Lotze and Bradley. He translated Brentano’s descriptive psychology into the conceptual framework set out in his *Analytic Psychology* published in 1896, a work which contains numerous references not only to Brentano and Twardowski, but also to Stumpf, Ehrenfels and Meinong.

Both Russell and Moore read Stout’s book carefully, and they drew from it their sharp distinction between ‘psychological content’ and ‘object of thought’, this latter being the basis of the ‘meaning of terms’. Subsequent development of the question, which saw the publication by Russell of *On Denoting* in 1905, and the consequent change of perspective in his theory of propositional attitudes, is very well known and requires no further discussion here, also because it concerns Meinong more than Brentano.

Brentano’s logical theories on existential judgements were introduced into Britain by Land, who pointed out Brentano’s error in contending that a universal proposition does not assert the existence of the subject because it nevertheless presupposes that existence. It should finally be mentioned that Brentano’s thought was also disseminated in Britain by Alexander (who discussed the problem of sensory qualities and their intensity in particular), and who was instrumental in the subsequent presence at Oxford of two of Brentano’s pupils, Kraus and Katkov.

The analytic and semantic interpretation, via Russell, of Brentano’s theory of intentional reference had repercussions on Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* and the work of Ayer, the leading British representative of logical positivism, and it was then channelled through these sources into the philosophy of language of Austin and Grice. Brentano’s theory of intentionality was instead taken up by Anscombe, but in the sense that she made explicit the logical aspects of intentional propositions – an interpretation which matched that put forward by Chisholm.

After intentionality theory had been reintroduced into the philosophical debate of the 1960s and 1970s by Chisholm and Quine, it was developed in relation to logic and formal semantics, following what Quine termed a pro-

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31. On the topic see van der Schaar 1996.
33. See Albertazzi, Jacquette, Poli 2001b.
34. Land 1876.
35. Alexander 1927.
gressive ‘semantic ascent’. A failure to distinguish between concrete and direct intentional reference, on the one hand, and the logical indirect intentional relation on the other – as Husserl would have put it – often confined discussion of intentionality to the problem of logical relations, so that the psychological and experimental aspects of its origins were entirely ignored. However, as Husserl stressed, Brentano always placed greatest emphasis on the importance of the distinction between actual and symbolic presentations, specifying that contents which are given to us indirectly by means of signs (language included) are only symbolic.\(^37\) Other reasons for this confusion will emerge later.

The spread of Brentano’s thought in Poland warrants separate treatment, for two reasons. Firstly because in the person of Twardowski it represents a distinct branch in the theoretical development of Brentano’s philosophy. Secondly because it too is part of contemporary analytic philosophy, and especially that sector of it interested in logico-formal matters. The advent of Brentano’s thought in Poland led to its nominalist development which, through the thought of Kotarbinski, merged with the philosophical (non-formal) theories of Tarski, whose subsequent emigration to the United States carried forward the Polish logical and philosophical tradition in the Anglo-Saxon countries. The miscellaneous book edited by Coniglione, Poli and Wolenski is a first attempt to reconstruct these origins.\(^38\)

Considered from a general point of view, the products of the logical-philosophical school of Lvov-Warsaw resulted from the academic and intellectual efforts of Twardowski. However, as specifically regards the period between the end of the nineteenth century and the First World War, they were the work of Brentanists or members of Brentano’s school.\(^39\) Besides Twardowski, who studied under Brentano, also influenced by his ideas were Kotarbinski, Ajdukiewicz and Ingearden – the latter also by his studies of Husserl. In particular, Kotarbinski’s pansomatism or concretism is noted as a variant of Brentanian reism, although it was developed independently and cannot be considered a direct derivation from it on theoretical grounds. This interpretation also gained currency because of its development by Ajdukiewicz, and it is still to be found in certain analytic studies on Brentano – for example those by Smith.\(^40\) For that matter, this interpretation by analytic philosophy is entirely understandable if one bears in mind that Kotarbinski’s reism is a theoretical approach very similar to that which characterized the linguistic turn of the

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\(^{37}\) Husserl 1994, 30.
\(^{38}\) Coniglione, Poli, Wolenski 1993; Albertazzi 1993b.
\(^{39}\) Kotarbinski 1966; Dambowska 1978.
\(^{40}\) Ajdukiewicz 1988.
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twentieth century, in that it used linguistic analysis to address ontological problems.

Brentano’s thought was first introduced into the United States by G. Bergmann, a Viennese mathematician and member of the Vienna Circle who emigrated to America in 1938. Brentano’s direct realism was subjected to criticism in the United States and modified into a sort of conceptual representationalism: an interpretation which marks another shift towards a nominalist version of Brentano’s theses which, though not coincident with the variant developed in Poland, forms part of its Anglo-American reception into analytic philosophy – as is also apparent in the work of Bergmann’s pupils, Hochberg for example. Nowadays, Brentano’s thought runs the same risk in its reception into cognitive science, being affiliated with the Cartesian and mentalist tradition of the ‘homunculus in the mind’ or the ‘inner forum’ (see below).

The significant revival of Brentano’s in the United States during the 1950s was the work of Chisholm, who turned Brentano’s direct realism – with its eminently psychological and experimental basis – into a philosophy of mind, once again with a markedly linguistic treatment of the problem of intentional reference and a close linkage with the analytic interpretation given to Brentano in Great Britain. Chisholm writes:

Brentano’s descriptive psychology is doubtless very close to what Husserl originally called phenomenology to be. But in the philosophical problems that are central to it, and in the precise analytic manner with which Brentano dealt with them, his descriptive psychology is also very close to the ‘philosophy of mind’ or ‘philosophical psychology’, that is now of concerns to philosophers in the analytic tradition.43

However, in regard to the transition made from psyche to mind in contemporary times, Wilkes notes that:

Adopted and reinforced by the British Empiricists, this picture [soul as mind] is one with which philosophers in the English-language tradition have been struggling ever since. By and large it did not impress writers and poets (recall Woodsworth or Coleridge: but there are countless examples […]), and was not supreme in philosophy in Continental Europe.44

This rendering of Brentano is still current in the Anglo-American countries as well, in particular among philosophers (like Dennett) concerned with the mind-body problem and the theory of intentionality.\textsuperscript{45}

It seems, however, that exponents of analytic philosophy have not grasped the core of Brentano’s programme. As McAlister observes:

I believe, however, that Chisholm’s interpretation of Brentano’s intentionality doctrine is not wholly accurate, and that while the doctrine he sets forth as Brentano’s is an interesting and provocative one, it gives a misleading impression of what Brentano’s views actually were, by obscuring almost entirely the specific nature of the question Brentano was trying to solve, and by misleading the answer Brentano gave [...] In this paper I will try to show that there is no textual basis for the interpretation of Brentano’s intentionality doctrine that Chisholm gives, and I will discuss briefly how, in the light of that fact, Chisholm might have thought that there was.\textsuperscript{46}

In particular, in her analysis McAlister underlines the misunderstandings by Chisholm of the concepts of (i) ‘object’, and of (ii) ‘physical phenomena’, two central components of Brentano’s theory of reference. Specifically, Chisholm takes physical phenomena to be not sensible qualities, which they are, but physical activities. According to McAlister, Chisholm also misunderstands (iii) the difference between reality and existence, which is the core of Brentano’s metaphysics. All in all, these misunderstandings are crucial for the interpretation of Brentano’s theory.

Another example, even if less striking, of how difficult it is to understand Brentano’s theory from the point of view of analytic philosophy is the following. In the first edition of his book on the \textit{Origins of Analytic Philosophy}, Dummett recognizes the goodness of Brentano’s ideas but he considers intentional acts of reference to be ‘directed towards external objects’, which, incidentally, corresponds to Chisholm’s interpretation.\textsuperscript{47} Fortunately, the passage has been omitted from the revised English version of the text. However, the example is not fortuitous. Analytic philosophy arose in a cultural climate where physicalism was the overall paradigm in epistemology and influenced all disciplinary fields, so that the ‘psychologistic’ flavour of Brentano’s metaphysics was first the cause of its neglect, secondly the cause of its disappearing, and thirdly made it incomprehensible.

Examples abound, but it is worth quoting another misunderstanding of Brentano’s thought, which interprets it in terms of folk psychology:

\textsuperscript{45} Fort a recent overview of analytic-oriented intentionality theories see Lyons 1995.
\textsuperscript{46} McAlister 1976, 152.
\textsuperscript{47} Dummett 1988, 39. Emphasis mine.
Chapter 10: A history of Brentano criticism

Folk psychology [...] is not a theory about the nature of the mind at all but a system for explaining behaviour. Certainly such a system entails certain things about the nature of the mind (such as that the mind includes mental acts of believing and desiring). However, if this aspect of folk psychology were to seek a mentor in the world of academic philosophy and psychology, it would do best to look in the direction of Brentano’s account of mental acts. For here we have a post-Cartesian account of conscious grasp, in the sense of understanding, of content, where no time or space in the explanation is given over to talk about shape or structure or syntax as the driving force of mental acts.

Finally it might be said that this implicit folk psychological account of the mind (as does Brentano’s) depicts humans as, above all, conscious beings. It explains the propositional attitudes as conscious processes whereby the human in question takes up a conscious attitude to something he or she understands, where ‘understands’ means ‘grasp the meaning of’ or ‘make sense of’ or some such.48

In Spain and Italy, largely because of the growth of phenomenological studies, Brentano’s thought has attracted renewed scholarly attention since the Second World War. This interest in Brentano in Spain and the Spanish-speaking countries has been mainly due to the work of Ortega y Gasset, who arranged for the translation of Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint and its publication in 1923 by the Revista de Occidente, a journal and publishing house that he himself had founded.49

Brentano and his thought were first introduced into Italy by encyclopaedia entries and then his inclusion in various encyclopaedias of philosophy published in the 1950s.50 The interest in Brentano in Italy should be situated within the country’s tradition of history of philosophy. The resumption of interest first arose within the Catholic academic sphere, and it was due to Bausola, who edited an Italian abridgement of the The Origin of the Knowledge of Right and Wrong in 1966. Then Vanni Rovighi investigated the origins of the concept of intentionality, albeit with reference more to Husserl than to Brentano.51 Again, a historical-theoretical assessment of Brentano’s thought from a phenomenological standpoint, and as a precursor of Husserlian theory, was conducted in a 1960 study by Melandri which examined the origins of phenomenology in relation to the Brentanism framing Husserl’s investigations. Around twenty years later, a monograph by Modenato gave detailed exposition to Brentano’s theses throughout his lifetime. More recently, a historical analysis by Antonelli has underlined in particular the Aristotelian roots of

50. Banfi 1930; Fabro 1949; Abbagnano 1950; Rosso 1957.
Brentano’s thought and examined its relations with the theories of Benecke, Ueberweg, Lotze and Trendelenburg. As said, however, Antonelli’s book contains significant misrepresentations of Brentano’s thought, in particular the theory of parts, and the ontological commitment of the thesis of intentional in/existence.

3 CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES

Since 1989, the Brentano Forschung of Würzburg has published in collaboration with the Brentano Foundation the journal *Brentano Studien* under the editorship of Baumgartner, Burkard and Wiedmann. The aim of the Brentano Foundation (http://www.franz-brentano.de/websites7english/mainframes/ifbg/main-ifbg.html) is to continue the work of the Brentano Gesellschaft founded in Prague by Masaryk in the 1930s. The journal is conceived as a yearbook on Brentano and his school, and as part of the broader tradition of both phenomenology and analytic philosophy. Specifically, the Brentano Forschung, which is one of the repositories of Brentano’s *Nachlaß* (see the Bibliographical Note) is editing Brentano’s works. To date, however, nothing has been published.

Substantially connected to Chisholm’s reading of Brentano is the work of Mulligan, Smith and Simons, who since the seminars on Austro-German philosophy held at the University of Manchester in the 1970s, have contributed to the rediscovery and dissemination of a number of Brentanian themes, presenting them, classically, as the roots of analytic philosophy and of Husserlian phenomenology. As Smith affirms:

Much has been written about this so called ‘intentionality passage’ from Brentano’s *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*. The thesis here formulated has proved to be one of the most influential in all contemporary philosophy. It gave rise to Husserlian phenomenology, but it also lies at the root of the thinking of analytic philosophers on meaning and reference and on the relations of language and mind.

These scholars have also often set Brentano’s thought in opposition to a ‘German’ thought of Heideggerian stamp whose influence – they claim – can be today discerned in the work of Lacan and Derrida. This last opinion is specifically put forward in a series of essays by Smith, who, however, in other passages underlines the relevance of Brentano in shaping what is usually

54. Smith 1994, 35.
called Continental philosophy – the philosophy of, principally, Germany and France in the twentieth century.

The thesis of Brentano as the forerunner of an ‘Austrian philosophy’ propounded (as we saw at the beginning of this chapter) by Neurath has been brought up to date by Haller, who, with Wittgenstein’s thought playing the pivotal role, has contrasted a certain type of problematic and use of logico-formal methods with the theses and methodology of German idealism. More recently the thesis has been embraced and supported by Smith, who espouses the view of Brentano as a forerunner of the Vienna Circle and of analytic thought. He writes:

Our thesis, then, which is to be conceived as a strengthening of the Neurath-Haller Thesis […] is that the Central-European traditions of logical positivism in particular and of scientific philosophy in general can be understood as a part of the exact or analytic legacy of Brentano.57

The intrinsic curiosity of the claim consists in the fact that Smith admits that verificationism, physicalism, behaviourism, and emotivism in ethics, i.e. the main theses characterizing the Vienna Circle, are totally absent from the thought of Brentano and the Brentanists; and that, vice versa, the topic of intentionality is totally absent from that of the exponents of neo-positivism. That notwithstanding, the thesis that Brentano laid the cultural basis for the rise of scientific philosophy as neopositivism and analytic philosophy is firmly reasserted.58 In this framework, even Schlick’s strong attack against Brentano’s theories becomes distorted, thus incomprehensible. For example, following Chisholm’s interpretation, Smith even finds close similarities with Schlick’s observation statements belonging to the class of statements expressing experiences, which, according to him, are immediately evident in precisely the Brentanian (i.e., ‘Cartesian’!) sense.59

The most astonishing claim, however, is the ascription to Brentano of an anti-metaphysical stance (although the assertion is withdrawn in subsequent essays):

Brentano was not only sympathetic to a rigorously scientific method in philosophy; he shared with the logical positivists also a certain anti-metaphysics orientation and his work involves the use of methods of language analysis similar to those developed later by philosophers in England.60

58. Smith 1994, 35.
60. See Smith 1994, 18.
This view on Brentano pervades the conception and execution of the Cambridge Companion to Brentano, whose contributors share, for the most part, traditional analytic assumptions. Specifically, the Companion considers only some parts of Brentano’s doctrine, and repetitions of his main theses reappear in several chapters. Above all, the aspects of Brentano’s thought considered by the various authors (exceptions being McAlister, George and Kranz) are developed within an ideological analytic framework which again starts from erroneous assumptions. Examples are identification of the concept of presentation with that of idea in the Lockean sense – which is to misunderstand the conceptual framework and the concept itself of presentation of descriptive psychology as a variety of contemporary philosophy of mind – which implies a further misunderstanding of the concept of empirical psychology in Brentano’s sense.

Specifically, the concept of ‘idea’ refers to immediate conscious introspection on the contents of the mind, otherwise called qualia, sense data, representations. The empirical, experimental and descriptive components of Brentano’s psychology, however, in that they stress different aspects of the subject matter, cannot be divided in different parts.

To quote Wilkes’ statement about the concept of psychology in Aristotle, which also pertains to Brentano’s:

Whenever I talk of ‘psychology’ I am talking about theoretical and experimental scientific psychology: the pursuit of those in laboratories and white coats. I am not talking about commonsense psychology, whether that is considered as the domain of the man in the street or as ‘philosophical psychology’: armchair theories of action and perception, or ‘sentential models’ of cognition, and so forth. No doubt scientific psychology and commonsense (or ‘philosophical’) psychology differ only in degree – but degrees can be colossal. Whenever I do need to mention commonsense psychology, I shall invariably preface the term ‘psychology’ by ‘commonsense’. Psychology alone, will stand for the scientists’ work. This is of course true of Aristotle; the De Anima is a work in theoretical scientific psychology.

Another misunderstanding considers Brentano’s theses, even the earlier ones, to be representationalistic. But presentations, even in Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint, are not mentalistic, because they are based on

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62. Simons 2004, 47.
64. Wilkes 1995, 119.
the Aristotelian concept of psyche. They are not Cartesian states or attitudes: presentations *present*, they *do not represent* either the external world or the self.  

A semantic, Cartesian, mind-oriented interpretation of Brentano’s theory of intentionality has again been the conceptual framework for a number of recent studies on Brentano, for instance one by Chrudzimski, who again establishes a close correspondence between the immanent object of the *Psychologie* and the concept of sense in Frege.  

Albertazzi in particular has been responsible for shifting the emphasis back to the original scientific-experimental import of Brentano’s thought, as opposed to the interpretation given to it from both the hermeneutic and analytic points of view. This re-assertion of the fruitfulness of Brentano’s theories for contemporary thought has been encouraged by the publication in Italian of the three volumes of the *Psychologies* by Laterza in 1997, with a subsequent *Introduction* to Brentano’s thought in 1999, and also by attempts to recast the foundations of metaphysics on a Brentanian basis. This historical reading of Brentano’s thought has suggested its theoretical relevance to the development of cognitive science, of which in many respects Brentano and the Brentanists can be considered among the originators, together with Lotze, Mach, Helmholtz, Bolzano, Bühler, Husserl, Lewin and Selz. A turning point and a departure from this general scheme of reference can be considered the establishment in 1987, by Albertazzi, Poli and Melandri, of the Centre for Study of Central-European Philosophy in Trento, the purpose of which is to increase understanding of Central European philosophy and foster the development of contemporary philosophy. As part of its activities, the Centre has published the journal *Axiomathes*, now a Kluwer journal (www.kluweronline.com/issn/1122-1151) and in its thirteenth year, and a series of books ranging from historical reconstruction of Brentano’s thought and of the various members of his school, to the thematic development of his theories.

As Albertazzi has written:

A typical example of the situation that arose between 1870 and 1930 – although traces of it are obviously apparent in the whole of European thought – is provided by a group of theories developed within a particular cultural setting and which we may broadly term Central-European […] At first sight, the distinctive feature of these theories is some sort of “complementarity of scientific spirit and metaphysical tension, of empirical analysis and research into the absolute” […] This feature is displayed not only by
pre-eminently ‘philosophical’ and, so to speak, ‘Austrian’ theories, like those of Bren-ntano and Meinong, who pursued a programme of experimental metaphysics, but also and particularly by Polish thought and its ramifications in Britain: in fact, a non-inde-pendent piece of Mitteleuropa was transplanted to Britain via Lotze, and then invaded Munich (through Stumpf and subsequently the realist trend in phenomenology) and even the stronghold of German thought represented by Berlin (through Stumpf, Koffka and Lewin), thence to return to Leipzig and Göttingen (through Lotze) and Frankfurt (through Wertheimer, Koffka and Köhler). Through a series of shifts and influences, Florence – the most Central-European city of the Mediterranean region – also joined this set of concentric circles. Moreover, the majority of scholars in the aforesaid universities worked on the boundaries among various disciplines, addressing common themes from different points of view (that of consonance or mel-oody, for example) and opting for the conception of a hierarchy of intellectual con-structions in conceptualisation. This type of inquiry, which usually drew on laboratory experiments for its develop-ment, also in philosophy, displayed a number of variations in its base assumptions. By way of simplification, it was more ‘cognitivist’ among the scholars of the Graz school of Meinong and more ‘realist’ in various branches of Husserlian phenomenol-ogy; and the same difference can be discerned in experimental psychology within Gestaltpsychologie and its various ramifications. In no sense, however, was it either a psychology à la Dilthey (that is, a Geisteswissenschaftpsychologie opposed to the experimental psychology of Ebbinghaus and rooted in German idealism) or a neo-Kantian philosophy à la Rickert or Windelband […] These authors, I would stress again, addressed issues still central to current debate in the cognitive sciences: from the perception of form to the nature of images and their modelling in different formats of representation, as well as the problem of measuring psychological experiences.71

The impact of Brentano on psychology, however, is perhaps the most diffi-cult aspect to deal with, owing to the fact that until only a few years ago his descriptive psychology languished in almost complete oblivion, even in the psychology manuals. Only recently, and with a certain insistence indeed, has it been cited in by some researchers in artificial intelligence.72

As Zimmer stresses, the invisibility of Brentano endures in modern psy-chology too, for a series of reasons, among them the eminently quantitative Zeitgeist of psychological science during the second part of the nineteenth century.73 And I would also recall the role played in this respect by the extreme linguistic turn.

Indeed the revival of Brentano in the last twenty years has concerned more the philosophical aspects of his thought than the psychological and eventually

71. Albertazzi 2001a, 3-4.
72. In particular see Cantwell Smith 1966.
experimental ones. And yet Brentano indubitably played a major role in the psychological inquiry of his time. As we have seen, the opposition between his proposal of a psychology based on the evidence of inner perception and that of Wundtian stamp based on inner observation traversed psychology in its entirety at the turn of the century, and it persisted well into the 1930s, opposing and conditioning research by nativists and empiricists.

We have seen also that Brentano himself, besides conducting his critique of psychophysics, obtained original results in the interpretation of perceptive illusions, sometimes in contradiction to Lipps. Brentano ideas on these matters, together with those set out in a paper to the Fifth International Philosophy Congress, “On the Psychological Analysis of Sound Qualities”, closely match the findings of recent research in cognitive science. 74 In particular, Zimmer observes that Brentano’s doctrine of direct realism responds well to the call for an ecological physics advanced, for example, by Gibson, and then by Turvey, Kugler and Shaw 75 – provided, I would add, that it takes account also of the internal presentative primitives to which Brentano’s theory refers. The difference would consist in differentiating between a physic-geometrical description of the sensory input and its related language, and a description of the presentative primitives (surface, colour, direction, orientation, etc.) within the parameters of a neo-Aristotelian descriptive geometry. 76

As mentioned, experimental verification of Brentano’s descriptive psychology has concerned, for example, the production of a grey distinct by simultaneous contrast, experiments which surprisingly anticipate more recent findings on the invariants in the perception. 77 In particular, Brentano’s experiment on simultaneous contrast is the prime example of gestaltic transposition in the visual field – the theory of which provided the basis for the idea of Gestaltqualitäten (Gestalt qualities) developed by another of Brentano’s pupils (and Meinong’s), von Ehrenfels. 78

Indeed there are various reasons why Brentano’s programme of philosophical, empirical and experimental psychology, with its wealth of innovative insights, took so long to gain acceptance. Primarily there is the fact that, paradoxically, Brentano’s programme was overly precocious with respect to the psychological theory current at his time. The philosophical and Aristotelian roots of his descriptive psychology, which today might make it congenial to the naïve physics adopted in certain sectors of artificial intelligence and cogni-

74. Brentano 1979, 93-103.
76. Albertazzi 2002b.
tive science research, were alien to the tenets of psychophysics, and even more so to the hermeneutic tradition of *psychology of spirit* propounded by Dilthey, which instead derived from German idealism.\(^\text{80}\)

Then the transcendental thrust of Husserl’s thought, and his well-known criticisms of both empirical and experimental psychology – in favour of a pure psychology in the sense of transcendental phenomenology\(^\text{81}\) – also helped to consign Brentano’s philosophy to oblivion.

Conversely, Brentano’s empirical psychology was in many respects incorporated into the two branches of *Gestalt*: that of Berlin by Stumpf, and that of Graz by Meinong and his pupils, Ehrenfels *in primis*. The theoretical point to be borne in mind is that this unity of theory and experimentation sprang from Brentano’s *theory of intentional reference*, and that the analyses conducted at the time in the various perceptive fields (hearing, vision, touch, force fields, etc.) were nothing but attempts to analyse the structure of the intentional presentation *empirically*. For that matter, Koffka, although curiously he does not cite Brentano, followed his experimental theory when he postulated the evolution of only those cognitive systems that have survival value for the species, in the ecological sense.\(^\text{82}\)

From this point of view, Brentano’s programme for an experimental metaphysics based on the *perceiver’s point of view* largely anticipated not only the inquiries of Wertheimer and Koffka but also those of broad sectors of the contemporary cognitive sciences.\(^\text{83}\) In particular, his conception of the act of intentional reference, actual and concrete, seems to be particularly akin to fields of research which assume an embodied mind and an enactive viewpoint in perception.\(^\text{84}\) Also his theory of perceptual space and time may prove to be the proper theoretical framework for research concerning perceptual momentum, proto-objects and the like.\(^\text{85}\) More in general, in that they point up the *specificity of the phenomenal level of reality*, Brentano’s theories provide a strong argument against both epistemological and ontological reductionism.

I would not say, however, that one can speak of widespread acknowledgment of this state of affairs in science. There are exceptions, obviously, for example the entry on Brentano written for the *Oxford Companion to the Mind* by Thinès, who is also noted for his introduction to experimental phenomenol-

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79. See, for example, Hayes 1985a, b.
80. Dilthey 1924.
84. See Varela, Thompson, Rosch 1992; Maturana, Varela 1987.
85. See, for example, for visual and auditory perception, Freyd, Finke 1984; Hubbard 1995.
In fact, it is above all Brentano’s insistence on a *direct and realistic approach* to the world of experience through the *evidence* of the acts of presentation that gives him such close affinity to some contemporary research fields in psychology. Thinès puts it as follows:

The basic difference in Brentano’s system lies in the fact that, unlike Descartes, he does not discard the relation to experienced objects for the sake of the so-called illusions of the senses but strives on the contrary to establish a firm world-reference for every conscious phenomenon. This is the reason why he speaks of acts of consciousness, designating thereby not the facts of actual behaviour but the constitutive power of the self as such.

In order to circumscribe the realm of psychic phenomena, empirical psychology must first proceed to a descriptive survey of subjective experience by way of intuition. This first phase is not meant to be introspective; it is in fact an attempt at delineating psychology’s own field of investigation, i.e. at a pre-scientific level. This basic task of classifying the ‘acts’ is ultimately phenomenological and represents the epistemological moment of Brentano’s endeavour […] Today’s psychologists are therefore indebted to Brentano – be it in indirect fashion – for his early endeavour to lay the epistemological foundations which psychology needs, in order to exist as an adequate science of man’s subjective experience.

Finally, a Brentanian research programme has been established by the Mitteleuropa Foundation of Bolzano, Italy (www.mitteleuropafoundation.it). With this initiative Brentano’s theoretical legacy has made its definitive entry into the field of cognitive science, although its developments cannot for the moment be predicted. The founders intend that Brentano’s metaphysics should find development mainly in research on consciousness and the theory of perception, these being closely interconnected, and to which correspond two lines of inquiry at the Foundation, respectively on recognition of form and on cognitive semantics. Moreover, given that for Brentano descriptive psychology and metaphysics coincide, the Foundation’s research programme can also be called a programme of experimental metaphysics.

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86. Gregory 1987; Thinès 1977.

87. Thinès 1987, 117-118.
Chapter 11

A wager on the future

To conclude, I would like to summarize my personal point of view on Brentano.

Why should a contemporary scholar – and especially a scientist – undertake such painstaking analyses as those offered by Brentano and embark on such an internal *anabasis* on his or her own experience, constantly conducted on the boundary between inner and outer, or try to disentangle such a maze of conceptual architecture? Most of all, is Brentano’s main endeavour to reconstruct reality starting from inner experience a practicable one?

In my opinion, there are several reasons for making the effort. Generally speaking, most scientists share a realistic assumption: whatever their field of expertise, they believe in the existence of reality, which is the object of their principal interest; but the question is which kind of reality do they assume?

Then there is the fact that the categorical apparatus currently available is increasingly inadequate for the solution of the problems that scientists address: examples are theory of consciousness, theory of perception, and more generally, epistemology. Physicalism is not a viable paradigm, given the challenges raised against it by robotics, biological sciences, theory of complexity, and other fields of contemporary science.

On reading Brentano, one is struck by the intriguing similarity between the questions he posed for the scientists of his time and those in which we are interested today. In other words, his topics are still our topics, although his were treated with a somehow odd and old-fashioned form of argumentation.

I would stress once more that, within the school of Brentano, theoretical inquiry always had its experimental counterpart, cases in point being Benussi’s research on temporal apprehension correlated with Husserl’s analyses of the double intentionality, or Stumpf’s research on auditory perception and his idea of eidetic configurations.

Brentano’s endeavour to develop a *psychology from an empirical standpoint*, in fact, sprang from a distinctive combination of Aristotelianism and scientific psychology into a *general theory of inner form*. The Gestalt principle itself of suprasummativity originated in a debate initiated by Brentano in

2. Stumpf 1883.
Descriptive Psychology (an analysis of the parts of the act of intentional reference)\textsuperscript{4} and which was made classic by Husserl in his Third Logical Investigation.\textsuperscript{5} In many respects, Brentano conducted pioneering analysis of problems that are currently in the focus of cognitive science and artificial intelligence: from the problem of reference to that of representation, from the problem of categorial classification to ontology and the cognitive analysis of natural language. Brentano, in fact, dealt with and wrote on questions concerning the auditory stream (temporal apprehension), visual perception (continua, point of view, three-dimensional construction of phenomenal objects), intentionality, imagery, and conceptual space, considering these pertaining to a metaphysical enquiry.

Moreover, Brentano displays clear awareness of the complexity of problems and of the interrelations among different areas of inquiry. From this point of view, his theory, however complex, offers elements for the treatment of problems currently under investigation.

It may be recalled that one of the main questions raised by Brentano’s psychology closely concerns one of the most widely debated issues in contemporary cognitive psychology: that of the cognitive integrations at the primary level of perceptual organization. No one today disputes the existence of perceptual interpolations, that is, of forms of completion which operate even in the primary process, like phenomena of totalization, of completion, of integration, of gap-filling, etc. The problem is whether there also exist cognitive (i.e. top down) interpolations at this level, and here the problem of interpolation meets that of consciousness.

In particular, the problem as currently posited is (i) whether these forms of completion indicate from the outset the presence of rational categorizations in the form of anticipatory schemes, conjectures, abstractions, inferences, judgements, planning, etc.; and (ii) what status should be attributed to the cases of phenomenal perception that manifest a type of perceptual presence – not imagined but experienced (‘encountered’, in scientific phenomenological terms) – which does not occur in any sensory modality. This is the case of amodal perceptions, which for that matter are entirely normal phenomena in our everyday vision, like the continuation of one visual surface behind another, and on which Kanizsa conducted classic studies.\textsuperscript{6}

In contemporary cognitive science, the problem raised by general cases of amodal perception is usually put in terms of whether the stimulus is something already structured or whether it is made up of discrete elements to be

\textsuperscript{4} Brentano 1995b.
\textsuperscript{5} Husserl 1970.
functionally interpreted by the perceiver. In other words, the questions concern whether the percept is given or constructed – whether, that it to say, it springs immediately from self-organization or whether it requires the intervention of top-down components. Some eighty years have passed, but the dispute still close resembles the one between Benussi and Koffka at the beginning of the last century.\footnote{Benussi 1912; Koffka 1935.}

In general – very few exceptions apart – one gains the impression that current debate is conducted in reductionist terms of top-down or of direct bottom-up integration. In short, the general tendency in the contemporary cognitive sciences with regard to the theory of representation seems to be that of analysing it either bottom up in terms of essentially neurophysiologic processes, or classically psychophysical processes, or top down in terms of logical inferential processes. More specifically, the theory of perception is conceived as a theory of measurement device in its turn connected to the empiricist/common sense view of the mind. Accordingly, what the perceptual system has to do is to inform us about elementary physical quantities (energy of sounds, intensity and wavelength of light). Attached to this theory are also abstractions derived from the technology-shaped refinement of commonsense taxonomies (for example, in colour vision, colour terms). There is then the functionalist-computational approach which defines perception as the recovery of physical world structure from sensory structure by input-based computational processes. In this case inverse optics go from image to the true 3D layout of physical objects in a scene.\footnote{Poggio, 1990.}

Very similarly, even more sophisticated theories, from Shepard to Leyton, affirm that physical regularities in the external world are projected into perceptual systems as surrogates for their internal structure (the so-called internalization of physical laws).\footnote{Shepard, 1994; Leyton, 1994.} Leyton, who offers a metric-free description of shape, demonstrates the dynamic structural properties of the object, in whose shape is embedded its own history. In both cases, however, the codex is given by the transformation of stimulus and by the physical object assumed as the starting point for the process of transformation. Brentano, on the contrary, very accurately defined presentations as passive affections [\textit{passive Affektionen}] or undergoings [\textit{Erleidungen}] which require the constant activity of a causal principle to remain in their subject, and he affirmed that the cause of sensation is not the primary object of the intentional reference, notwithstanding their simultaneous manifestation. In contemporary theory of perception, then, a radical leap is usually made from one area of research to the other.
while denying autonomous ontological status to the phenomenal level, notwithstanding the fact that this is the primary mode of access to a theory of representation, as the Gestaltists always maintained. In this case too, Brentano’s major achievement was to have outlined the existence and the nature of this specific level of reality. Because it has own laws of organization, the phenomenal level is not reducible to the underlying levels, physical and/or physiological, because it bears a categorical novelty. For the same reason it cannot be immediately assimilated into higher cognitive processes.10

The contemporary debate, as I have said, is sometimes also complicated by computational models of representation which distort phenomenological data but nevertheless assume the role of prototypes of representation and thus hamper analysis of the question, as in Marr’s model.11 For example, at the computational level, visual representation consists of mapping between scenes as three-dimensional shape representations of object domains and pictures as two-dimensional shape representations of scenes in terms of picture primitives (lines or points). What computational theories usually do not consider, for example, is an intermediate third level, that of the dynamic of the actual image in perception, the extension of whose three-dimensional depth may vary considerably, as has been recently noted.12

In short, despite a large body of experimental results and the development of powerful modelling tools, what seems to be lacking is a thorough theory of representation and of consciousness; a theory able analytically to define the difference between the structure of the concrete actual presentation and that of abstract representation in general, as well as the invariants that are dynamically transposed from one representative level to another, and the laws of reciprocal functional dependence (in this sense one might follow Ehrenfels by talking about transposition of structures).13 In short, what is lacking is a theory of the types and levels of representation, from concrete to symbolic, and of the relations among them. Internally to this debate, Brentano’s immanent realism seems to be one of the few ways out of reductionism, upwards (representationalism) or downwards (neurophysiology), in which research on consciousness today finds itself.14

Consequently, Brentano’s views themselves contradict those who have sought to depict him as the originator of the various contemporary forms of representation.

10. The terminology is taken from Hartmann’s ontology. See Hartmann 1935.
13. Ehrenfels 1890.
mentalism or merely as the precursor of Husserl – in comparison with whom, moreover, he constantly seems to come off worse.\footnote{See, for example, \citet{Follesdal1978}; on the topic see \citet*{Zimmer1998}, 100-102, who underlines the similarity of the criticisms brought by \citet*{Follesdal1998} and \citet*{Kraus1998} against Brentano’s theory, recalling the sense-data question.}

By contrast, his painstaking analysis of the structure of the actual presentation in the time of presentness, being evident, concrete and direct is rooted in the external world as a sort of ‘window of metaphysics’\footnote{Albertazzi 1997c.} which à la Aristotle coincides with the primary cognitive processes: that is, with perception in the various perceptual fields, and in its intermodality.\footnote{See, for example, \citet{Shimojo2001}.}

As to the debate in theory of perception, of which Brentano was a forerunner, there was a brief revival of Gestalt theories and method in the 1960s, when an also qualitatively based psychophysics was proposed.\footnote{\citet{Kubovy1981}.} Only in very recent years, however, has the idea of an ‘experimental phenomenology’, in the sense given to the term by \citet*{Stumpf1902} and \citet*{Michotte1962}, as a scientific methodology returned to the international scene.\footnote{\citet{Koenderink2002}.} This phenomenological revival in science concerns both method (qualitative and subjective analysis of data accompanied by quantitative measurement) and theory (analysis of the various types of perceptive phenomena and cognitive spaces, mainly visual, mathematical modelling of the perceptual continuum, and cognitive approach to semantics).

Underlying this research is a Brentanian programme that views \textit{psychology as the foundation of science}, a psychology that performs the role that Newtonian physics fulfilled in the last century. The physics to which Brentano’s descriptive psychology refers, carrying traces of Aristotle’s sublunary physics, is a physics \textit{from the point of view of the observer}, and as such it is closer to comprehension of phenomena such as the perception of space, and more generally of the various types of perception (like the perception of gloss, metallic, etc.), from natural to artificial to virtual, that interest various sectors of contemporary research from robotics to modelling in the theory of vision. It thus seems that some aspects of the nineteenth-century neo-Aristotelian and empirical theories of continua are still current and are of close relevance to the development of cognitive science – an idea which, as a philosopher, I am trying to introduce.\footnote{On the topic see \citet*{Albertazzi2001}.}

Scientists working in various fields of perception, for example, have begun to describe the characteristics of the objects of presentations in visual, audi-
tory and tactile perception as examples of the real ‘boundaries’ among *multiple and multiform* kinds of continua; which means, in Duncker’s terminology, different modes of *participation* of the ‘phenomenal self’ in ‘phenomenal objects’.

Presentations are also the bricks of Brentano’s *metaphysical architecture*, construction of which still seems to be a worthwhile endeavour. In Brentanian terms, the acts of intentional reference, occurring here and now, are boundaries of multiple and multiform continua existing in all their parts and made up of accidental though connected parts. Inner perception thus unfolds as the locus of the original intuition of the continuum of our experience, which is such because it is relative to a temporal-spatial ‘becoming’, namely the perceiver/thinker.

At bottom, this ‘becoming’ is nothing but a temporal-spatial structure of specific type filled with phenomenal appearances from the various sensory fields which manifests itself as the accidental perception of itself *qua* multiple and multiform continua. This is essentially the philosophical meaning of the concept of accident as a modal extension of its substance in Brentano’s late theory of categories, and it is an intriguing field of research for a scientific theory of consciousness.

Obviously, I am aware of the difficulties intrinsic to the framing of a theory of consciousness based on the continuous variation and change of the modes of a multifarious conscious accidental being, in which the world is continuously reconstructed so to speak, *amodally* and *indirectly*. To be grounded – and not to finish up as a sort of phenomenalism – it requires a theory of continua able to explain the architecture of the multiple and multifarious spaces given in actual duration and their laws of dependence. For this purpose, Husserl’s theory of objectified acts is indubitably a development and an important part of the framework; but every contribution by the members of the school of Brentano, from Stumpf to Meinong to Twardowski, is part of that framework. Each of them addressed the complexity of Brentano’s thought from a specific point of view.

However, there is no ‘first-person’ perspective in intentional reference, as is usually assumed in phenomenology, for example. The idea of a mental Ego, at this foundational level, is totally absent as well. In any case, it is not possible to build metaphysics upon language, because symbolic forms of indirect presentation on various capacities – natural and formal languages, and epistemological theories – lack evidence, they have inferior veridicality and are intrinsically opaque. From Brentano’s viewpoint, the choice taken in the twentieth century to rely on language even for ontological inquiries is utterly wrong.
Bibliographic notes


See also the website: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/brentano/

1 BRENTANO’S WORKS IN GERMAN

An edition of Brentano’s literary production in its entirety is not yet available. At present the available works by Brentano divide between the following two types:

1. Works published during his lifetime.
2. Works in his Nachlaß.

The works which Brentano published during his lifetime, in the form of both books and essays, represent only a small part of his total output. The books published from the Nachlaß divide between:

2. Books published since the 1970s.

(See F. Mayer-Hillebrand, “Franz Brentanos wissenschaftlicher Nachlaß”, *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 6, 1951-52, 599-603, and by the same author, “Rückblick auf die bisherigen Bestrebungen zur Erhaltung und Verbreitung von Fr. Brentanos philosophischen Lehre und kurze Darstellung dieser Lehren”, *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 17,

The books belonging to the first category were compiled according to debatable philological criteria, with additions and _collages_ of writings produced in different periods. The considerable arbitrariness of these constructs and the interpretative interpolations made by the editors have not generally benefited the understanding and diffusion of Brentano’s thought. In particular, collections of the posthumously-published essays and dictations have often adopted the method of interpreting earlier texts as anticipations of later ones.

Moreover, one should read a huge body of correspondence (1400 letters with Marty alone) which has been published only in part, while some of the corpus, including letters from Brentano’s period in Italy (1895-1916), is entirely unpublished. Brentano’s philosophical correspondence is of great interest, not least because a letter sent to one scholar was then passed on to others, who read it, commented on it, and then sent it back, in a sort of epistolary colloquium. Only a tiny part of Brentano’s correspondence has been published from the _Nachlaß_.

Apropos the _Nachlaß_, its first classification was produced by T. Masaryk, who founded a Brentano Archive in Prague for the purpose of organizing and publishing items. In 1939, at the beginning of the Second World War, the Archive was transferred first to Manchester, then to Oxford (the Bodleian Library), and finally to the United States.

Brentano’s unpublished writings and dictations have undergone successive cataloguing by F. Mayer-Hillebrand, W. Baumgartner and T. Binder. They can currently be consulted at diverse universities. In the USA at the University of California (Berkeley), Brown University (Providence, Rhode Island), Cornell University (Ithaca, New York), Harvard University (Cambridge, Mass.), University of Minnesota (Minneapolis); Northwestern University (Evanston, Ill.), and at the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. In Australia they can be consulted at Melbourne University (Victoria); in Europe at the Bodleian Library of Oxford, the Staatsbibliothek of Munich, the University of Innsbruck, the University of Vienna, and the Goethemuseum of Frankfurt; in France at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; in Latin America at the University of Mexico City (Messico D.F.) and the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The Brentano Archive originally deposited at Brown University included Brentano’s personal library. It can now be consulted at the Forschungsstelle und Dokumentationszentrum für österreichische Philosophie of Graz.
In the absence of a critical edition of Brentano works, division of his oeuvre by topic is not yet feasible, with the exception of that part of it published by Brentano himself. Consequently, while awaiting a critical edition, the chronological order of his main publications will be used to organize the following bibliography of those of Brentano’s works edited by himself or others and which have been published to date.


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3 CRITICAL STUDIES

3.1 General Studies

An almost complete bibliography until 1990 is contained in the already-mentioned work by Baumgartner and Burkard. Consequently listed below is the best known critical literature on Brentano. To be noted, however, is that from the 1970 onwards, this literature is prevalently analytical.

3.1.1 Studies on Austrian thought


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