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The Inaugural Address

BRENTANO'S THESIS

Dermot Moran

It seems appropriate in an Address to the Joint Session of the Aristotelian Society and Mind Association to revisit Franz Brentano's much-quoted and oft-misunderstood account of intentionality, particularly since Brentano himself refers to Aristotle as his source and since intentionality is now a cornerstone of much contemporary philosophy of mind.¹

Intentionality, 'directedness' or 'aboutness', refers to the manner mental states purportedly relate beyond themselves; take objects which may or not exist; carry semantic content. In the current literature, Brentano is credited with many different claims: the mind has an intrinsic and unique power to refer; mental properties are irreducible to physical properties, and hence materialism is false; that intentionality is a mysterious non-natural property; intentionality puts people in relation to propositions. Thus Hilary Putnam interprets 'Brentano's thesis' as the view that 'intentionality won't be reduced and won't go away.'² For D. M. Armstrong: 'Brentano held that intentionality set the mind completely apart from matter.'³ Also in this vein, Hartry Field sees

1. Brentano refers to Aristotle's *De Anima*: 'Aristotle himself spoke of this mental in-existence', *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, ed. Oskar Kraus, English ed. Linda L. McAlister, trans. A.C. Rancurello, D.B. Terrell and L.L. McAlister (London: Routledge, 1973; 2nd English Edition with introduction by Peter Simons, 1995), p. 88 note †. [Hereafter PES]. Elsewhere he cites *Metaphysics* Book 5, ch. 15, 1021a29, which speaks of certain things whose nature includes a reference to something else, see F. Brentano, *The Origin of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong*, trans. R. Chisholm and Elizabeth Schneewind (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 14. [Hereafter RW].

The first 1874 edition of PES contained only the first two books out of six originally planned (including a book on the relation between mind and body, PES, p. xxvii). In 1911 Brentano revised and reissued the second book separately, under the title *On the Classification of Mental Phenomena*. Oskar Kraus published a revised posthumous edition of the whole of PES with supplementary essays from the *Nachlass* in 1924 and 1925, and this is the basis of the English translation. Brentano's views changed continually, though it is not always clear how to characterise these changes, especially as he claimed his later formulations were what he had intended all along.

2. Hilary Putnam, *Representation and Reality* (Cambridge, Ma: MIT Press, 1988), p. 1.

3. D. M. Armstrong, 'The Causal Theory of the Mind', in William G. Lycan, ed., *Mind and Cognition. A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p. 43.

‘Brentano’s problem’ as that of giving a ‘materialistically adequate account of believing, desiring and so forth’. According to Field:

The...problem, raised by Brentano, is the problem of *intentionality*. Many mental properties—believing, desiring, and so forth—appear to be *relational* properties: more precisely, they appear to relate people to non-linguistic entities called *propositions*. So any materialist who takes believing and desiring at face value—any materialist who admits that belief and desire *are* relations between people and propositions—any such materialist must show that the relations in question are not irreducibly mental. Brentano felt that this could not be done; and since he saw no alternative to viewing belief and desire as relations to propositions, he concluded that materialism must be false.⁴

These interpretations of Brentano have wide currency, almost to the extent of constituting an orthodoxy, but they do not accurately convey the actual views of the historical Brentano. Rather they arise mainly from Roderick Chisholm’s influential account,⁵ according to which Brentano ‘discovered’ intentionality as the characteristic feature or mark of the mental, which, due to its ineliminability, demonstrates the irreducibility of the mental, thus refuting physicalism. According to Chisholm, Brentano’s challenge to contemporary philosophy is the question: if intentionality is a real, irreducible feature of mental life, how can the naturalistic programme of bringing mental events within the limits of scientific explanation ever be completed?

Since I believe there is philosophical value in getting things right historically, it is worthwhile returning to Brentano’s own conception in its original setting with a view to unpacking its key elements. We shall see that Brentano’s version of intentionality is deeply embedded in a complex of broadly Cartesian, internalist and—though one must be very careful—introspectionalist assumptions. He did accept the reality of psychological states and their evident nature, they are as they appear to be, psychology does

4. Harry Field, ‘Mental Representation’, in Stephen P. Stich and Ted A. Warfield, eds, *Mental Representation. A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 34.

5. Roderick Chisholm, ‘Sentences About Believing’, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* LVI (1955–56), pp. 125–48. See also the Chisholm–Sellars correspondence published as ‘Intentionality and the Mental’, in H. Feigl, M. Scriven and G. Maxwell, eds, *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science* Volume Two (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1958), pp. 507–39.

reveal our mental natural kinds. But, I shall argue, Brentano never held that mental events were *ontologically* irreducible to the physical; or that materialism was false; or that intentionality related people to propositions. Nor did he claim to have 'discovered' intentionality. For him, intentionality merely served as the most satisfactory criterion (among several other candidates, such as non-spatiality and inwardness) for initially identifying the domain of the mental, indeed a criterion to which, in his view, traditional philosophy (i.e., Aristotle–Aquinas–Descartes) subscribed. Brentano did claim that *all* and—less emphatically—*only* mental states were intentional. He did see intentionality as the best 'mark of the mental', but it is not at all clear, as we shall see, just what is being marked off from what. In particular, his definition of the physical refers only to a certain phenomenal properties of our conscious states, and his understanding of the psychical is precisely that which is grasped reflexively in inner perception. Thus understood, the distinction between the 'physical' and the 'psychical' in Brentano's terms cannot be coherently mapped onto the distinction between the mental and the physical as deployed by current philosophy of mind in its discussion of physicalism and materialism, unless that discussion is already committed to a type of phenomenalism. Brentano cannot be recruited on one side or the other in the broad debate concerning materialism and reductionism. Furthermore, Brentano concentrated on classifying and describing various kinds of psychic acts in terms of their intentional modes, but it was never his intention to offer an *explanation* of intentionality, i.e., just how intentionality itself comes about (in terms of accounts in the brain, evolution, theories of reference, or whatever). We shouldn't infer from this, however, that he held intentionality to be something mysterious, or that he ruled out such an explanation, rather he simply did not see it as the function of his 'empirical' or 'descriptive psychology' to provide such an explanation. He consciously restricted himself to what could be gained by precise description carried out by 'inner perception', confident that inner perception could empirically discover fundamental a priori truths about the mental.

The exploration of concepts of intentionality independent of Brentano's formulations is outside the scope of this paper, but I believe that, given the frequency with which Brentano is cited in

most of these discussions, a consideration of his own views may be helpful. Brentano is most accurately understood in the rather restricted context of a historically late, nuanced Scholastico–Cartesian view of the mind, as indeed his earlier interpreters (e.g. Husserl) clearly recognised but which Chisholm’s reformulation masks. In what follows, I shall highlight some of Brentano’s more problematic and most Cartesian assumptions. I shall isolate and review in turn the main conceptual components of his account of intentionality and some difficulties which have been raised regarding them. In short, I shall be largely agreeing with Brentano’s earlier critics such as Twardowski and Husserl, and arguing that the current version of his contemporary revival is misplaced. By clarifying his actual views, I hope also to be able to absolve Brentano of at least of some of the popular sins with which contemporary philosophy of mind has credited him.

I

Brentano’s Thesis. In an oft-quoted paragraph of *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (1874, hereafter PES), offered as a positive criterion for identifying mental states:

Every mental phenomenon is characterized by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object, and what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously, reference to a content, direction towards an object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a thing), or immanent objectivity. Every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself, although they do not all do so in the same way. In presentation something is presented, in judgment something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on. (PES 88)

Brentano’s influence was such that, twenty years later in 1894, his student Kasimir Twardowski (1866–1938) could enthuse:

It is one of the best known positions of psychology, hardly contested by anyone, that every mental phenomenon intends an immanent object. The existence of such a relation is a characteristic feature of mental phenomena which are by means of it distinguished from the physical phenomena.⁶

6. Kasimir Twardowski, *On the Content and Object of Presentations. A Psychological Investigation*, trans. R. Grossmann (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1977), p. 1.

Brentano himself never used the term 'intentionality';⁷ he spoke rather of 'intentional inexistence' (*intentionale Inexistenz*) and of the 'intentional relation' (*die intentionale Beziehung*, RW 14). From the passage quoted above we see that Brentano employed two different formulations—between which he never distinguished: (i) directedness towards an object (*die Richtung auf ein Objekt*), and (ii) 'relation to a content' (*die Beziehung auf einen Inhalt*).⁸ He never separated his account of the intentional object from the notion of intentionality as a relation. They express the one notion. In fact, if anything, his account of the intentional relation tends to collapse into his account of the intentional object.

The first formulation, directedness towards an object which may or may not actually exist but which possesses 'mental' or 'intentional inexistence', may be given different emphases. On the one hand, one can focus on the mind's referential power, perhaps interpreted as a magical 'noetic ray'. Consciousness—like an arrow⁹—strikes its target. On the other hand, the focus can be placed on what guarantees the very success of this power to refer. Consciousness's success in 'lassoing' its objects (as McGinn puts it)¹⁰ invites an ontological account which aims at explaining just how these rays or arrows always reach their targets. Thus Alexius Meinong endeavoured to explain how thought is guaranteed success in reaching its objects by postulating baroque typologies of objects. This, in turn, provoked Brentano—and Russell—to develop various logical and linguistic techniques for dispelling embarrassing ontological commitment. For the later Brentano, apparent affirmations of non-existent objects should be rephrased as existential denials. 'Perceiving a lack of money' really means: 'denying money'. Brentano also developed a distinction between direct and oblique modes of reference, a distinction meant to sort

7. The technical term '*intentionalitas*' did have currency in the late Middle Ages, used to refer to the character of the logical distinction between *prima* and *secunda intentio*, but the modern use of the term 'intentionality' owes to Husserl not Brentano.

8. Theodore De Boer, *The Development of Husserl's Philosophy* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1978), p. 6, agrees with my contention that Brentano identified the mental relation with the act's directedness towards the object.

9. G. E. M. Anscombe, 'The Intentionality of Sensation: A Grammatical Feature', in R.J. Butler, ed., *Analytical Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968), p. 160, traces the medieval meaning of *intentio* to *intendere arcum in*, 'to aim an arrow at'.

10. The image comes from Colin McGinn, *The Problem of Consciousness* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p. 37.

out the problem of the apparent positing of intentional objects as somehow having real existence. Modes of reference, for the later Brentano, do not have ontological commitment: when I think of someone who loves flowers, the person is presented directly *in modo recto* and the flowers are presented indirectly *in modo obliquo* (PES 374). Neither the direct nor the oblique mode here imply an existing object. Similarly thinking about someone in the past or future is thinking under a special mode, a non-positing mode.

Brentano's gradual acknowledgement of the misleading role of linguistic form foreshadows Russell's view that: 'logical constructions are to be preferred to inferred entities'. Statements concerning non-existent objects are to be reformulated so their logical form is clearly distinguished from their misleading grammatical form. In Ryle's phrase, the later Brentano's strategy is one of 'systematic denominalisation', shifting the emphasis from the subject to the predicate place.¹¹ Whereas Meinong sought to turn all nominatives into objects, the later Brentano adopted what has been called the 'adverbial view' of the intentional relation, a direct descendant of the Scholastic way of handling intentional objects, whereby their *modus essendi* is that of inhering in substance as accidents rather than existing separately in their own right.

Brentano's earlier formulations do seem to posit a range of intermediary objects between the mind and external things. Although the early Brentano often speaks of the intentional object as a non-thing (*Nicht-Reales*), or as 'insubstantial' (*unwesenhaft*), he also refers ambiguously to 'some internal object-like thing' (*ein innerlich Gegenständliches*), something 'in-dwelling' (*inwohnendes*),¹² mentally immanent (*geistiges inhaben*, DP 155), which 'need not correspond to anything outside' (DP 24). Twardowski interprets Brentano's 'intentional inexistence' as 'phenomenal existence',¹³ a property attaching to an object in consciousness, but Brentano's earlier formulations do not adequately distinguish between the thing that appears and the appearance of the thing.

11. Gilbert Ryle, 'Intentionality-Theory and the Nature of Thinking', in Rudolf Haller, ed. *Jenseits von Sein und Nichtsein* (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1972), p. 12.

12. Franz Brentano, *Descriptive Psychology*, trans and ed. Benito Müller (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 24. [Hereafter DP]

13. Twardowski, op. cit., p. 22.

Brentano's student, Alexius Meinong, sought to explain thought's ability to refer to all kinds of things from actual things to non-existent (gold mountains), ideal (numbers) or even impossible objects (square circles), by positing these entities as having various special kinds of being distinct from actual existence.¹⁴ Brentano reacted against Meinong by emphatically denying any special kind of being to the intentional object. As he conceded in 1911: 'I am no longer of the opinion that mental relation can have something other than a thing as its object' (PES xxvi).¹⁵ When one thinks of a horse, it is an actual horse one thinks about and not the 'thought about horse' (*gedachtes Pferd*).¹⁶ When I promise to marry someone, it is a real person that I promise to marry and not an *ens rationis*.¹⁷ According to Brentano's later reism, 'nothing is ever made an object of thinking but a real thing'.¹⁸ Only concrete individuals (*realia*) exist, and the intentional object is now construed as a part or accident of an individual substance. This substance may be only a temporary accidental unity, a 'kooky object' as Gareth Matthews calls it.¹⁹ Leaving aside this later reism, in most of Brentano's formulations, including the later, a certain terminological indecisiveness prevails, the term 'object' (*Objekt*) can refer either to the content of the act or to the external object. Consider the following passage from 1905, for example:

But by an *object* of a thought I meant what 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*'.²⁰

14. Alexius Meinong, 'The Theory of Objects', trans. by R. Chisholm in *Realism and the Background of Phenomenology* (Glencoe, Ill: The Free Press, 1960), p. 83. See also R. Chisholm, 'Beyond Being and Nonbeing', in Rudolf Haller, ed, *Jenseits von Sein und Nichtsein* (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1972), pp. 25–36.

15. See Foreword to the 1911 Edition of the second book of *PES*.

16. Letter to Anton Marty 17 March 1905, in Brentano, *The True and the Evident*, ed. R. Chisholm (New York: Humanities Press, 1966), p. 78.

17. Letter to Oscar Kraus 14 September 1909, quoted by Kraus *PES* 385.

18. Letter to Oscar Kraus 14 September 1909, quoted by Kraus, *PES* 385.

19. Gareth B. Matthews, 'Commentary on Caston', in John J. Cleary and W. Wians, eds, *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy Volume IX (1993)* (New York: University Press of America, 1995), pp. 246–54. See also Barry Smith, 'The Substance of Brentano's Ontology', *Topoi* 6 (1987), pp. 39–49.

20. Letter to Anton Marty 17 March 1905, in Brentano, *The True and the Evident*, op. cit., p. 77.

Rather than making a distinction between object and content, Brentano's strategy for handling this ambiguity of the term 'object' was to declare that terms like 'object' gain their meaning from their position in the sentence and have no meaning on their own, what Brentano in his late works calls, borrowing the term from Anton Marty, 'synsemantic' (PES 322 n.2 and 332) as opposed to an 'autosemantic' term whose meaning remains fixed in all contexts.

At the root of the Meinongian temptation lies Brentano's employment of the misleading term 'inexistence'. In fact, 'inexistence' was understood by him in the Scholastic sense of *in esse*, 'indwelling', the mode of being of an accident in a substance. Later in his 1911 edition of PES Brentano admitted his earlier account was ambiguous (PES 180 note), saying he had considered replacing the term 'intentional' with that of 'objective' but this would have given rise to more misunderstandings by those who did not appreciate the Scholastic meaning of *esse obiectivum*, the manner in which things are 'objectively' in the mind. The later Brentano repeatedly emphasised that the intentional object is best described not as a special object with 'inexistence' but as the real object *as thought by* the mind. Frequently Brentano refers to Descartes' distinction between objective and formal reality in explanation of the status of the intentional object. In fact Brentano is replaying a debate which took place between Descartes and his Thomist critic, Fr. Caterus, a debate between the Scotistic and Thomistic interpretations of *realitas obiectiva*. Indeed, the terminological similarities between Brentano and Descartes strikingly demonstrates Brentano's debt to what I call the Scholastico-Cartesian tradition.

As is well known, Descartes had vacillated between a view of ideas as some kind of intermediary object, an inner picture, and a more refined view whereby an idea is a mental mode, a modification of the thinking process. In the First Objections, the Louvain Thomist, Fr. Caterus, understands thought simply as 'the determination of an act of the intellect by means of an object'²¹ such that the relation of thinker to the object is merely an 'extrinsic

21. *Oeuvres de Descartes* VII, ed. C. Adam and P. Tannery (Paris: Vrin, 1983), p. 92. *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Volume II trans. J. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff, and D. Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 66–67.

denomination' and not a real property of that thing. Caterus therefore denies that 'objective reality' in the mind is anything real possessing formal reality and hence not anything requiring a causal explanation. Caterus stressed that no intentional object sat between the external thing and the mind. Thinking of 'nothing' is not apprehending an object which is not itself nothing, rather it is not thinking at all, for Caterus. Opposing him, Descartes adopts a Scotist stance whereby the 'objective reality' of an idea is something posited between the mind and the real thing, something whose content requires a causal explanation. For Descartes, the thought of nothing is 'not nothing', though it is of course 'less perfect' than the thing itself. The early Brentano's concept of immanent objectivity agrees closely with the Cartesian or Scotist view. His later position mirrors that of Caterus the Thomist, who held that thoughts have no ontological status at all. But the point is: Brentano did not progress beyond the concepts or even the language of this seventeenth-century dispute. As Gilbert Ryle remarked, Brentano offered merely 'a psychologist's amendment to the "way of ideas"'.²²

Brentano's mature view is that, in an intentional act, the thinker is modified 'objectually', as it were—the mind is modified adverbially. Mental entities do not have some kind of 'inexistence', they are modifications of the intending mind. Speaking of mental entities as existing in themselves, for the later Brentano, is merely a convenient linguistic fiction (PES 388) akin to the manner in which mathematicians effortlessly talk about different kinds of number, e.g., negative or imaginary numbers (PES 386), without any ontological commitment. Brentano in fact combines certain linguistic redescriptions which dissolve the embarrassing ontological superfluities, with a reist version of a more classical Aristotelian account where thoughts are accidental states of a substance, the thinker.

Brentano's linguistic settlement of the ontological issue, what we might call his 'adverbial view', is not without its own daunting problems, however. Briefly, if intentional objects are to be construed adverbially in this manner, the danger is that all acts would be quite distinct from each other in kind, infinitely multiplying mental acts, an objection which has been well

22. Gilbert Ryle, 'Intentionality-Theory and the Nature of Thinking', p. 10.

expressed by Jerry Fodor.²³ If ‘seeing a unicorn’ differed from ‘seeing a dragon’ in that they were actually two entirely different acts (‘seeing-unicornly’ and ‘seeing-dragonly’), then there is no way we could ever learn the meaning of ‘seeing’ and, as Fodor elegantly puts it, the word ‘seeing’ would be as accidental to the nature of the act, as the occurrence of the word ‘dog’ in ‘dogmatic’. Thus, even when the embarrassing ontological spectres conjured up by Brentano’s first formulation are dispelled, the seemingly innocent linguistic reformulation presents other problems.

II

Intentionality as Relation to a Content. Brentano’s second formulation of intentionality, as ‘relation to a content’, seems at first glance, to promise a more satisfactory account. Unfortunately, Brentano collapses his account of content back into his account of objects, dissipating any gain pregnant in this formulation.

Brentano frequently conceived of intentionality as a relation, although he also acknowledged the difficulty in this way of talking. What kind of relation is it? What is related to what? It cannot be a relation between two extant things, a subject and a physical thing, since the intentional object need not exist.²⁴ Both Husserl and Heidegger criticised Brentano’s early view which seemed to conceive of intentionality as a ‘determination of the subject’ or as a relation between a subject and his own inner representations (a view defended in recent years by Jerry A. Fodor).²⁵ According to Heidegger, intentionality is misconstrued if it prompts the Cartesian question: ‘How can this ego with its intentional experiences get outside its sphere of experience and assume a relation to an extant world?’²⁶ This can only end, in Dummett’s phrase, in the ‘bog of empiricism’,²⁷ what Ryle calls

23. See J. A. Fodor, ‘Propositional Attitudes’, in *Representations* (London: Harvester Press, 1981), p. 180. Fodor is basing his argument on D. Davidson, ‘Theories of Meaning and Learnable Languages’, *Proceedings of the 1964 International Congress of Language, Methodology and Philosophy of Science* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1964), pp. 383–394.

24. Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. A. Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana U.P., 1982), p. 60.

25. Heidegger criticises this concept of relation in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* p. 61. For Fodor’s view, see ‘Propositional Attitudes’, pp. 177–203, especially p. 202.

26. Heidegger, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

27. Michael Dummett, *Origins of Analytic Philosophy* (London: Duckworth, 1993), p. 31.

'the Humean impotence to apprehend anything at all'.²⁸ The later Brentano recognised that intentionality was not a relation between two extant entities, a subject and an intentional object.²⁹ The intentional act is a relation to a correlate, a relation which makes one of the *relata* an *object*, something over and against a subject. It is a peculiar relation, however, in which only one of the terms is real (DP 24), namely the performer of the act. At times Brentano employs the Scholastic terminology we have already encountered in Caterus, seeing the relation of a thinker to an object as merely an 'extrinsic denomination' and not a real relational property (PES 271n3).³⁰ In *Descriptive Psychology* he says that a psychic relation is not a real relation (DP 173), and in a supplementary essay to PES he says that intentionality is 'quasi-relational' (*Relativliches*, PES 272),³¹ by which he seemed to mean that it only looked like a relation, but in fact one of the *relata* is present *in modo recto* whereas the other is *in modo obliquo* (PES 335), e.g. the kind of relation involved when I say 'I am taller than I was a year ago'. At other times, however, the reist Brentano was reasserting that intentional relations were genuine indeed paradigmatic relations, expressing part-whole, or accident-substance relations.³² If the nature of the relation is thus unclear, so also is the nature of the *relata*.

Very early on, Brentano was criticised for failing to make a distinction between the *content* and the *object* of an intentional act, for not recognising that objects are given under a description, for not recognising something like a Fregean *Sinn*. In 1890, Brentano's students, Alois Höfler and Alexius Meinong,³³ pointed out that a distinction must be made between the intra-mental content, on the one hand, and the actual existent thing on the other. In 1894 Twardowski, following suit, similarly distinguished between the

28. Gilbert Ryle, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

29. For a critique of Brentanist relations, see Richard B. Arnauld, 'Brentanist Relations', in K. Lehrer, ed., *Analysis and Metaphysics. Essays in Honor of R.K. Chisholm* (Boston: Reidel, 1975), pp. 189–208. Arnauld attributes Brentano's difficulties to an inadequate grasp of proper logical form.

30. Caterus uses the language of 'extrinsic denomination' in his debate with Descartes in the First Objections and Replies to refer to the manner in which 'thinking about the sun' relates to the sun.

31. See also SN 43.

32. *Kategorienlehre* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1968), pp. 166–76.

33. A. Höfler and A. Meinong, *Logik* (Leipzig, 1890), p. 7, cited in Twardowski, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

immanent content (or mental picture) and the extra-mental object:³⁴ ‘What is presented *in* a presentation is its content; what is presented *through* a presentation is its object.’³⁵ The content, according to Twardowski, is purely a vehicle to the real object, a view well-expressed by Dummett (referring to Frege): ‘The sense is itself the route; the entire route, and nothing but the route’.³⁶ The later Brentano sometimes appears to be acknowledging the need to insert a sense between the mind and its object, especially when he talks of a ‘mode of presentation’ (to which we shall return) but in fact he repudiates the distinction between content and object in so far as he understands it at all (PES 293).

Brentano acknowledged Kant as the source of his term ‘content’. For Kant, ‘content’ referred to the matter as opposed to the form of intuition (DP 147).³⁷ For Brentano: ‘If one speaks of the content of a presentation, of a judgement or of an emotional relation, one is thinking of what is enclosed in it’ (DP 160). He explicitly acknowledges the term is ambiguous (PES 88), ‘synsemantic’ (PES 294), varying with the context. In Brentano’s distinction of the three fundamental classes of psychical acts, each class has its own particular kind of content. Brentano is thus distinguishing between presentational content (including, perhaps, perceptual content), judgeable content, and emotional content.

Hartry Field’s claim, which we quoted above, that Brentano’s intentional content is propositional is mistaken.³⁸ Judging asserts particulars, that is, individual objects, it does not posit or deny a *content* at all (PES 292). Brentano claims: ‘Every content of an experience is individual’ (DP 149), content is being equated with object. For Brentano (PES 221), since the presentation can also be made the object of a judgement, what is given to be judged is the

34. Twardowski, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

35. Twardowski, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

36. Michael Dummett, ‘Frege and Husserl on Reference’, in *The Seas of Language* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), p. 227. The passage is worth quoting: ‘We must not, however, think of the Fregean sense as an intermediate station *en route* to the referent, as if the thinker aimed at the sense, which then readdressed the thought to the referent. The sense is itself the route; the entire route, and nothing but the route. The sense may be regarded as an object, but to grasp it is not an instance of that object’s being given to us; it is a way in which the referent is given to us. Grasping a sense and thinking of that sense are two quite different things.’

37. On the history of the terms ‘*Gehalt*’ and ‘*Inhalt*’ in German philosophy, see *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. J. Ritter (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1974), Band 3, pp. 1401–46.

38. See also Dummett, *Origins*, p. 33.

object presented and nothing propositional.³⁹ He rejects the traditional Aristotelian view that a judgement is a combination or separation of ideas.⁴⁰ Mere combination is not yet judgement. Judgements need not take the subject-predicate form, a judgement involves acceptance (*Anerkennung*) or denial (*Leugnen*), rejection (*Verwerfung*), of an object. A theist simply affirms 'God' not 'the existence of God'. In the later reist Brentano, what is asserted is not any content but the existence of the individual substance, the one who judges. Propositional content is only an a mirage of grammar for Brentano, people are misled by the subject-predicate grammatical form of judgements to think that judgements themselves have this form rather than being assertions or denials of the existence of particulars.

Brentano thought of the content as what is psychologically available for inspection. He acknowledges a certain depth in mental content however, when he distinguishes between the *explicit* and *implicit* content.⁴¹ The explicit content is the whole which is presented. When I see a tree, the tree is the explicit content but the leaves are implicitly the content (DP 160). Unfortunately, Brentano never distinguished between the psychologically apprehended elements, and the 'real', logical or ideal components in the content of the act. He is thus never able to distinguish between what belongs to the thought as a mental episode, and what in the thought supports and conveys the meaning, a recurrent problem in the Cartesian tradition.⁴²

39. Bell, *Husserl*, p. 13: 'no mental act can be properly said to have a content which is of the form: "that p"'.
 40. In Brentano's version of traditional logic the four categorial forms (A, E, I, O) are reducible to one: the existential proposition (PES 214; 295). For example (PES 213), the I-proposition, 'some man is sick', really has the form of asserting 'a sick man [exists]'. In so called 'thetic judgements' a particular may simply be asserted. Similarly, universal affirmations (A-propositions) may be rewritten as negative (denial) existential propositions: 'all men are mortal' becomes 'there is no non-mortal man'. Brentano proposed some amendments to traditional logic in order to support his account of the relations between categorial forms: For him, A-propositions do not imply I-propositions. 'All unicorns have one horn' does not imply 'some unicorn has one horn' (PES 304). See Peter M. Simons, 'Brentano's Reform of Logic', *Topoi* 6 (1987), pp. 25–38.

41. This is different from Dennett's distinction of 'explicit' and 'implicit' in *The Intentional Stance* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1987), p. 216. For him, whatever is implied logically from an explicit representation is 'implicit' in that representation. There is another notion of 'implicit' mentioned by Dennett where it means what someone or system is capable of extracting from the explicit representation. Many discussions of content do not make the implicit/explicit/tacit distinction clear.

42. Despite being part of an inner psychological episode, Brentano's content can be communicated. When we hear words spoken, we apprehend the content of the speaker's mind. But since Brentano's content remains resolutely that which is psychologically before the mind, his analysis was to say that the mental content of the speaker evinces in the hearer a mental content which gives notice of the speaker's intentions. Twardowski reproduces this account, which conspicuously fails to demonstrate how private mental contents can be turned into common meanings.

As early as 1894, Edmund Husserl, struggling against psychologism, recognised the need to distinguish the 'psychological'—or what he calls the 'real'—content (*Gehalt*) from the 'ideal content' (*Inhalt* or *ideales Gehalt*) or 'signification content' (*Bedeutungsinhalt*).⁴³ On this account, the *psychological* content is individual but the meaning content is not. Furthermore the meaning does not reside, as Brentano thought, in the act as a real component of it. In the *Logical Investigations* of 1901 Husserl recast his original distinction as a distinction between the *real* and *ideal* contents of the act, and in the second edition of 1913 between the *phenomenological* and the *intentional* content (LI V, Vol. 2, 558) The objectivity of the meaning must transcend the act which is its vehicle. For Husserl, as for Frege, the thought of an ideal truth, e.g. the Pythagorean theorem, is extra-mental and does not dwell within the mental episode. Everything objective is transcendent and intentionality is simply the name for this astonishing fact, that we do grasp the transcendent.

Moreover, for Husserl, as for Twardowski, ordinarily, our psychic acts go directly to the object, are *about* the object, not the content. It takes a special act of reflection to make the 'content' of an act into its object. Husserl went on to develop his noematic account of intentionality, acknowledging Brentano as his inspiration but deeply disagreeing with his account. Husserl wished to 'separate what is indubitably significant in Brentano's thought-motivation from what is erroneous in its elaboration',⁴⁴ cleansing intentionality of its distorting Brentanian immanentism.

Crucially, Husserl completely rejects Brentano's project of defining psychology in terms of a separate subject-matter of psychological phenomena.⁴⁵ Equally importantly, Husserl recognised that, although Brentano thought intentionality was his chief criterion for identifying psychological phenomena, in fact, in Brentano's work, the psychological was fully and adequately character-

43. Husserl's 1894 article, 'Intentionale Gegenstände' is translated by Dallas Willard in Edmund Husserl, *Early Writings in the Philosophy of Logic and Mathematics* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1994), pp. 345–387 esp. p. 353; and discussed by J. N. Mohanty, *Husserl and Frege* (Bloomington: Indiana U.P., 1982) p. 12 and also in his 'The Development of Husserl's Thought', in B. Smith & D. Woodruff Smith, eds, *The Cambridge Companion to Husserl* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), p. 50.

44. Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, trans. J. N. Findlay in 2 vols. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), Investigation VI Appendix, Vol. 2, pp. 858–9 [hereafter LI].

45. LI V §9, Vol. 2, p. 553.

ised as what is capable of inner perception. Brentano's psychic phenomena are simply the acts of inner perception.⁴⁶ Husserl's assistant, Heidegger went further in criticising the Cartesian internalism underpinning Brentano's—and indeed Husserl's—account of intentionality and eventually discarded the whole notion.

Despite the fact that philosophers as diverse as Husserl and Ryle identified the Cartesian representationalism inherent in Brentano's account, and questioned the coherence of Brentano's efforts to found a separate science of the psychical, nevertheless, Roderick Chisholm proceeded to revive Brentano's thesis in a manner which has had an enormous impact on recent discussions of the nature of mind. Briefly, Chisholm's revival consisted of reformulating intentionality as a set of peculiar logical or grammatical features (chiefly failure of substitutivity and existential generalisation) of sentences containing psychological verbs. He argued that the recalcitrance of these logical features within a purely extensionalist theory proved the mental to be ineliminable.

Chisholm's claim that Brentano defended an irreducible mental domain is a distortion. Brentano never held the *ontological* irreducibility of the mental to the physical. Brentano was an admirer of Comte, his philosophical temperament was from the outset decidedly naturalistic. In 1866 he had defended the thesis that philosophy's method was that of natural science. Indeed it was his belief that science confirmed a Cartesian indirect realism, which held that external world was never known directly, that led him to his distinction between mental and physical phenomena. Brentano has little to say about physical processes as such, they are outside consciousness, 'unintuitable' (*unanschaulich*, DP 4), and are known only by their effects. Brentano accepts a broadly Cartesian story (he attributes it to Locke) concerning secondary qualities. They belong not to objects in the world but to our experience (DP 17).

We have no experience of that which truly exists, in and of itself, and that which we do experience is not true. The truth of physical phenomena is... only a relative truth. (PES 19)

We infer the existence of physical things from the phenomena we

46. LI, VI, Appendix, Vol. 2, p. 856.

are directly acquainted with. Indeed, the assumption of the existence of an external world is 'initially hypothetical' (DP 163).

Since mental states, by contrast, can be intuited directly, they can be described independently of other sciences, and this description can provide helpful guides to those sciences.⁴⁷ According to Brentano's conception, 'descriptive psychology' ('psychognosy', or 'descriptive phenomenology'⁴⁸) was to be an *exact* science, like mathematics (DP 5), *independent* (DP 156) of, and *prior* to, 'genetic' or physiological psychology (DP 8) which studies causal relations between the physical and the mental. Genetic or physiological psychology shouldn't seek causal explanations before the phenomena to be explained are correctly described (PES 194). Descriptively at least, the psychological stands on its own, but this tells us nothing metaphysically about what the mental is.⁴⁹ In fact his view in 1874 was that the mental depends on the physical (PES 48) but the physical doesn't explain the mental, which is explicable only on its own terms. Genetic psychology may ultimately discover that intentional phenomena have a physico-chemical substratum, and indeed Brentano assumed some such dependence of the mental on the physical, but this doesn't affect the description of mental states. In his *Descriptive Psychology*, he strengthened this claim: that consciousness can be explained by physico-chemical events represents 'a confusion of thought' (DP 4). Different orders of inquiry are involved. The earlier Brentano was content to argue that phenomenological description must be 'given its due'⁵⁰ in any explanatory science worthy of the name. Description can't be side-stepped. Though he gradually came to emphasise more the independence of descriptive psychology, and eventually in his reist period, proclaimed a full-blooded Cartesian dualism, his 1874 distinction between physical and psychical phenomena

47. See Theodore de Boer, 'The Descriptive Method of Franz Brentano: its Two Functions and Their Significance for Phenomenology', in L. McAlister, ed., *The Philosophy of Brentano* (London: Duckworth, 1976), p. 106.

48. The title of his University of Vienna lecture course for 1888-9 was 'Deskriptive Psychologie oder beschreibende Phänomenologie'. See Franz Brentano, *Descriptive Psychology*, op. cit.

49. This seems close to Richard Rorty's position in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton U.P., 1979), p. 208: 'irreducibility is always just irreducibility, and never a clue to 'ontological' differences'.

50. A view which has been reiterated by Owen Flanagan, *Consciousness Reconsidered* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992).

cannot be understood as an ontological doctrine as Chisholm's followers tend to do.

III

Descriptive Psychology as Inner Perception. Brentano strongly disagrees with Kant's view that we have only a phenomenal grasp of our own psychical states, and defends a Cartesianism whereby what are reached in the introspective procedure are real acts. Psychology contemplates 'psychical realities'.⁵¹ For him, psychical phenomena alone are *real*, possessing 'actual existence' (*eine wirkliche Existenz*); the physical has merely phenomenal existence. 'Our mental phenomena are the things which are most our own' (PES 20). Furthermore, they are as they appear to be.⁵² Because we grasp our acts immediately with what he calls 'evidence',⁵³ that is absolute certainty, we can make real discoveries about the nature of the mental which have the status of a priori laws.

Brentano advocates 'inner perception' as the key to the discovery of our psychic states, though he does not think of this as a special faculty of introspection. Taking a stand on a complex dispute being carried on at the time, he distinguishes inner perception (*innere Wahrnehmung*) from inner observation (*Beobachtung*) or introspection which he rejects.⁵⁴ We cannot

51. Franz Brentano, DP 137. The later Brentano clearly affirmed that the soul is an independently existing substance (*eine Realität*) but in PES he bracketed this metaphysical view to concentrate on a psychological account of mental states.

52. PES 20. Sartre repeats this aspect of the phenomena of phenomenology, their *esse* is *percipi*.

53. Evidence is a phenomenological trait of the act, although Brentano himself saw the psychologistic consequences of this view, and in later writings denied that evidence was to be equated with a psychological intensity or force of conviction (PES 204), a view he associated with Mill and Herbert Spencer. He remarks that if a judgement were a case of intensity of feeling, then doctors would warn people against mathematics, as mathematical judgements would carry dangerously high levels of intensity. See F. Brentano, *The True and the Evident*, op. cit., p. 35. Here Brentano (1889) acknowledges that in PES (1874) he had inclined towards the view that one's degree of conviction was analogous to intensity of pleasure or pain. Also, negative judgements would never be possible on that view that judgement is a presentation with intensity. In fact, Brentano denies there are degrees of evidence (contra Husserl, RW 83)—either something has evidence or it does not. I simply read the evidence off the act but this evidence must present with a certain noetic rather than emotional character. One can even have an evident perception that something is merely probable, see Jan Szrednicki, *Franz Brentano's Analysis of Truth* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1965), p. 96.

54. Brentano's (PES 29) terminology is not exactly in line with Wundt, see W. Wundt, 'Selbstbeobachtung und innere Wahrnehmung', *Philosophische Studien* 4 (1888), pp. 292–309. See K. Danzinger, 'The History of Introspection Reconsidered', *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 16 (1980), pp. 241–62.

observe our own mental states while occupying them.⁵⁵ But, by careful training, we can *perceive* our inner mental states as they engage outer phenomena, and this perception grasps them whole. Brentano believes inner perception can intuitively apprehend and compile a complete list of the ‘ultimate mental elements’ (PES 45; DP 13), the real parts of our psychic acts—to have a God’s-eye view of the mind.⁵⁶ Psychology slices up mental states into their real parts, on the way discovering necessary, apodictic truths. There is a sense in which Brentano recognises that our ‘first person authority’ has such a solid epistemic warrant that it constitutes full a priori knowledge. But it is a distortion to see this as a kind of peering in, as Searle and others have portrayed it. Brentano simply sees it as a feature of psychic acts that they present with certainty, though that certainty can be overlooked and obscured for various reasons.

Inner perception refers to the manner the acts themselves are reflexively grasped as we engage in acts of external perception. Brentano borrows Aquinas’⁵⁷ and Aristotle’s notion of concomitant or additional consciousness (*Bewußtseinsnebenbei*), whereby the essential features of the primary act are grasped ‘incidentally’ (*en parergo*, PES 276). There is no perceiving without the possibility of apperception (DP 171; PES 153). We *apperceive* ourselves having perceptions, we cannot *observe* these perceptions directly. We inwardly perceive only what presents in the now, and in immediate memory. As Husserl saw, this account of inner perception is deeply problematic.⁵⁸ Again, Brentano does not advance beyond the Cartesian–Leibnizian view that inner perception is apodictic, given with certain ‘evidence’ (*Evidenz*).

Following the Cartesian tradition also, Brentano believes that something can be *perceived* without being explicitly *noticed*.⁵⁹

55. ‘It is a universally valid psychological law that we can never focus our attention upon the object of inner perception’ (PES 30).

56. The image of the divine view of the mind is from Colin McGinn, *The Problem of Consciousness*, op. cit., p. 90.

57. Against Aquinas, Brentano denies inner perception involves a remembering subsequent to the original act (PES 126n), there is no timetag between the original and the reflexive acts.

58. LI VI, Appendix, Vol 2., pp. 864–867

59. Similar to Leibniz’s *petites perceptions*. See Leibniz, *Preface to New Essays*, in R. Ariew and D. Garber, eds, *G.W. Leibniz. Philosophical Essays* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989), p. 295. Leibniz says one doesn’t hear a mill which runs all day nearby. He also holds that to perceive the sound of the roar of the sea is to perceive the individual sounds of the waves even though they are not distinctly noticed.

Something can be given with apodictic certainty and yet all its parts need not be distinctly noticed. Take the case of hearing a chord (PES 277). Some people can attend to and hear the individual notes making up the chord, others cannot. For Brentano, the notes of the chord must be 'really apprehended' (*wirklich erfaßt*, PES 277) if the chord is heard but they need not be individually distinguished or noticed (DP 26). When I grasp a complex inner state, I may not at the same time attend to all the component parts of that state but nevertheless they are all psychologically presented and may with training be discovered.

Although our inner psychic states in inner perception have the character of certain evidence, what we perceive may be confused (PES 277), suffer from 'incompleteness', 'unnoticeability', 'misinterpretability' (*Misdeutlichkeit*, DP 10; 156). This does not affect its evidence and universal validity (PES 277). Like Descartes, we can—through lack of attention—take one thing for another,⁶⁰ but careful, trained inner perception can yield necessary truth. Unfortunately, Brentano never effectively clarifies this distinctions between perceiving and noticing (*Bemerken*), and other modalities such as attending to, taking note of, being struck by, being absorbed by (DP 37).

Brentano's Cartesian views on inner perception provide the backdrop to his account of psychical phenomena to such an extent that, as we saw, Husserl believed that Brentano in fact identifies the psychical with inner perception. This is correct. Bearing this in mind let us now consider Brentano's distinction between the physical and the psychical in the light of what we have learned about his overall philosophical commitments.

IV

The Physical and the Psychical. Brentano explains his distinction between mental and physical phenomena as follows: 'the object of an *inner* perception is simply a mental phenomenon, and the object of an *external* perception is simply a physical phenomenon, a sound, odor, or the like' (PES 210). As we have seen, Brentano held that 'physical phenomena can only exist phenomenally' (PES

60. Compare John Searle, *The Rediscovery of the Mind* (Cambridge, Ma: MIT Pr., 1992), p.148.

vii).⁶¹ His examples of physical phenomena are not what Dummett calls ‘transactions in the physical world’⁶² but phenomenal properties:

... 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. (PES 79–80)⁶³

Moreover, physical phenomena are not just sense qualities (tastes, colours, etc.), but also include more abstract presentations such as ‘thinking of a general concept’ (PES 79). So, physical phenomena are emphatically not external physical objects in the usual sense. We may provisionally say that ‘physical’ phenomena are, for Brentano, the adventitious contents of acts ranging from sense data to abstract objects like triangles, but thought of as phenomenal but nevertheless real parts of psychological phenomena, that is, elements of inner perception.

Brentano’s distinction between the psychical and physical, then, rests on his distinction between the objects of inner and outer perception. But this account quickly collapses. Since physical phenomena are parts of inner perception, Brentano can say that, strictly speaking, ‘all phenomena should be called “inner”’ (DP 137) and again, ‘everything psychical falls under inner perception’ (DP 129). Since any act of outer perception (e.g. seeing) is capable of grasping itself (realising that I am seeing), then as act it belongs to inner perception. All ‘psychical’ acts are inner; a subset of these acts Brentano deems to be acts of outer perception and again deems their contents or objects as ‘physical’. Outer perception is just a special case of inner perception.

To help articulate his account of inner perception or additional consciousness, Brentano distinguishes between the *primary* and *secondary* object of the same act.⁶⁴ The primary object is, for

61. Kraus’s believed this was a careless error on Brentano’s part (PES 401) but elsewhere Brentano repeats: ‘We deny to physical phenomena any existence other than intentional existence’ (PES 94; also 98 n.21).

62. Michael Dummett, *Origins of Analytic Philosophy*, p. 30. On the problem with landscape, see PES 79n. 2 and R. Grossmann, *Phenomenology and Existentialism. An Introduction* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), p. 35.

63. The inclusion of ‘landscape’ might mislead one into thinking that ‘physical phenomena’ refers not only to appearances but also to external objects (and Kraus considered it a mistake on Brentano’s part), but it is likely that ‘landscape’ means here a mental picture of the scenery.

64. PES 127–8. Brentano draws on Aristotle’s discussion in *De anima* III, 2 425b12 ff. as to whether the sense of sight also has itself as object.

example, the colour red I see, the sound I hear, the *immediate* object of the act; the secondary object is the act of seeing or hearing itself (or, in Brentano's later period, myself performing the act, SN 41), grasped *en parergo*. Secondary objects only appear because primary objects do, although the primary object is not temporally prior. Both objects belong to the one act, there are not two acts (this would open up an infinite regress, PES 127).

This distinction between primary and secondary objects quickly gives rise to intractable problems. Perhaps Brentano intended to retain the term 'physical phenomenon' solely for the primary object as immediately given in *sensory* experience, but Brentano complicates the matter by declaring: 'the mental as well as the physical can become a primary object' (PES 278). When I attend to the mental life of others, e.g. 'I know what you are thinking', the act belongs to outer perception not inner. And of course in thinking of a triangle, which we might consider to be a mental object par excellence, for Brentano, the triangle is a *physical* phenomenon. Elsewhere he says that 'the presentation which accompanies a mental act and refers to it is part of the object on which it is directed' (PES 128), suggesting that 'object' refers both to the appearing physical phenomenon *and the act itself*. The 'physical' phenomenon now belongs to the content of the secondary act and hence is contained within the mental phenomenon. The secondary object contains the primary object as a part. Twardowski interprets Brentano in this way: the primary object is the physical phenomenon and the secondary object of the act is 'the act and content taken together',⁶⁵ now both considered as belonging to inner consciousness. Perhaps, as we have already entertained, we could restrict the term 'physical' to that aspect of an act which has the phenomenological character of 'outsideness' — 'adventitious' in Descartes' terminology. But not only physical phenomena are *adventitious* elements⁶⁶ since mental acts can be adventitiously received too. Being object of an act is not exhausted by being physical or even sensory, since we can have a mental act

65. Twardowski, op cit., p. 16.

66. Descartes himself in Meditation Three uses entirely phenomenological criteria for discriminating the adventitious from other kinds of ideas. Adventitious ideas are received passively, independently of the will. This leads to the natural impulse to think of them as not caused by myself.

as object (SN 59). The whole account seems shot through with confusion.

A further and more devastating problem with the primary/secondary object account is that, if the secondary object contains the primary object as well as the act within itself, then we don't really need a two-tier theory of objects at all, we could simply say every act grasps itself and its object together at the same time, extending the doctrine of evidence far beyond where Brentano wanted it to go. Brentano's reliance on the additional consciousness account gets him into deep difficulties concerning the unity of the act and the nature of its object. From this analysis it becomes clear that Brentano's very notion of physical and psychical phenomena, the core of the famous distinction, and the inspiration for much contemporary discussion, is largely incoherent.

Let us finally turn to another important element in his account of intentionality, one which some commentators believe is responsible for providing the intentional act with its object, namely, presentation. According to Michael Dummett's recent interpretation of Brentano, it is the presence of the presentation that gives an act its intentional character.⁶⁷

V

The Fundamental Psychological Modes. Brentano's account of presentation belongs within his general classification of mental acts into three 'fundamental classes' (*Grundklassen*, PES 45) or 'modes' (PES 276).⁶⁸ presentations (*Vorstellungen*), judgements, and 'phenomena of love and hate' (or 'relations of feeling', *Gemütsätigkeiten*, PES 276; RW 55), a classification which owes much to Descartes.⁶⁹

For Brentano, it is a psychological law, given with *a priori* self-evidence (PES 370), that 'everything psychological either is a presentation or is founded on a presentation'. Presentation is the fundamental element in any psychic act and a real part of that act.

67. Michael Dummett, *Origins*, p. 29, citing PES 80 and 266–7.

68. It is noteworthy that Searle, *Intentionality*, p. 6, introduces the term 'psychological mode' without reference to Brentano.

69. Brentano argues that a three-fold classification of mental acts had been proposed by Plato but he accepts Aristotle's division as more authoritative and to be followed fairly closely by Descartes (*idea, iudicium, voluntas*). In particular, Brentano rejects the Kantian dualism of sensibility and understanding. See also RW 50–54.

Although Brentano sometimes suggests that simple presentations can occur on their own without judgements,⁷⁰ elsewhere he says: 'there is no act in which all three are not present' (PES 265).

His account of presentation is rather broad: 'We speak of a presentation whenever something appears to us' (PES 198). The *presentative act*, the presenting, can be an act of sensing, imagining, remembering, or even, as we have already seen, 'the thinking of a general concept' (PES 79). Presentations (*contra* Kant) need not be purely sensuous. But no judgement can occur without a presentation,⁷¹ e.g., my decision to go on a journey requires the presentation of the journey (DP 90; PES 181). Even memory involves presentations. For Brentano, 'it is impossible for conscious activity to refer in any way to something which is not presented' (PES 198). Every presentation is *of* something.⁷² The same object may be appear in different ways in thinking, desiring or fearing (PES 181). Each kind of act has its own mode of presentation (PES 278). Different kinds of act don't necessarily take special objects but are 'distinguished according to the different ways they refer to their content' (PES 197–8).

Brentano further believes that the presentative content of a single experience cannot contain a contradiction within it (DP 149), everything must present itself with genuine positive content (with no 'material falsity' to use Descartes' phrase). There are no negative presentations for Brentano any more than there were for Descartes.⁷³ Presenting delivers something unambiguous to the mind although what that is may not be clearly distinguished. Thus

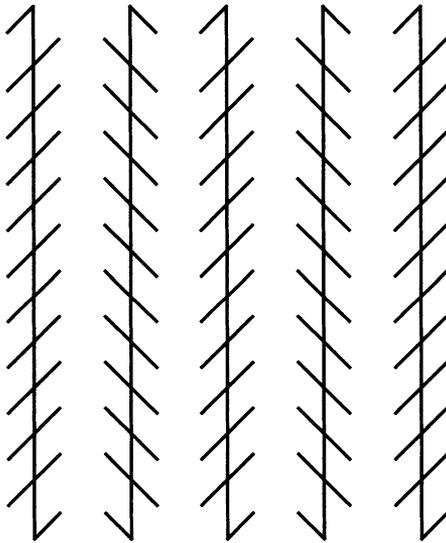
70. J.N. Findlay, *Meinong's Theory of Objects and Values* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), pp. 5–6, speaking of Meinong's theory, says: 'The *Vorstellung* is in itself a wholly passive experience, to which we surrender ourselves without endeavouring to make anything out of it; such experiences are, in their pure form, infrequent in adult mental life, but of their occasional occurrence there can be no doubt.'

71. Twardowski, op. cit., p. 14 agrees.

72. Even pains, itches, etc. present, though just what is presented is obscure. Pain, for Brentano is a complex of a presentation, a judgement, and an emotion of repulsion (PES 83). Pain presents some feeling governed by qualities of what he calls 'intensity', 'lightness' and 'saturation', together with a location. The presentation produces an aversion (a feeling of hate). In experiences like pain we tend to confuse the feeling presented and the emotional reaction, whereas, Brentano argues no one hearing a sound and enjoying it, would confuse the hearing with the enjoyment. Similarly a blinding flash of light can be painful, but there is no doubt that we experience a presentation of light as well as feeling of pain and aversion.

73. Husserl introduced the notion of 'empty intending' (*leermeinen*) in part to allow for the possibility of referring to something without having a presentation of it at the same time, e.g. when I talk about the bridge I have never in fact seen, or when I simply manipulate symbols without troubling to consciously grasp their meanings.

he interprets perceptual illusions, such as Zöllner's illusion, in Cartesian terms as giving us an unambiguous presentation (the content contains no contradiction) but that a contradiction arises between the presentation and the judgement about it (DP 149), or alternatively, a contradiction arises between two judgements naturally prompted by the one presentation. In the Zöllner illusion,⁷⁴ vertical parallel lines with a series of short parallel lines drawn diagonally across the vertical lines at opposing angles appear to be converging:



Zöllner's Illusion

Brentano's insistence that every act (remembering as much as perceiving) contains a presentation raises another problem: if presentings of something in the present and the presenting of

74. DP 10; DP 149. See *Lexikon der Psychologie* (Freiburg: Herder, 1972), Band 3, p. 804. C. F. Zöllner (1834–87) was a Leipzig physicist who developed a curved theory of space. He was responsible for Wundt's appointment to a Chair in Leipzig. This illusion is similar in kind to but less well known than the Müller-Lyer illusion, which Titchener credits Brentano with drawing to the attention of psychologists. See E. B. Titchener, 'Brentano and Wundt: Empirical and Experimental Psychology', in L. McAlister, ed., *The Philosophy of Brentano* (London: Duckworth, 1976), pp. 91–100, esp. p. 89n.42.

remembering the same thing (now past) both count as presentations in the full sense, and if both appear with equal intensity, how do we judge one to be past? Husserl will try to solve this problem by distinguishing elements in the act-character. Perceivings present phenomenologically with 'bodily fulfilment' (*Leibhaftigkeit*), memories are fulfilled but without the intuition of bodily presence. Brentano's blanket term '*Vorstellung*' for the immediately given in all acts and his lack of distinction among kinds of presentation does not allow him to make a proper discrimination here. He holds that 'hearing' and 'remembering hearing' have entirely different objects. In later writings, Brentano moved to the view that these acts took the same object under different temporal modes.

According to Michael Dummett's interpretation of Brentano, as we have already mentioned, it is the presentation that is responsible for the act's intentional character. The presentation provides the object that the desire or judgement then is about. Dummett is partially right here. Judgements and other mental acts all involve presentations. Dummett is assuming that intentionality is constituted by providing an object to the mind and that the vehicle for this is the act of presentation. The act of presentation then is the intentional element in any psychic act. Brentano, however, precisely because he construed intentionality both as directedness towards an object and as possession of a content, sees a layer of intentionality in all three psychic modes. For Brentano, on top of the intentional relation in the presentation, a 'second intentional relation' (RW 16) is added by the act of judging. The judging provides a new mode of presentation. The full intentional character of an act is determined not just by the givenness of an object but by a certain act-character (Husserl's 'act-quality'). As Brentano says: 'in a single mental activity, then, there is always a plurality of references and a plurality of objects' (PES 276). Mental acts are complexes of intentional relations which are nonetheless unities for Brentano.

VI

Mode of Presentation. In order to give a full account of intentionality in Brentano we must then not just talk of intentional act and object but also of mode of presentation. We earlier noted

that Brentano sometimes struggled towards acknowledging something like Fregean *Sinn*, we now need to look more closely to see how he understands ‘mode of presentation’ since this term appears also in both Frege and Husserl. Brentano himself later acknowledged that he had neglected the importance of mode of presentation in the 1974 edition of *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*. In his later writings he saw the need to ‘multiply the modes of mental reference’ (PES 386) beyond the three basic kinds (presentations, judgements, emotional attitudes) which he had recognised in earlier years. Beliefs and desires consider the same object under different modes or manners (DP 143). There are also many subsidiary modes of presentation, e.g. affirming and denying,⁷⁵ loving and hating, all present the object under different modes. Similarly remembering and perceiving present the object under different temporal modes.

When I am remembering making a mistake, I am not performing the error over again. In remembering the error, the ‘error’ is presented but now under a different, non-active mode of presentation (SN 57). Brentano draws on the Cartesian distinction between formal and objective reality to explain the difference in mode. When I believe something actively, or when I am actually making an error, the belief or error is *formally* in me, when I remember believing something or making an error, then that belief or error is *objectively* in me, present in an unplugged, bracketed form, as it were.⁷⁶ Similarly, temporal differences are not differences in the object of the act, as Brentano earlier believed, but in the mode of presentation of the act itself or a mode of an associated judgement.⁷⁷

Nevertheless, though mode of presentation is an important addition to the notions of act and content, it still does not give Brentano enough leverage to extricate his theory of intentionality from a mass of problems, particularly when content and object are never differentiated.

75. Against Frege, Brentano held that asserting and denying were distinct psychological modes.

76. *True and the Evident*, pp. 15–16.

77. Kraus criticised Husserl for not recognising that Brentano’s later doctrine of the temporal modes of consciousness is similar to his own view in the *Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness*. See O. Kraus ‘Towards a Phenomenology of Time Consciousness’, in L. McAlister, ed., *The Philosophy of Franz Brentano*, pp. 224–39.

VII

Conclusion. Having considered Brentano's various formulations of intentionality, i.e., directedness towards an object, and relation to a content, and having further considered the philosophical context in which these formulations are worked out, it becomes clearer why Brentano's earlier critics, such as Husserl, are nearer to the truth in their interpretation of the meaning of Brentano's theses.

Brentano thinks of intentionality in representationalist, immanent terms, for him it was a relation between a thinker and the content of his or her mind. Furthermore, his distinction between inner and outer perception is incoherent as we have seen, and his various attempts to rescue his account, including his adverbial and relational formulations are all caught up in serious difficulties. I have further argued that Brentano's distinction between physical and psychological phenomena cannot be understood other than as a phenomenological distinction concerning the contents of acts of inner perception. This distinction is not the same as the distinction between mental and physical as it appears in contemporary philosophy of mind. Moreover, Brentano's views as a whole are best understood as a continuation of the Scholastico–Cartesian tradition. Whether a satisfactory account of intentionality can proceed independently of Brentano or whether it is inextricably caught within a deficient ontological and epistemological framework I leave as an open question. But it is clear that Brentano himself did not progress much beyond a refined and nuanced Cartesianism in his account of the mind and its intentional relations, and those who invoke Brentano as guardian of mental irreducibility are just plain wrong.⁷⁸

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