

# Philosophy and Pluralism

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## A Case for Philosophical Pluralism: The Problem of Intentionality

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In what sense can we speak of pluralism regarding the philosophical traditions or styles crudely characterised as 'Continental' and 'Analytic'? Do these traditions address the *same* philosophical problems in different ways, or pose *different* problems altogether? What, if anything, do these traditions share?

Studying philosophical pluralism means examining each area and each issue separately to avoid unhappy generalisations about traditions, their methods, starting points, and presuppositions. Here I propose examining philosophical pluralism with respect to a single issue: intentionality. In what sense can intentionality serve as a test case for pluralism? Intentionality is in a sense privileged by being located both at the origins of Continental phenomenology and quite centrally in contemporary analytic philosophy of mind. Highlighted in certain strands of both traditions (e.g. Husserl, Searle), it is downplayed or displaced in other strands (e.g. Derrida, Quine). Its historical role and its contemporary locus, then, may be sufficient reasons for examining intentionality as an interesting case of pluralism.

It is no longer credible to do philosophy without attention to the history of philosophy (Dummett, 1993), and analytic philosophy has become more conscious of its historical lineage. The *historical* roots and configurations of the concepts associated with intentionality offer a fruitful way of examining pluralism. Concepts have histories; or, better, concepts *are* their histories. Furthermore, these histories are not autonomous, there is almost always some cross-fertilisation, some shared influences. Our study of pluralism, then, opens with some reflections on the history of the problematic of intentionality.

### The Concept of Intentionality

Intentionality is not a unitary phenomenon but rather a complex cluster of issues: the 'aboutness' of our beliefs and desires; the puzzling fact that some at least of our mental states possess semantic content; the 'mark of the mental'. No physical phenomenon, it

is claimed, exhibits intentionality. Physical things do not refer beyond themselves, they are not intrinsically 'about' anything else. Acts like striking John take real objects, mental acts like imagining Martians have their objects immanently. Intentionality has been seen as the central identifying feature of all consciousness (e.g. by Husserl), or, minimally and controversially, as describing that whereby one part of the world refers to another part of the world, how one thing can carry information about another (Dretske, 1981). Not all these views can be reconciled.

Continental philosophy (Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty) saw intentionality as a fundamental feature of human consciousness, a *phenomenon* requiring description. The aim was to *describe* the phenomenon by peeling away the network of everyday and metaphysical presuppositions which disguise or distort it.

Absent from early twentieth-century analytic philosophy, intentionality emerges as a problem only with the work of Chisholm (1956; 1957; 1958), Anscombe (1958; 1968) and Sellars. In their accounts of intentionality, analytic philosophers perform a classical analytical manoeuvre: shifting from examining consciousness and its objects directly to the analysing the grammar and logic of *sentences* involving intentions (Chisholm's 'sentences about believing', 'intentional idioms'). Analytic philosophers (excepting Searle and Dretske) make a characteristic methodological decision to analyse *talk* about intentional phenomena rather than looking directly at intentional phenomena themselves.

For recent, avowedly naturalistic, analytic philosophy, intentionality stands as a challenge to the programme of scientific reduction. Intentionality is a phenomenon to be brought under scientific *explanation*, rather than characterised in its own terms (this, analytic philosophers believe, Brentano already adequately achieved). The problem is: given materialism, how can there be intentionality (Haugeland, 1990)?

Analytic philosophers reject post-Brentanian Continental discussions of intentionality as embedded in an alien metaphysical outlook, incorporating idealistic presuppositions, and involving the postulation of mysterious entities (Meinongian non-existent objects) or mysterious mental powers ('noetic rays'). Alternatively, the Continental tradition is simply ignored.

Different terminological traditions have evolved, each side accusing the other of jargon. Much of the disparagement can be dispelled by carefully situating the terminology in its tradition and seeing the parallels. As there is no neutral metalanguage, a pluralist discussion of intentionality must allow that technical vocabularies emerge within overall conceptual schemes. Nevertheless,

among some recent philosophers, a shift can be detected away from purely linguistic, propositional formulations to the terminology of psychological and mental states, recognising pre-linguistic or non-linguistic intentional acts, e.g. perception.

There is remarkable convergence regarding intentionality's historical lineage. Analytic and Continental philosophers agree that Franz Brentano is the source of modern discussions of intentionality. The divergence between traditions arises after Brentano. Brentano's significance for analytic philosophy is that he offered a criterion for recognising the mental domain and sharply distinguishing it from the physical. Thus Chisholm sees Brentano as putting intentionality forward as *the* criterion of the mental: All and only mental phenomena are intentional. If intentionality is irreducible, how can physicalism and materialism explain the mental? Analytic philosophers begin from Chisholm's formulations and rarely go behind Chisholm to Brentano's own text.

Continental philosophy, on the other hand, looks back to Husserl as founder of a method for exploring the essential structures of consciousness. Husserl's initial and abiding problem is how objectivity arises from subjectivity, i.e. how objective, timeless truths (e.g. ideal mathematical truths) arise from within transient, subjective, psychological states. To explain this he initially drew on Brentano but soon criticised him.

### **Brentano's Classification of Physical and Psychical Phenomena**

Brentano never advanced the thesis that intentionality is the mark of the mental, meaning the *ontological* claim that reality is divided into two domains—the mental and the physical. Brentano (1973) sought to delimit a new science: empirical, *descriptive psychology* (later *descriptive phenomenology*).<sup>1</sup> 'My psychological standpoint in empirical; experience alone is my teacher' (ibid. p. xv). Against those who saw psychology as the study of psychophysical laws, Brentano maintained that description precedes causal explanation. Traditionally, psychology studied the soul as 'the substantial bearer of presentations' (ibid. p. 5). Brentano wishes to study just presen-

<sup>1</sup> The first edition was published in 1874 in two books, with three other books to follow. The Foreword to the 1874 Edition (p. xv) also promised a Sixth Book on 'the relationship between mind and body'. Only some of the projected books were actually completed, though not in that precise form. The second edition of *Psychology* (1924) produced by Oskar Kraus contains these as additional essays and notes.

tations (*Vorstellungen*), appearances (*Erscheinungen*), phenomena (*Phänomene*).

For Brentano, everything psychological either is a presentation (*Vorstellung*) or is founded on a presentation. I *hear* a tone, I *judge* it is a musical note, and I *experience pleasure* at the sound. The judgement and the pleasure are based on the presentation of the tone. Moreover Brentano is interested in the presentative act not the object of the act.

Brentano distinguishes the appearances of consciousness into two kinds:

All the data (*Erscheinungen*) of our consciousness are divided into two great classes—the class of physical and the class of mental phenomena. (Ibid., p. 77)

Brentano denies that the physical and psychological sciences divide the entire field of science between them. The study of psychological facts overlaps the empirical sciences (ibid., p. 6). Furthermore, physical events can have mental effects and vice-versa. According to Brentano, physical sciences study specifically the causal relations ('forces') between real objects and our sense organs (ibid., pp. 98–99). The physical sciences deal with phenomena that present themselves in sensation alone, whereas the domain of mental phenomena include items that present themselves in imagination and other psychological modes. Our knowledge of physical phenomena is always fallible. We infer the existence and nature of these physical objects whereas we are directly and infallibly acquainted with our own experiences. Physical phenomena are of interest to psychology only in so far as they provide the content for mental acts (ibid., p. 100). Brentano, then, is scarcely concerned with classifying the nature of the physical at all. Psychology, in the first instance, studies the data of apodictic, self-conscious acts, the domain of inner perception. Brentano's invocation of the traditional distinction between external and inner perception is crucial. We *know* our inner mental perceptions infallibly and apodictically. The phenomena of inner perception (*innere Wahrnehmung*) are given in a manner which made them self-transparent or self-conscious, whereas we can only *theorise* about physical phenomena:

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, as they say, only a relative truth. (Ibid. p. 19).

'Our mental phenomena are the things which are most our own' (ibid., p. 20). They are as they appear to be.

Brentano's classification of mental and physical phenomena is riddled with ambiguities. For example, Brentano sometimes uses the term 'phenomena' simply for the manifest facts that present themselves, e.g. the phenomena of magnetism or the 'inorganic phenomena' of chemistry (ibid. p. 50). Sometimes, however, the term 'phenomena' is used to refer to presentations as appearances in consciousness, the manifest phenomenological aspect of experience.

His distinction between physical and psychical phenomena is best approached through the traditional distinction between outer perception and inner perception. The psychological domain consists of *acts* which themselves can be made the direct objects of other psychic acts in inner perception (*innere Wahrnehmung*). One cannot be wrong about one's immediate, inner experience of hearing, or seeming to be hearing, having hearing presentations. Psychical phenomena always have what Brentano calls 'real existence' (*eine wirkliche Existenz*), indubitable self-givenness. 'Physical' phenomena are the contents of mental acts—tones I hear, colours I see, images—and have only 'a phenomenal and intentional existence' (ibid., p. 92). This reverses normal philosophical usage, whereby primarily the physical has real existence. Brentano even states that 'physical phenomena can only exist phenomenally' (ibid., p. 92); 'we deny to physical phenomena any existence other than intentional existence' (ibid., p. 94). Our knowledge of them is always partial and fallible. Brentano withholds judgement as to whether physical phenomena (colours, sounds) have real, extra-perceptual existence. Spatio-temporal objects as such are not experienced directly. They are posits, theoretical constructs located in a world which 'resembles' or is 'similar to' one which has three spatial dimensions and flows in one direction in time (ibid. p. 100). Physical *objects* inhabit scientific theory; Physical *phenomena* are the manifest, phenomenal, immediate 'objects' of sensory awareness:

Examples of physical phenomena ... 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. (Ibid. pp. 79–80).

Sense qualities, imaginings, all are 'physical phenomena'. Brentano fluctuates between referring to physical phenomena and real physical things (the landscape?). His terminology is broad: *Gegenstand*, *Objekt*, *Realität*, *ein Reales* all refer to the objective

domain in a complex of different senses. The texts are ambiguous and Brentano's views shifted continuously. Continental philosophers highlight Brentano's background metaphysical assumptions; analytic philosophers generally ignore the philosophical context of 'Brentano's thesis'. This means that Brentano's confusions of intentional content, object and real thing, continue to haunt contemporary discussion.

Brentano is *not* offering an ontological distinction which divides the physical from the non-physical so as to cut nature at the joints. Contemporary physicalists who cite Brentano's thesis as implying this are simply mistaken. Brentano (like Husserl) leaves entirely open the question whether intentional phenomena ultimately have a physical substratum. He acknowledges that physiological processes are similar in type to chemical and physical processes (except more complex), but rejects as crude any suggestion that mental phenomena can be constructed out of, for example, physiological data of the nervous system (ibid. p. 52). Mental phenomena must first be understood by being described in their own phenomenological terms. Brentano's real aim is to distinguish the 'phenomenological' components within the psychological event, namely the act and its correlative object.

Brentano considers a number of possible criteria for distinguishing mental from physical phenomena but arrives finally at intentionality as the key factor:

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 here to be understood 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. (Ibid., p.88)

In this paragraph a number of different and possibly conflicting formulations feature:

- the notion of mental inexistence (*intentionale, mentale Inexistenz*)
- relatedness to a content (*die Beziehung auf einen Inhalt*)
- directedness to an object (*die Richtung auf ein Objekt*)
- immanent objectivity (*die immanente Gegenständlichkeit*)

It is not clear how Brentano thought of these characterisations.

Are they different ways of saying the same thing? Is each one a separate but sufficient condition for intentionality, none being necessary in itself? Or are they taken together necessary and sufficient conditions of intentionality? Brentano's characterisations have been criticised for veering between the ontological and the semantic. Chisholm, dissatisfied with Brentano's criteria, offers a number of reformulations. Husserl and Heidegger follow Twardowski in criticising Brentano for failing to keep the notions of *content* and *object* distinct. What is asserted is not the same as the object referred to. Brentano's notion of content is unclear, indeed he acknowledges the ambiguity of the term. Does content include both the immanent, private, subjective, psychological part of the act (e.g. the sensation, aspect or mode of presentation) and also the propositional or semantic content? Husserl distinguished between the real and ideal contents of the act. Dummett (1990, p. 84) maintains that 'content' for Brentano meant 'propositional content' as in Frege, but Husserl's and Heidegger's criticisms that Brentano failed to recognise that objects are given under aspects, under a description, suggest that 'content' may cover a whole series of items in Brentano's account (including mode of presentation, sensations, etc.). Brentano's phrase the 'intentional inexistence of the object' appears to posit a new species of non-existent objects immanent in consciousness. This was criticised widely. After 1905, Brentano sought to avoid immanentism. In the 1911 Foreword to the Second Edition of *Psychology*, he stated: 'I am no longer of the opinion that mental relation can have something other than a thing as its object' (Brentano, 1973, p. xix), meaning thereby that he rules out all but existent objects. The later Brentano endorses a realism whereby the intentional act refers to the real thing possessing real existence or else does not refer at all.

When I promise to marry someone, Brentano says, it is a real person that I promise to marry and not an intentional object. Similarly, Brentano (1966, p. 78) says that when one thinks about a horse, it is an actual horse one is thinking about and not the 'thought about horse'. But even here Brentano's terminology remained imprecise, the term 'object' (*Objekt*) is ambiguous between the direct content of the act and the external object:

It has never been my view that the *immanent* object is identical with the '*object of thought*' (*vorgestelltes Objekt*). What we think about is the object or thing and not the 'object of thought'. (Brentano, 1966, p. 77)

Brentano's mature view of the intentional relation is *adverbial* (Bell, 1990), what Scholastics called the *modus essendi* view. Irreal

entities do not exist, they are modifications of the intending mind. The Scholastics understood inexistence (*in-esse*) as the manner a quality inheres in a substance. A non-existent intentional object is really a modification of the subject and need not exist at all in any sense (Aquila, 1977, p. 2). Similarly, the object of the act is transcendent but may be ideal (ibid. p. 13).

Brentano's account of the intentional relation remains unsatisfying. What is the nature of this supposedly irreducible intentional relation? Brentano's account of relation has also been criticised (Chisholm, 1958; Aquila, 1977). Chisholm (1957, pp. 169-70) asks what relation holds between two things when one of them need not exist? Brentano (1973, p. 272) himself rejects the notion of the intentional relation as something that arises when two really existing things are put together, e.g. as spatial distance arises between two objects. Brentano (ibid.) himself dropped relation in favour of something 'relation-like' (*Relativliches*), a property. It is a relation which makes one of the relata an object, something over and against a subject. Husserl and Heidegger criticise the relational account of intentionality. It is not a relation between two things, i.e. a subject and a physical thing (Heidegger, 1982, p. 60), or between a mental act and its own immanent content (ibid. p. 61). Intentionality is not a relation at all, for Heidegger (1985), it is that feature whereby we are already out in the world not a *relation* with the world.

Brentano's ambiguities concerning the intentional relation and object haunt the later tradition. Analytic and Continental discussions of intentionality perpetuate many of the ambiguities and false promises of Brentano's original insight. To see this, we need to sketch the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of 'Brentano's thesis'.

### Husserl, Heidegger and the Continental Tradition of Intentionality

Husserl rejects Brentano's account of the structure of the act, the intentional relation, and the intentional object, while retaining the concept of *descriptive phenomenology*. Husserl makes intentionality central to consciousness, but criticises Brentano for ignoring the fact that different kinds of acts have different essential structures. Brentano's division of mental acts into presentations, judgements and phenomena of love and hate is rejected by Husserl (1970, p. 554) who recognises a complex series of acts with different intentional structures, some embedded in and modified by other acts. To *see* the Berlin Schloss, to *judge* about it, to *delight* in its archi-

tectural beauty, to *cherish the wish* that one could do so, are distinct experiences with distinct modes of intention (ibid. pp. 559-60), characterisable in different phenomenological terms. One act can itself become the object of another act (I can *remember thinking X*). Acts can be complex wholes, not divisible into different component acts (ibid. p. 574). Husserlian intentional acts have essential structures which open out towards each other, allowing intrinsic possibilities; indeed, the essence of the act can be conceived of as a structure of possibilities.

Husserl rejects Brentano's 'intentional inexistence of the object':

The 'immanent', 'mental object' is not therefore part of the descriptive or real make-up (*Bestand*) of the experience, it is in truth not really immanent or mental. But it also does not exist extramentally, it does not exist at all (ibid., pp. 558-59).

Husserl is a direct realist about the object intended in perception. I see the object and not my sensations. Sensations (later called 'hyletic data') accompany and form part of the 'matter' of the act of seeing the real object. Furthermore, each shift of perspective yields a new 'content' to my experience of seeing the box, i.e. I see it from a different angle, in a different light, and so on, but nevertheless, the object—the box—itself remains constant. Sensations and perceptual aspects are a necessary part of my experience of the box but are not what I directly experience. Husserl distinguishes the matter (*Materie*) or the content of the act from the 'act quality' (the act of judging, interrogating—the specific propositional attitude that is being adopted). Different contents can pick out the same object and similarly the same mental content can refer to different objects in different acts. Husserl retains Brentano's distinction between outer and inner perception. There is an *aspectual* moment—what Husserl calls an *Abschattung*, an adumbration or profile. A physical thing is always experienced aspectually in profiles. Inner experiences are given absolutely and apodictically and not onesidedly in profiles: 'A mental process of feeling is not adumbrated' (Husserl, 1983, p. 96). Husserl and Brentano remain Cartesian in this respect.

In writings (1967, 1983, 1989) after the *Logical Investigations* Husserl develops a new noetic-noematic structure for intentional acts. The 'noema' (literally: the meant) is the *object as intended* and is part of the structure of the intentional act, graspable only in a special act of attention. It encapsulates the possibilities that accrue to an object and determines reference to the object (as in Frege). The sameness of the object across different adumbrations is the work of the noema and of the synthesising nature of the noetic

acts. Even non-linguistic acts have noemas and hence the noema is an extension of the notion of meaning to all acts. The nature of Husserl's noema has been the subject of much critical debate—especially compared to Frege on sense and reference. Føllesdal see the noema as an abstract entity—a meaning—and not an object as such. Others (Sokolowski, 1984) see the noema as an *aspect* of the object, the object as it presents itself in the act. This aspect can be seen either as a real dimension of the object, or as something abstract that indicates the object. Husserl's views have importance for recent discussions of mental content. Føllesdal (1969, 1990, 1993, 1994), Mohanty (1964, 1972, 1981, 1982), Dummett (1990), and Dreyfus and Hall (1982) all see Husserl as offering an alternative and indeed more complex structure than Frege's *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*.

Heidegger criticises both Husserl and Brentano for remaining imprisoned in a Cartesian standpoint. For Heidegger, intentionality is not the problem of the relation between the isolated subject and transcendent objects in the world. This misreads the true phenomenology of our lived experiences. We encounter objects in pragmatic engagements or comportments (*Verhaltene*) with the environment. It is only because I encounter something environmentally and pre-conceptually that I am later able to make it the focus of theoretical objectification, turning an environmental thing (*Umweltding*) into a natural thing (*Naturding*). e.g. 'flowers' are given as gifts, says Heidegger (1985, p. 37), whereas 'plants' are the domain of botany. Brentano and Husserl wrongly privileged theoretical activities over lived engagements. Husserl had become preoccupied with method for gaining access to the transcendental sphere of the *a priori* structures of consciousness. Heidegger moves more towards the intersubjective, pragmatic domain of linguistic behaviour and its interpretation. Heidegger's mature work abandons intentionality altogether, in favour of the nature of our dwelling in the linguistic and significative domain (being-in-the-world).

In summary, Husserl provides an elaborate, nuanced description of the complex structures of intentional acts. In particular he inserts a noema between the act and its transcendent object. Husserl regarded the reduction as his greatest achievement. After Husserl (e.g. in Merleau-Ponty) there was a growing recognition of the impossibility of reduction. Thus in Continental philosophy of the mid-twentieth century the theme of intentionality gradually gets displaced, receiving a death blow in Derrida's deconstruction.

## The Analytic Discussion of Intentionality

Analytic accounts of intentionality are more diversified than Continental, because inspired by a wider range of philosophical intuitions and perspectives. Accounts range from those which see intentionality as irreducible (Searle, 1983), to instrumentalist intentional stance accounts (Dennett, 1987), to reductionist accounts inspired by information theory (Dretske, 1981), to evolutionary and biologically based accounts (Millikan, 1984), to eliminativist programmes (Churchland, 1981, 1984; Stich, 1983), to interpretationist accounts (Putnam, 1991). There are realists, irrealists, internalists, externalists.

Analytic commentators start from Chisholm's reconstruction of Brentano. Chisholm calls attention to peculiar logical features of sentences employing intentional idioms. He argue that sentences expressing psychological states exhibit intensionality (chiefly: failure of existential generalisation, and failure of substitution of identicals, referential opacity). For Chisholm, this raises a challenge for the naturalistic explanation of the mind. Unfortunately, as Chisholm himself and others realised (Lycan, 1969; O'Connor, 1967), these intensional characteristics of sentences do not pick out all and only *psychological* states (or sentences embodying intentional verbs). Many non-psychological verbs observe intensionality, e.g., verbs expressing tense ('Mary Smith will become Mrs Jones'), modal verbs, verbs expressing relations, and verbs such as 'I owe John ten pounds'. Chisholm's redeployment of Brentano does not succeed in providing criteria for picking out the mental. Yet analytic commentators continue to see Brentano's thesis as distinguishing two different orders—the mental and the physical and see the challenge as incorporating mental events into a naturalistic account of the world. Thus while Dennett and Searle disagree, they share many of the same assumptions.

Daniel Dennett (1969) begins with Chisholm's formulation of Brentano's challenge. Dennett dissolves Chisholm's problem by embracing naturalism while allowing intentionality as a pragmatic, explanatory stance. Behaviour is explained by attributing beliefs and desires *as if* the behaviour were rational. To say the cat *saw* the mouse is a successful way of making intelligible the behaviour and predicting its outcome. For Dennett the intentional stance is immensely powerful and indispensable and, in that sense, irreducible. Nevertheless, intentionally-construed behaviour is actually produced by innumerable, non-intentional events going on at the physical level. In a sense, the intentional supervenes on the physical. Behaviour at the macroscopic level is best predicted intention-

ally because most intentional systems approximate to rationality. Nevertheless, at the microscopic level, events obey the laws of physics. There is no mystery or threat posed by allowing intentionality in explanation. It does not introduce new ghostly entities with magical powers. It is an ontologically neutral *stance*, an indispensable mode of explanation for humans (e.g. in law, economics, etc.). To an extent then Dennett agrees with eliminationists like Paul Churchland, and to an extent he agrees with non-reductionists like Searle. He denies he is strictly an *instrumentalist* in the ascription of mental states. Rather he is more like a pan-psychist, there is nothing mysterious about minds, because everything, more or less usefully, can be described in mentalist terms. The progress from non-mental to mental is a matter of complexity not a difference in kind. There is no *underived* intentionality, our intentionality is derived as a late and complex product of evolutionary forces.

Searle, too, seeks to naturalise intentionality ('biological naturalism') but, *contra* Dennett, Searle asserts the irreducibility of intrinsic intentional states. Searle (1992) attacks materialist and behaviourist attempts to explain away the mental as caught in a Cartesian 'conceptual dualism'. Intentionality is a real property of minds, albeit physically based: 'mental phenomena are caused by neurophysiological processes in the brain and are themselves features of the brain' (ibid. p. 1). In this sense, he agrees with Dennett that the basic processes are physical and that many of the macrophenomena are explicable in terms of the microphenomena (ibid. p. 87). But there are genuine 'higher-order' properties not found at the lower levels (e.g. water is a fluid due to molecular behaviour, no molecule itself has fluid properties). Mental properties causally supervene on physical properties (Searle and Dennett agree): Searle sees no reason to hold the mental cannot also be physical. Consciousness, for Searle, is an *emergent higher-level* property of the brain.

Searle's account of intentional states (Searle, 1983), using strategies drawn from the study of speech acts whereby intentional states consist of representative content in a psychological mode, is an analytic version of Husserl's account. Like Husserl, Searle distinguishes between real objects in the world, and the presentative contents of our psychological modes. Both Husserl and Searle are realists: When I think of President Carter, I am thinking of the real person and not some intentionally inexistent object. Like Husserl too, different kinds of intentional states (perceiving, imagining, remembering, etc.) represent their conditions of satisfaction in different ways. Searle, like Husserl, recognises that an inten-

tional state always takes place against a Background of non-intentional practices and in a Network of other states.

### Continental Versus Analytic—The Case for Pluralism

Having sketched -very broadly—the Continental and Analytic discussions on intentionality, what are the lessons for pluralism? Pluralism consists in tolerating different approaches while seeking a common answer to at least some shared problems. Pluralism in philosophy cannot mean abandoning the search for truth in favour of peaceful co-existence. It is precisely the acceptance of the project of seeking the truth (even if disagreeing about the universality of truth across different forms of life) that allows philosophical projects to be compared.

The history of intentionality suggests the possibility of convergence of traditions. Husserl complicates Brentano's picture while seeking to develop a science of subjectivity. Heidegger criticises the unexamined Cartesian metaphysical assumptions underlying this project. Analytic philosophers harden Brentano's' original classification into a distinction between two ontological realms—the mental and the physical, and seek to treat the intentional objectively. Searle challenges the broadly Cartesian metaphysical assumptions underlying this orthodoxy. There is considerable suspicion of Cartesianism in both accounts. The whole subject-object account needs to be radically rethought and here there is a coming together of traditions.

Increasingly, there is evidence of willingness to explore the other tradition's resources, e.g. Dummett's (1990) comparison of Frege and Husserl. Just as Chisholm revived Brentano for analytic philosophy, so Føllesdal translates Husserl's account of the noema into terms comprehensible to an analytic audience, leading to a rethinking of Frege's account of sense and reference.

On both sides, too, there are figures closer to the other side than to their own. Searle's defence of irreducible, intrinsic pre-linguistic intentionality parallels Husserl; his rejection of the unconscious mirrors Brentano's and Sartre's views. Dreyfus (1995) has championed Heidegger's externalist account of intentionality against both Husserl's and Searle's internalism. Heidegger and Putnam both challenge internal representationalist accounts of consciousness (as given in Fodor, 1981). Fodor accepts (partially flippantly) Heideggerian Dasein; Stich acknowledges parallels between his position and Derrida's deconstruction.

On the other hand, considering intentionality is the founding

concept of Continental phenomenology, it is surprising how little discussion of the theme occurs in recent Continental publications (except in Husserl exegesis). Since Merleau-Ponty, there is no Continental support for behaviourism or for scientific reductionism or materialism. Continental philosophy is inherently anti-reductionist (though it shows no great knowledge of different concepts of scientific reduction) and is not stirred by the naturalist programme. Continental philosophers seem baffled by analytic discussions of mental causation, supervenience, epiphenomenalism and qualia. Yet they have much to gain from analytic discussions of these problems, if only to define precisely how the Continental tradition stands in relation to them and to redress that tradition's anti-science bias. The recently formed European Society for Analytic Philosophy and the activities of the CREA philosophers in Paris may soon render the convenient labels of 'Analytic' and 'Continental' useless for all practical purposes. This in itself would be a step forward for genuine pluralism by forcing a rethink of conceptual boundaries.

In intentionality, each side has its own best supporting cases. Practical activities such as playing sports support the account of intentional behaviour which avoids positing intentional contents or noemata at all. On the other hand, daydreaming, hallucinating and other private experiences seem best treated by internalist accounts of the intentional object. Philosophy of mind, like moral philosophy, must begin by respecting the full complexity of the phenomena. Genuine pluralism is an openness to consider the best cases of the opponent and allows that opponent to explain her case in her own terms. Both sides can benefit by critical scrutiny of Brentano's classification and its subsequent history. Our case study of intentionality gives some hope for the success of such philosophical pluralism.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> I am grateful to Daniel Dennett, Alan Montefiore and William Lyons for comments on earlier drafts of this paper and to Hubert L. Dreyfus, Kevin Mulligan and Richard Kearney for discussion of the issues.

## William James, 'A Certain Blindness' and an Uncertain Pluralism

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'Pluralism' may be an ambiguous term. But it is not the multitude of the word's meanings but the multitude of sorts of thing that 'pluralists' might be claiming to be not-single-but-plural that generates unclarity about what any 'pluralist' position amounts to. Take ethics: a 'pluralist' might be maintaining, as against say an ethical hedonist of a Benthamite sort, that there is more than one sort of thing 'good in itself'. Another 'pluralist' might maintain that there is more than one sort of life that counts as a 'good way of life'. Or that not all moral duties are forms of the duty to be truthful. Or that there is more than one framework in terms of which experiences, actions or lives can properly be assessed. There is a problem in understanding what it is that is supposed to be counted: one-or-many of what? While the value today of William James's popular essays in what we might now call 'value pluralism' far exceeds their role in illustrating this difficulty, they do exemplify it. James of course described himself as a 'pluralist'; he was on the flagship of that movement. But just to what extent and in what respects remains unclear.

Richard Rorty (1989, p. 38) has brought to contemporary attention James' 'On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings' (in James, 1917a, pp. 229ff). While this essay, to which James himself attached importance as an expression of the 'pluralistic or individualistic philosophy', was given the keynote place in C. M. Bakewell's 1917 selection of James's philosophical papers (James, 1917b), it was delivered as the first of a pair of addresses (to women students), in 1896. And so it is appropriate to trace his argument through both 'A Certain Blindness' and 'What Makes a Life Significant'. This task is not easy. James's complexity and sense of diversity defy even his own attempts at summary. But there are also substantial obscurities in James's 'line', expressed in apparently inconsistent formulations and unacknowledged changes of direction, that go beyond dialectical and rhetorical shifts of emphasis.

The 'blindness' James initially diagnoses is that which is the consequence of humans' 'practical' engulfment in their own lives,