

# Improper Intentions of ambiguous objects: Sketching a New Approach to Brentano's Intentionality

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*l'anima filosofante non solamente contempla essa veritate,  
ma ancora contempla lo suo contemplare medesimo e la bellezza di quello,  
rivolgendosi sovra se stessa e di se stessa innamorando  
per la bellezza del suo primo guardare.*  
(Dante, Convivio 4 II 18)

In this article I will begin by discussing recent criticism, by Mauro Antonelli and Werner Sauer, of the ontological interpretation of Franz Brentano's concept of intentionality, as formulated by i.a. Roderick Chisholm. I will then outline some apparent inconsistencies of the positions advocated by Antonelli and Sauer with Brentano's formulations of his theory in several works and lectures. This new evaluation of (unpublished) sources will then lead to a sketch of a new approach to Brentano's theory of intentionality. Specifically, it will be argued that the notion of "intentional object" is inherently and unavoidably ambiguous in every act of external perception, due to the fact that we can only have improper intentions directed at the external world.

## The ontological interpretation and its discontents

In several articles Mauro Antonelli and Werner Sauer have advanced a systematical criticism of the so-called ontological interpretation of Franz Brentano's concept of intentionality (e.g. Antonelli 2000, Sauer 2006). Antonelli and Sauer claim that this interpretation, as proposed mainly by Roderick Chisholm, Oskar Kraus, and more recently Barry Smith, represents a severe misunderstanding of Brentano's thought.

According to the ontological interpretation, the intentionality of consciousness does not consist in a special relation, that is to say, in the "intentional relation" to ordinary objects, but in an ordinary relation to a special class of objects, the "intentional" or "immanent objects".<sup>1</sup> (Antonelli 2000, p. 98)

What makes acts intentional, would be their having an intentional object. The intentional relation can never fail, whatever the status of the external object, because there always is an immanent object: a special object with a special existential status.

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<sup>1</sup> "Nach der ontologischen Deutung besteht also die Intentionalität des Bewußtseins nicht in einer besonderen Beziehung, d.h. in der "intentionalen Beziehung" zu gewöhnlichen Objekten, sondern in einer gewöhnlichen Beziehung zu einer besonderen Klasse von Gegenständen, den "intentionalen" bzw. "immanenten Gegenständen".

When Hans thinks of a horse, then the horse must immanently inexistent in Hans' mind. In the middle Brentano, this does not mean anything less than that Hans is in a logically regular relation to an immanent horse.<sup>2</sup> (Chrudzimski 2004, pp. 124 f.)<sup>3</sup>

According to Chrudzimski, in Brentano's middle period his position regarding the immanent object is in most respects an object theory rather than a mediator theory. The object of the intentional relation would be a special entity that in a certain sense acts as surrogate for the commonsensical intended objects. After all, we must always have an intentional, i.e. immanent, object, both when the external object exists and when it does not. As Chrudzimski points out, in principle such an object theory does not imply anything yet about the ontological status of such intentional objects (Chrudzimski 2004, pp. 125, compare Chrudzimski 2007, p. 6.) Chisholm, however, famously argued that this would entail a special kind of existence "short of actuality but more than nothingness".<sup>4</sup>

Against such interpretations of Brentano's theory of intentionality, Antonelli and Sauer quote the master himself, who apparently protested vehemently against such distortions of his doctrine when they were advanced during his lifetime. The central quotation they bring to bear against the ontological interpretation and the object-theory comes from a letter of Brentano to Anton Marty of 17-03-1905:

However, it has never been my view that it would be the case that the immanent object = "presented object". The presentation does not have "presented thing", but "the thing", so e.g. the presentation of a horse not "presented horse", but "horse" as (immanent, i.e. the only kind of object in the proper sense) object.<sup>5</sup>

Brentano goes on to clarify that this would mean to equate in all respects the objects of the first and of the second intention: the object of e.g. external perception and the object of internal perception. The "presented horse" is the (partial) object of the internal perception, while the object of the external perception would simply be the horse itself. However, the latter claim must be made with great caution: to be the object of any act means, as Brentano himself says in the letter, to be an immanent object. So the distinction here is not actually between external and internal object, but between intentional object and intentional correlate. Antonelli clarifies:

In the *Psychology from an empirical Standpoint* Brentano thematized the psychical act, in so far as this is primarily directed at its intentional or immanent object; the act is directed at itself as secondary object merely on the

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<sup>2</sup> "Wenn Hans an ein Pferd denkt, dann muß das Pferd im Geist von Hans immanent inexistenten. Das bedeutet jedoch nach dem mittleren Brentano nichts weniger, als daß Hans in einer logisch regulären Relation zu einem immanenten Pferd steht."

<sup>3</sup> Compare Chrudzimski 2007, p 19: "a wholly regular relation to a special object" "eine ganz reguläre Relation zu einem speziellen Objekt".

<sup>4</sup> The same kind of (mis)interpretation of intentionality as an object-theory is also well-known in Husserl-scholarship, where it is described in the same terms, cf. Smith & McIntyre 1982, p. 41: "the intentionality of an act does not consist in a peculiar sort of "intentional relation" to an ordinary object, but in an ordinary relation to a peculiar sort of "intentional object"."

<sup>5</sup> "Es ist aber nicht meine Meinung gewesen, daß das immanente Objekt = „vorgestelltes Objekt" sei. Die Vorstellung hat nicht „vorgestelltes Ding", sondern „das Ding", also z.B. die Vorstellung eines Pferdes nicht „vorgestelltes Pferd", sondern „Pferd" zum (immanenten, d.h. allein eigentlich Objekt zu nennenden) Objekt." Compare with the translation in Brentano 2009, 52.

side. In this secondary relation the intentional correlate, that is the thought as such, of the act is thought together with it. This intentional correlate, that begins and ends with the act, is the psychically modified counterpart of the intentional object, which is independent from thought.

In the *Descriptive Psychology*, Brentano now thematizes the psychical act in its inner configuration, i.e. in so far as it grasps itself with direct evidence in inner perception, where the intentional correlate as “part of the intentional pair of correlates” is always also grasped together with it. In contrast to the intentional correlate, that is a distinctional part in the proper sense, he now considers the intentional object as distinctional part in a modified sense or as “part to be obtained by modifying distinction”.<sup>6</sup> (Antonelli 2000, p. 109.)

### Some difficulties

There are some issues with such a position. First of all, in Brentano’s logic lectures of 1884/85 (just a few years before the descriptive psychology lectures of 1887/1888) we find the correlate and the intentional object straightforwardly equated:

Let us now turn to the analysis of the elements of our internal perceptual presentation, as far as we can conduct it. Its object is our Self in its real manifold psychical references to intentional correlatives (immanent objects).<sup>7</sup> (Brentano EL 72, 12287)

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First, regarding the [act of] presenting.

Its correlative [is] the presented. Both [are] called presentation. (Which cannot be changed, though it frequently leads to confusions between the act of presentation and the presented (intentional object)).<sup>8</sup> (Brentano EL 72, 12289)

As I will argue more extensively below, I do not think that Antonelli can be right when he claims that the “intentional object” is completely “independent from thought”. It is precisely as intentional that the object appears to us in reflection, as phenomenal, i.e. as part of a mental act. An intentional object as mental object cannot at the same time and in the same sense be something in itself extramentally.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> “In der *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt* hatte Brentano den psychischen Akt thematisiert, insofern dieser primär auf sein intentionales bzw. immanentes Objekt gerichtet ist; lediglich nebenbei [...] ist der Akt auf sich selbst als sekundäres Objekt gerichtet. In dieser sekundären Beziehung wird mit dem Akt selbst sein intentionales Korrelat, d.h. das Gedachte als solches, mitgedacht. Dieses intentionale Korrelat, das mit dem Akt mitentsteht und mitvergeht, ist das psychisch modifizierte Gegenstück zum intentionalen Gegenstand, der vom Denken unabhängig ist.

In der *Deskriptiven Psychologie* thematisiert Brentano nun den psychischen Akt in seiner inneren Bezüglichkeit, d.h. insofern er sich selbst in der inneren Wahrnehmung mit unmittelbarer Evidenz erfaßt, wobei das intentionale Korrelat als „Teil des intentionalen Korrelatenpaares“ stets miterfaßt wird. Im Unterschied zum intentionalen Korrelat, das distinktioneller Teil im eigentlichen Sinne ist, betrachtet er nun das intentionale Objekt als distinktionellen Teil im modifizierenden Sinne bzw. als „durch modifizierende Distinktion zu gewinnenden Teil“.

<sup>7</sup> “Wenden wir uns nun zur Analyse der Elemente unserer inneren Wahrnehmungsvorstellung, so weit wie sie eben führen können. Ihr Objekt ist unser Selbst in seinem wirklichen mannigfachen psychischen Beziehungen mit intentionalen Korrelativen (immanenten Gegenständen).” Also see Chrudzimski (2004, p 155, n. 150).

<sup>8</sup> “Zunächst von dem Vorstellen.

Sein Korrelativ das Vorgestellte. Beides Vorstellung genannt. (Was nicht zu ändern, obwohl es häufig zu Verwechslungen führte zwischen Vorstellungsakt und Vorgestelltem (intentionalem Objekt)).”

<sup>9</sup> As I argue in Ierna 2012, 2014, and below, in the strict and proper sense, externally and independently from thought there are only “unpresentable forces”, which per definition cannot be either the intentional or the intended object.

Antonelli underscores that there are no multiple ways of existing for Brentano, one cannot speak of “intentional existence” and “real existence” as different ontological levels:

“To exist” accordingly means simply “to be correctly acknowledged”. Since there are no different ways of acknowledging, there can be no different ways of existing.<sup>10</sup> (Antonelli 2000, p. 106)

However, I think that this does lead to some friction with his later claim that:

The real A of course exists independently from its being thought, while the thought A only exists in so far as one thinks the real A. The intentional or immanent object of thought is not the thought, but the real A.<sup>11</sup>. (Antonelli 2000, p. 107)

If to exist means to be the object of a positive judgement, then how can we speak of something existing completely independently from any judgements whatsoever? If we take the case of external perception, Brentano warns time and again that “*Wahrnehmung ist Falschnehmung*”,<sup>12</sup> because the existence of the external world is merely putative, hypothetical. The external world as such is unknowable in itself, it merely causes appearances in us. It would be odd, however, to say that the immanent objects cause appearances in us, they rather are the effects, the phenomena. Let us look at this in more detail.

### **Brentano’s intentionality**

In nearly every discussion regarding Franz Brentano’s re-introduction of the concept of intentionality sooner or later the (in)famous passage from the *Psychologie vom Empirischen Standpunkte* gets quoted to prove one point or another.

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 judgement something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on.

This intentional in-existence is characteristic exclusively of mental phenomena. No physical phenomenon exhibits anything like it. We could, therefore, define mental phenomena by saying that they are those phenomena which contain an object intentionally within themselves. (Brentano, 1874, pp. 124 f.; 1995, p. 88 f.)

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<sup>10</sup> “Existieren” heißt dementsprechend lediglich „als richtig anerkennen“. Da es keine verschiedenen Weisen des Anerkennens gibt, kann es keine verschiedenen Weisen des Existierens geben.

<sup>11</sup> “Das wirkliche A existiert natürlich unabhängig von seinem Gedachtwerden, während das gedachte A nur insofern existiert, als man an das wirkliche A denkt. Der intentionale bzw. immanente Gegenstand des Denkens ist nicht das gedachte, sondern das wirkliche A”.

<sup>12</sup> Brentano (1874, p. 119): “Die innere Wahrnehmung [...] ist eigentlich die einzige Wahrnehmung im eigentlichen Sinne des Wortes. [...] Die sogenannte äussere Wahrnehmung ist also strenggenommen nicht eine Wahrnehmung”.

Unfortunately, there are numerous problems with both this practice as well as with the passage itself.<sup>13</sup> First of all, it invariably gets quoted in a variety of translations, secondly Brentano’s students rarely refer to it, thirdly Brentano himself in the actual quote admits that the terminology is neither wholly his own nor wholly unambiguous. Indeed, in this quote<sup>14</sup> we actually find at least six different formulations of the defining characteristic of intentionality:

1. Intentional inexistence
2. Reference to a content
3. Direction towards an object
4. Immanent objectivity
5. Including something as object
6. Intentionally containing an object

Due to the problematic nature of the intentionality quote, we should try to contextualize these various descriptions by drawing on other passages from Brentano’s writings too. In this respect, it seems useful to me to sketch a brief counterfactual scenario here: what if the intentionality quote wouldn’t exist? Which sources would we turn to in order to discuss the thorny issue of intentionality and intentional objects? As has already been often remarked, Brentano’s influence is for the most part due to his lectures and letters, rather than to his publications,<sup>15</sup> hence in the counterfactual scenario these would of course then be the most important sources to understand not only Brentano’s concept of intentionality, but also the reception of this concept among his students. The first ones to turn to, would be his mid-1880s lectures on logic:

In every psychical phenomenon we find a reference to an immanent object. Examples may clarify this: when I think, I think of something, something is as thought in me; the thought is the immanent object of the thinking. When I want, I want something etc. It is the same with phenomena of pleasure: enjoying something, fearing something. Always an immanent object, and if you take away this object, then you take away the psychical phenomenon as well. This reference is an exclusive property of psychical phenomena, something similar is missing in physical phenomena.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> On this point, I couldn’t agree more with Antonelli (2000, p. 93): “Brentano’s famous intentionality passage from the *Psychology from an empirical Standpoint* is quoted over and over again, and his so-called “Intentionality Thesis” explained, and generally misunderstood.” “Immer wieder wird Brentanos berühmte Intentionalitätspassage aus der *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt* zitiert und seine sogenannte “These der Intentionalität” ausgelegt und durchwegs mißverstanden”.

<sup>14</sup> And its footnotes, where he adds the aristotelian terminology of “*psychische Einwohnung*”.

<sup>15</sup> These are also considered among the reasons for “Brentano’s invisibility”, e.g. as outlined in Albertazzi et al. (1996, p. 4).

<sup>16</sup> Brentano Y 2, pp. 46 f. “In jedem psychischen Phänomen finden wir eine Beziehung auf ein immanentes Objekt. Beispiele mögen das erläutern: Wenn ich denke, so denke ich etwas, es ist etwas als Gedachtes in mir; das Gedachte ist der immanente Gegenstand des Denkens. Wenn ich will, will ich etwas usw. Auch bei den Phänomenen der Lust ist dasselbe: Freude an etwas, Furcht vor etwas. Immer ein immanentes Objekt, und wenn Sie dies Objekt wegnehmen, so nehmen Sie das psychische Phänomen mit weg. Diese Beziehung ist den psychischen Phänomenen ausschließlich eigen, es fehlt etwas Derartiges bei den physischen Phänomenen”.

Note that the term "intentional inexistence" does not make an appearance, it is actually relatively rare and its occurrence in the overused intentionality quote has distorted its importance.<sup>17</sup> Psychical phenomena are those that have a "relation" or "reference" ("*Beziehung*") to an immanent object: No immanent object, no mental act.<sup>18</sup> What is this "relation" (if it is at all a relation)? What is this immanent object? In general when I think something, the immanent object is the "thought object". There cannot be a thought object without thought and there cannot be a thought without a thought object. This makes them correlates:

Let us consider internal perception, it shows us e.g. presentations - which are real; judging, love, hate - all real. But these are not without correlates: no presentation without a presented, no judging without a judgment. Indeed, these correlates are what is observed directly in internal perception, while the presenting, judging, etc. which are real, are observed indirectly. When we take both correlates of bigger and smaller, father and son, then I cannot present one without the other. It is the same with internal perception. The presented is presented "in recto", the presenting "in obliquo". This is the reason why it has been often claimed that we would not present the latter at all, but only the former as presented. The loved as loved, but not the loving. The loved would be in us as phenomenon, but we would not perceive the loving as presenting? That is of course a clear contradiction.<sup>19</sup>

In this lecture from the WS 1884/85, Brentano employs both terminologies, speaking of a relation of thought to an immanent thought object as well as of the correlativity of thought and the thought object.

But we have to be careful to distinguish the two different perspectives. In the second quote, Brentano tells us that from the perspective of internal perception, we always see two correlative elements: the presenting and the presented, the judging and the judged, etc. Internal perception presents them both, one *in recto* one *in obliquo*, but it is not exclusively directed at the phenomenon itself, which is the target of the primary act. From the perspective of the primary act, we are not aware of the im-

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<sup>17</sup> Sauer 2006, p. 3: "Though Brentano himself explicitly points out that he does not mean to propose the expression "intentional (mental) inexistence" as his own technical terminology, commentators generally have concentrated precisely on this expression as the key for understanding the intentionality passage, indeed as key to the conception of intentionality of the pre-reistic Brentano in general.", "Wiewohl Brentano selbst ausdrücklich klarstellt, daß er den Ausdruck 'intentionale (mentale) Inexistenz' nicht als seinen eigenen terminus technicus verstanden wissen will, haben sich Kommentatoren vielfach gerade auf diesen Ausdruck als Schlüssel für das Verständnis der Intentionalitätspassage, ja der Intentionalitätsauffassung des vorreistischen Brentano überhaupt konzentriert."

<sup>18</sup> In Brentano's own notes for this lecture, manuscript EL 72, 12093: "No presenting without presented", "*Kein Vorstellen ohne Vorgestelltes?*".

<sup>19</sup> Brentano Y 2, pp. 104 f. "Nehmen wir die innere Wahrnehmung, sie zeigt uns z.B. Vorstellungen - das ist etwas Reales; Urteil, Liebe und Haß - alles real. Aber diese sind nicht ohne Korrelate: kein Vorstellen ohne Vorgestelltes, kein Urteilen ohne Geurteiltes. Ja, diese Korrelate sind dasjenige, was eigentlich direkt betrachtet wird bei der inneren Wahrnehmung, während das Vorstellen, Urteilen etc., also das Reale, indirekt betrachtet wird. Wenn wir die beiden Korrelate des Größeren und Kleineren, Vater und Sohn nehmen, so kann ich das eine nicht ohne das andere vorstellen. So geht es bei der inneren Wahrnehmung. Das Vorgestellte wird "in recto", das Vorstellen "in obliquo" vorgestellt. Daher ist auch oft behauptet worden, daß wir es gar nicht vorstellen, sondern nur das andere als Vorgestelltes. Das Geliebte als geliebt, das Lieben aber nicht. Das Geliebte sei als Phänomen in uns, wir nähmen aber das Lieben als Vorstellen nicht wahr? Das ist natürlich der reine Widerspruch."

In Brentano EL 72, 12144, he uses the same terminology of correlates and directly presenting the correlative objects vs indirectly "*in obliquo*" presenting the acts.

manent object *as* immanent. In perception we are aware of the tree, not of the tree-as-perceived. We can therefore still make a perspectival distinction between the correlative elements of a psychological phenomenon and the immanent object of the act. Moreover, in these passages nothing whatsoever is being said about “existence” or “inexistence”. Brentano discusses this in his lectures on descriptive psychology:<sup>20</sup>

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As little as I am inclined to doubt the existence of the outer world, yet we have no certainty about it. This is different with internal perception. That I now judge thus and so, etc. are innerly secured facts. Who would shake the existence of this inner experience, would saw off the branch he is sitting on.<sup>21</sup>

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We need to understand the content of sensations: inner experience does not show colors, tones, as existing in reality, but rather sensations of them. It shows them as immanent objects, as phenomena. We have no right to consider the red, blue as really existing, but rather as really existing phenomena. Descriptive psychology must describe these as phenomena.<sup>22</sup>

When introducing existence in the mix, things get complicated. Brentano, as a true empiricist, acknowledges that external perception is not to be trusted. Internal perception, however, gives us indubitable evidence. Yet, internal perception does not show us physical phenomena in the same way as external perception. It does not show us the objects of sensation (colors, smells, sounds, etc.) as if they were properties of some external substance, but rather, as Brentano literally claims in the quote I just gave,<sup>23</sup> it shows us the objects of sensation “as immanent objects, as phenomena”. From the perspective of internal perception, the objects of sensation are revealed to be correlates of mental acts, and hence no less real than the acts themselves. However, while they are “really existing” as phenomena this does not imply that they are “really existing” externally as well, i.e. that to the immanent objects would correspond transcendent objects.

17 /10

Everything that we experience so evidently internally, shows a reference to an immanent object. I grasp in myself a presenting, this is not without a presented, that is: without an immanent object, whether this is also avail-

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<sup>20</sup> These quotations are taken from the manuscript Q 10 in the Husserl-Archives.

<sup>21</sup> “So wenig ich geneigt bin an der Existenz der Außenwelt zu zweifeln, so haben wir doch keine Sicherheit über sie. Anders die innere Erfahrung. Daß ich jetzt so und so urteile usw., sind innerlich gesicherte Tatsachen. Wer an der Existenz dieser inneren Erfahrung rüttelte, sägte den Ast ab, auf dem er sitzt.”

<sup>22</sup> “Wir haben den Inhalt der Empfindungen kennen zu lernen: die innere Erfahrung zeigt nicht Farben, Töne als in Wirklichkeit bestehend, wohl aber Empfindungen davon. Sie zeigt solche als immanente Gegenstände, als Phänomene. Wir haben kein Recht das Rot, Blau als wirklich bestehend anzusehen, wohl aber als Phänomene wirklich bestehend. Diese als Phänomene hat die deskriptive Psychologie zu beschreiben.”

<sup>23</sup> As well as in the letter to Marty from 17-03-1905 I quoted at the beginning, where Brentano states that the object of the presentation of a horse is an “immanent object”, which is “the only kind of object in the proper sense”.

able outside or not. What I want, exist in me, even if it never becomes real outside. Always there is a loved, hated, assented, etc.<sup>24</sup>

From the perspective of internal perception we can distinguish two distinct parts: the primary act and its correlate, which is the immanent object. Internal perception is not a separate act itself, but a secondary form of consciousness, a secondary function within every mental act, indeed a reflection on the act.<sup>25</sup> Hence, also in each and every act of external perception we are directed at one and the same object, but from two perspectives: once as object of external perception, and once as the object of internal perception, i.e. as correlate of the act of external perception. Since internal perception shows us the act of external perception and the object of external perception as correlates, we saw above that the object of external perception is revealed as a phenomenon, as an immanent object. As correlate, this immanent object cannot be any less real than the act in which it is included, though this does not entitle us to any further conclusion, i.e. about its reality *extra mentem*. Indeed, as intentional object it cannot exist outside of or independently from thought. Therefore, as objects of internal perception, the correlates of act and its immanent object both exist in the same sense. The parlance of “as phenomena” is not a modification or weakening of “existing”, since Brentano explicitly inserts “really” between them. To be a phenomenon is not a different or weaker mode of existence, but rather a specific mode of being perceived, i.e. by internal perception, which is the mental function of perceiving psychical phenomena with their correlates.<sup>26</sup>

In other lectures, Brentano seems to prefer the expression “relation to a content”, instead of “relation to an immanent object”, which he uses as equivalent:

On the basic classes of psychical phenomena

1. All psychical phenomena have as common feature the relation to a content. That is what distinguishes them from all others.
2. This relation to a content is a multiple one. According to the main differences, we can distinguish three main classes of psychical phenomena: presenting (wheresoever something appears), judging (wheresoever something

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<sup>24</sup> “Alles, was wir so evident innerlich erfahren, zeigt eine Beziehung zu einem immanenten Objekt. Ich erfasse in mir ein Vorstellen; dies ist nicht ohne ein Vorgestelltes, das ist: ohne ein immanentes Objekt da, sei dies nun draußen vorhanden der nicht. Was ich will, besteht in mir, wenn es auch draußen nie wirklich wird. Immer ist ein Geliebtes, Gehaßtes, Bejahendes usw. da.”

<sup>25</sup> “We also call inner perception with another name: reflection.” (Stumpf, Q 11/I, p. 16).

<sup>26</sup> I take this to be the position Anton Marty is describing in his letter to Husserl of 17 VIII 1901: “Der Gegenstand der Blauvorstellung ist: Blau, nicht: das vorgestellte Blau. Allein dies verträgt sich sehr wohl mit meiner These, daß jeder Vorstellung ein Correlat entspricht, welches nothwendig existirt, wenn die Vorstellung existirt. Denn damit ist nicht behauptet, daß dieses Correlat *als solches* (also das *vorgestellte Blau*) Gegenstand meiner Vorstellung sei. Wenigstens gilt dies nicht, wenn es sich um den *primären Bewußtseinsakt* handelt. Das Vorgestellte als solches ist in Wahrheit Gegenstand des *sekundären Bewußtseins*.” (Hua Dok III/1, p. 84) The presented is object of the first intention, the presented as such (i.e. the presented as presented) is object of the second intention.



is acknowledged or rejected, assented or denied), loving or hating (pleasure and displeasure, desiring and wishing away, wanting or fleeing, etc.)<sup>27</sup>

Nevertheless, we again see that “inexistence” and even “direction” are actually exceptional ways of describing intentionality in Brentano’s lectures, while the standard terminology is rather “relation to an immanent object”, sometimes “relation to a content”. But should we really translate and thereby interpret “*Beziehung*” as “relation”? When we consider Brentano’s discussion of mereology and the theory of relations he never points to intentionality as either a special kind of relation itself or as falling under one of the other kinds of relation. The four kinds of relations Brentano discusses in his logic lectures are: physical (e.g. parts of a continuum, quantitative parts), metaphysical (e.g. the connection among properties, such as quality and intensity), logical (e.g. the way genus and species are connected, color and redness) and then the fourth “loose and external” case of collectives (e.g. a herd, an army, a state). None of these kinds of relations picks out intentionality as the relation between a psychical act and its intentional object. Likewise, correlativity is a feature of many kinds of relations (larger/smaller, master/servant, father/son, etc.) and not specific to intentional acts. So, is the intentional “*Beziehung*” a relation? Brentano tried to be as clear and as unambiguous as possible about it:

1. Everything psychical has an object
2. This “having-an-object” is not a relation, because it does not involve the existence of another thing.<sup>28</sup>

While the dating of the manuscript is unclear, it harmonizes perfectly with what we have seen up to now. We can think about anything, whether it exists or not. Trivially, if intentionality were a relation in the classical sense, it would have to involve two distinct realities. Hence, obviously, whenever we think of some non-existent thing (centaurs, the golden mountain, etc.), the relation would not obtain. However, then we would not have an act either, since its object and its intentional relation to the object would be missing and we cannot have an act without an object. Therefore, since we do have acts that have a *Beziehung* to non-existent objects, intentionality cannot be a relation. For the empiricist Brentano, moreover, external perception generally does not show us the world in itself, i.e. does not show us substances, but only phenomena.<sup>29</sup> Consider his answer to Zimmermann in a letter from 03-01-1890:

Is extension the form of appearance of something in itself completely unknown?

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<sup>27</sup> Brentano EL 80, 13.003: “Von den Grundklassen der psychischen Phänomene

1. Alle psychischen Phänomene haben gemeinsam eine Beziehung auf einen Inhalt. Das ist, was sie von jedem anderen unterscheidet.

2. Diese Beziehung auf den Inhalt ist eine mehrfache. Nach den Hauptverschiedenheiten lassen sich drei Hauptklassen von psychischen Phänomenen unterscheiden Vorstellen (wo immer etwas erscheint), Urteilen (wo immer etwas anerkannt oder verworfen, bejaht oder verneint wird), Lieben oder Hassen (Lust und Unlust, Begehren und Wegwünschen, Wollen oder Fliehen u.s.f.)”

<sup>28</sup> Brentano PS 47, 51300: “1. Jedes Psychische hat einen Gegenstand 2. Dies “Gegenstand haben” ist keine Relation, denn es involviert nicht die Existenz von einem andern Dinge.”

<sup>29</sup> Brentano PS 76, 58002: “The objects of perception are called appearances, phenomena”, “Die Gegenstände der Wahrnehmung nennt man Erscheinungen, Phänomene”.

I answer: no! Provided that one doesn't link “appearance” with a completely improper meaning. Causing an appearance and appearing are two different things, and a lot of confusion is due to Kant, as he confounded and mixed up the one and the other.<sup>30</sup>

As we already know from the *Psychologie vom Empirischen Standpunkte*, Brentano argues that the purported cause of the physical phenomena is an “unpresentable force” in nature (Brentano 1874, p. 161), and states that “what truly exists, does not appear, and what appears, does not truly exist” (Brentano 1874, p. 24). Nature does not appear to us as it is, and what appears to us is at best “analogous” to what purportedly exists in nature. Hence, from this standpoint, it makes no sense whatsoever to speak of objects that are at the same time 1) really out there in nature (“*an sich*”) and 2) what our intentional acts aim at. External perception is at best putative: it assumes (naively) that what you see is what you get.<sup>31</sup> Intentional existence is as good as it gets. What is real is 1) whom is being appeared to and 2) the appearing itself; not however, what appears.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, in the manuscript where he clearly distinguishes the “*Beziehung*” from a relation, Brentano later reformulates this point as “the psychical reference is unilaterally real”<sup>33</sup> In a clarification to his logic lectures, Brentano even explicitly affirms: there are objectless presentations (“*es gibt gegenstandslose Vorstellungen*”):

Once again, what do names designate?

Answer: They designate the objects of our presentations, etc., but not as objects of presentation, but as what they are presented.

Objection: What they are presented as, what else is that if not as an object? And this [would be] impossible following our earlier remarks.

Answer: This is not true in general. Often it is an object, but not always. There is not presentation in which there would not exist something intentionally in the mind, but there are objectless presentations. Also something that is not, even what cannot be at all, can be presented.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> “Ist die Ausdehnung Erscheinungsform eines an sich völlig unbekanntes? Ich antworte: nein! Vorausgesetzt, dass man mit “Erscheinung” nicht einen ganz uneigentlichen Sinn verbindet. Eine Erscheinung verursachen und selbst erscheinen ist zweierlei, und Kant hat viel Verwirrung verschuldet, indem er das eine mit dem anderen verwechselte und vermengte”.

<sup>31</sup> Brentano PS 76, 58392: “We have a tendency to agree with sense-presentation as presentation of something real.”, “Wir haben nun eine Neigung der Sinnesvorstellung als Vorstellung von etwas wirklichem zuzustimmen”.

<sup>32</sup> Brentano, M 97, 31775, compare PS 76, 58723.

<sup>33</sup> “Die psychische Beziehung einseitig real”. Brentano PS 47, 51304.

<sup>34</sup> Brentano, EL 80, 13016, also see Rollinger 2009b, p. 7 and 17. “Nochmals also was bezeichnen die Namen?

Antwort: Sie bezeichnen die Gegenstände unserer Vorstellungen u.s.f., aber nicht als Gegenstände der Vorstellung, sondern als das, als was sie Vorgestellt werden.

Einwand: Das als was es vorgestellt wird, was ist das anders als ein Gegenstand? Und dies unmöglich nach den früheren Bemerkungen.

Antwort: Nicht allgemein ist dies wahr. Oft ist es ein Gegenstand, aber nicht immer. Es gibt keine Vorstellung, bei welcher nicht etwas intentional im Geiste existierte, aber es gibt gegenstandslose Vorstellungen. Auch etwas was nicht ist, ja etwas was gar nicht sein kann, kann vorgestellt werden.”

The point is reiterated in his descriptive psychology lectures from 1887/88: “Every presentation has a content of presentation, but not [every presentation has] an object.”<sup>35</sup>

Thus we see that Twardowski’s position in his 1894 habilitation work *Zum Lehre vom Inhalt und Gegenstand der Vorstellungen* (“On the Content and Object of Presentations”) is not just anticipated to a certain degree by Höfler and Meinong’s 1891 *Logik* (§ 6, pp. 6-7), but draws directly on Brentano’s lectures. Twardowski argued that there could not be truly “objectless” presentations, echoing Brentano’s dictum: “There is no presenting without [something] presented. There cannot be an empty presenting” (Brentano, Y 2, p. 54). Hence, seemingly empty presentations, to which no external object would or could correspond, would still always have an “object” too: a merely intentional object, i.e. a non-existent object (Twardowski, 1894, pp. 23 ff.). Then every act would have a content and to every content would correspond an object: “What is presented in the presentation, is its content, what is presented through the presentation, is its object” (Twardowski, 1894, p. 18). However, as proceeds from the quote above, Brentano himself was already explicitly dealing with the paradox that “all presentations present something, but not to all presentations corresponds something” in his own way.

A name designates in a certain way the content of a presentation as such, the immanent object.

In a certain way that which is presented through the content of a presentation.

The first is the meaning of the name.

The second is what the name denominates. Of this we say that it has that name. If it exists, it is the external object of the presentation.

We denominate by way of the meaning.<sup>36</sup>

What can we conclude from all this?

### Sketching a New Approach to Brentano’s Intentionality

With regard to the classical paradox “all presentations present something, but not to all presentations corresponds something”, in some sense, Brentano bites the bullet on this one, as he seems to make the existence of the external world hypothetical to such a degree that the second part becomes trivially true, and insists so emphatically on the correlativity that makes the first part tautological. A better way to resolve this dilemma, might be to take the talk about “perspectives” to the next level, i.e. in some sense following Husserl’s eventual development of phenomenology, but without the constitutional idealism. Also in Brentano’s case we can then both distinguish the two perspectives of internal and external perception on “the object” and at the same time preach the identity of the object as seen from two perspectives. Following Stumpf’s psychology lectures, there is but one act and

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<sup>35</sup> “Jede Vorstellung hat einen Vorstellungsinhalt aber nicht jede einen Gegenstand.” Brentano, PS 76, 58723, where on the same page he also calls such presentations “*Gegenstandslos*”.

<sup>36</sup> Brentano EL 80, 13018 “Der Name bezeichnet in gewisser Weise den Inhalt einer Vorstellung als solcher, den immanenten Gegenstand.

In gewisser Weise das, was durch den Inhalt einer Vorstellung vorgestellt wird.

Der erste ist die Bedeutung des Namens.

Das zweite ist das, was der Name nennt. Von ihm sagen wir, es komme der Name ihm zu. Es ist das, was, wenn es existiert, äußerer Gegenstand der Vorstellung ist.

Man nennt unter Vermittlung der Bedeutung.”

one object: internal perception is immanent in the act of e.g. external perception, not a separate act. While it too goes on the same object, it does so in a different manner.<sup>37</sup>

So the putative external object that we see when we naively follow the “aim” of our acts is presented as transcendently existing (though always with the caveat of “*Wahrnehmung ist Falschnehmung*”): physical phenomena appear as external (“*Die physischen haben das gemein, dass sie äußerlich erscheinen*” Brentano EL 72, 12075) From the perspective of internal perception this object is revealed as “nothing more” than an immanent object with intentional existence, i.e. really existing as a phenomenon. It is an appearance *caused by* an object, but not necessarily a veridical appearance *of* that object.<sup>38</sup> Only from the perspective of internal perception the phenomenal character of our external perceptions is fully revealed. In and with each and every act of external perception I also have an act of internal perception, but not as if a second act of observation would go on the first, but intimately united with it, as essential part of it. The object is the same, the only thing that changes is the perspective. Where external perception naively takes its objects as given (misleading us into a relational model), internal perception reveals every act as correlational with its object, i.e. every object as immanent, as only real in the sense of being a real phenomenon, not as being a mind-independent reality.

Hence, we may perhaps consider Brentano’s theory of intentionality as an incipient and tacit form of transcendentalism (broadly understood), though not, of course, of any form of idealism. It is “transcendentalist” (for lack of a better term) in the deflationary sense that all accounts of intentionality and of the phenomenality of the objects of our mental acts would be transcendentalist: we have no access to objects except as immanent objects that can but have the pretension of reaching something outside of our acts. There are not two objects, one immanent and one transcendent, but merely one object regarded from different perspectives: internal and external perception.<sup>39</sup>

Recall the quote from Brentano’s logic lectures that I reported in the beginning:

Let us consider internal perception, it shows us e.g. presentations - which are real; judging, love, hate - all real. But these are not without correlates: no presentation without a presented, no judging without a judgment. Indeed, these correlates are what is observed directly in internal perception, while the presenting, judging, etc. which are real, are observed indirectly. (Brentano, Y 2, pp. 104 f.)

Now let me try to clarify the position sketched here with an example following Brentano’s description as closely as possible: I look outside and see a red car. In my external perception I have a sensation of red. In my internal perception I have both the act of sensation as well as its correlate. Hence, we have on the one hand “the color red” (as the object of external perception) and on the other “the color red as object of external perception” (in internal perception). Now recall furthermore Brentano’s lectures on descriptive psychology: “inner experience does not show colors, tones, etc. as existing in reality, but rather sensations of colors etc. and hence it shows them as immanent objects

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<sup>37</sup> Stumpf Q11/I, 133 f.: “das innere Bewußtsein ... kein selbständiger Akt, es sei nur ein immanenter. ... Es muß ja das Bewußtsein in anderer Weise gerichtet sein auf das äußere Objekt wie auf das innere. ... Es ist e i n e Vorstellung, direkt gerichtet auf das primäre Objekt, indirekt auf sich selbst”.

<sup>38</sup> See the quote from Brentano’s letter to Zimmermann of 03-01-1890 above.

<sup>39</sup> *Mutatis mutandis*, these would be similar to the phenomenological and the natural attitudes in later Husserl.

of our sensations: as phenomena.”<sup>40</sup> Hence, inner perception does show us the objects of sensation, from its own peculiar perspective, but of course at the very same time, indeed in the very same act, they are also the objects of the act of external perception. So the same red color appears simultaneously as object of external perception (with its *Falschnehmung* as an external reality) and as object of internal perception (with its *Wahrnehmung* as an internal reality).

Nevertheless, this stronger role for the perspectives from which we regard the internal structure of intentional acts should also accommodate the analyses of Antonelli and Sauer who sharply distinguish the correlate from the intentional object.

Brentano object strongly to identifying the “thought object” with the “primary object”:

The “contemplated horse” considered as object would be the object of inner perception, which the thinker perceives whenever he forms a correlative pair consisting of this “contemplated horse” along with his thinking about the horse; for correlatives are such that one cannot be perceived or apprehended without the other. But what are experienced as primary objects, or what are thought universally as primary objects of reason, are never themselves the objects of inner perception. Had I equated “object” with “object of thought”, then I would have had to say that the primary thought relation has no object or content at all. So I protest against this foolishness that has been dreamed up and attributed to me. (Brentano 2009, 53, compare the quotation in Sauer 2006, 4)

Brentano states that “thought horse” is the object of inner perception, while “horse” is the object of external perception. Yet, whenever I externally perceive a horse, my internal perception will show me a correlative unity of act and object, i.e. in this cases of a horse-perception and a perceived horse. While the external perception is not directed at a horse *as thought*, nevertheless from the perspective of internal perception we uncover a “thought horse” in it. Without this “thought horse” it couldn’t be directed at the transcendent horse (whether or not it exist externally or not). So there is just one single object in question here, regarded from two perspectives: as object of the primary act it is the (potentially existing, transcendent) horse, as object of the secondary act it is the (necessarily existing, immanent) thought horse. When Chrudzimski states that “When Hans thinks of a horse, then the horse must immanently inexist in Hans’ mind.” (Chrudzimski 2004, 124) we do have to add, obviously, that the “thought horse” is not a horse, just like a past, future, negated, etc. horse would not be a horse. Brentano claims very correctly that “the presentation of a horse [does] not have “presented horse”, but “horse” as object”, i.e. external perception is directed at unmodified existence. Internal perception, however, perceives the real mental act without modification (a present, individual, etc.), and the correlative intentional object as modified, namely *as thought*. Internal perception cannot ever see horses *simpliciter*, but only presented, remembered, phantasized, etc. horses, i.e. modified horses. However, it could never do so if there were not a primary act that presents objects without modification. The alternative to regarding the unmodified and modified object as one and the same, though regarded from two perspectives, is to stipulate, besides the potential external object, two more objects internally. Indeed, Brentano clarifies that:

I have always held (in agreement with Aristotle) that “horse” and not “contemplated horse” is the immanent object of those thoughts that pertain to horses. Naturally, however, I did say that “horse” is thought or contemplated by us, and that insofar as we do think of it (N.B., insofar as we think of the horse and not of the “contemplated horse”) we have “horse” as (immanent) object. (Brentano 2009, 53)

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<sup>40</sup> Brentano, PS 76 58012-58013. “Die innere Erfahrung zeigt uns nicht Farben, nicht Töne, usw. als in Wirklichkeit bestehende: Sie zeigt uns aber eine Empfindung von Farben usw. und somit diese als immanente Gegenstände unserer Empfindungen: als Phänomene.”

As should be clear by now, the (in)famous intentionality quote from the *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* is not only insufficient, but even misleading regarding Brentano’s theory of intentionality. Like the proponents of the ontological interpretation as well as their critics, in this article I too saw the need to go beyond this single source in order to uncover Brentano’s meaning. Unfortunately, in many cases we do not as of yet have a reliable critical edition of the relevant manuscripts.<sup>41</sup> However, while the various passages I quoted come from a wide variety of contexts, they do add up to a coherent position. One central implication of the interpretation I am advocating would be that, what names refer to (“denominate”) are *not* immanent objects *as such*, i.e. *as* immanent, merely presented object (i.e. objects of internal perception), but the immanent objects *as* transcendent objects, *as if* they existed transcendent’ly (i.e. intentional objects).

The latter claim would then be in line with my transcendentalist interpretation. In the case of e.g. external perception, we cannot make any claims at all about any existence beyond the appearances: “what truly exists, does not appear, and what appears, does not truly exist” (Brentano 1874, 24). All claims of external perception and of the sciences based upon it are putative, presumptive, pretension. External perception does (mistakenly) show us the contents of sensation as properties of objects existing in reality, while internal perception (correctly) shows them as immanent objects, as phenomena. Indeed, the object is intimately “fused” with the act (Brentano 1874, p. 170). In one act with one object, I am also reflectively aware of the act and its correlate. The act of external perception misleads me into thinking this red actually is an external reality (property of a real external object, accident of a substance, etc.). Reflection shows me that it is not. In reflection the correlate of the act is revealed to me as an immanent object, as phenomenon. So at the same time, the same object of sensation is regarded as existing externally and internally, as existing as an external reality and as existing only as an internal reality. From the critical, reflective standpoint of internal perception, when we name the color of the rose “red”, we name the (putative) external object by way of the immanent content (which, as such, we know is really existing as phenomenon), while being aware of the presumption implicit in the act. We cannot name the inaccessible “unpresentable force in nature” and we distinguish the immanent and transcendent object, i.e. we distinguish meaning and reference and name the latter by way of the former. Hence, what is naively accepted by external perception, is revealed in its ambiguous nature by internal perception. This is exactly the inherently transcendental function of intentionality: that its reach exceeds its grasp. In the vast majority of the cases,<sup>42</sup> including external perception, we only have access to the intended objects through signs, i.e. through improper presentations: “We improperly present that of which we have no precisely corresponding presentation and often can have none.” (Brentano, EL 80/13060, translation from Rollinger 2009a, pp. 81 f.)

In the *Psychologie* Brentano had already pointed out 1) that external perception actually isn’t really a case of veridical perception (Brentano, 1874, p. 120; 1995, p. 70), 2) external perception is exactly like a dream, “without reality that would correspond to them” (Brentano, 1874, pp. 230 f.; 1995, p. 136), 3) physical phenomena are “signs of something real”, which does not appear itself. Hence, all extra-mental reality is only accessible through symbolic presentations (Ierna 2012). This position is reasserted also in his lectures on descriptive psychology:

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<sup>41</sup> On the reasons for this predicament, also see Schuhmann 2004, p. 277.

<sup>42</sup> Including God, higher numbers, and other minds, see Brentano EL 72 242-243.

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Is the burning of the lamp immediately certain? Only through inferences can we assume such, the appearance [*Schein*] itself that I have, does not justify it. Our appearance is only a sign [*Unser Schein ist nur ein Zeichen*], that is not yet that outer [thing] (Brentano Q 10)

Not only do the causes of our sensations not appear, they are to all effects “unpresentable”: Brentano speaks of an “*unvorstellbare Kraft*” (Brentano, 1874, p. 161; 1995, p. 94). Therefore the claim that “Der intentionale bzw. immanente Gegenstand des Denkens ist nicht das gedachte, sondern das wirkliche A.” (Antonelli 2000, p. 107) cannot be straightforwardly true. The “unpresentable force in nature” cannot be an “intentional object”, the phenomenon cannot be identical with its cause. This is more extensively discussed in his lectures on “Selected Questions from Psychology and Aesthetics”:

[Inner perception] shows us psychical phenomena, e.g. a judgment, a will, etc.

And all of these share the reference to an immanent object, e.g. desiring to a desired, denial to a denied, etc.

The desired as desired is in the desirer.

Although we, when we perceive our desiring, acknowledge the immanent existence of the desired as desired, we would not say that we perceive the desired as such, but only that we perceive our desiring, whose correlate it is. This correlate is simply not real. (as little as a past, hoped reality [would be] a reality)<sup>43</sup> (Brentano PS 78, 59568-59569)

Brentano then proceeds to repeat the external perception isn't perception in the proper sense of the word, and neither are its putative “objects” actually objects in the same sense as the objects of internal perception. We cannot distinguish between external perception and hallucination, so we never have immediate evidence of the external world. He again repeats his position of the *Psychologie* that physical phenomena are signs (Brentano PS 78, 59576) for their cause, which is unknown, which is not the object of the presentation (Brentano PS 78, 59577: “*kein wirklicher eigentlicher Gegenstand der Äußerer Wahrnehmungsvorstellung ... sondern nur eine Ursache der Vorstellung, ein in sich unbekanntes?*”).

Now one might suppose that the position of Antonelli and Sauer would at least work for sensations, which Brentano defined as “fundamental presentations of real physical phenomena” (Brentano PS 76, 58187, “*eine fundamentale Vorstellung von realen physischen Phänomenen*”), so of non-psychical, non-modified (no negations, inactuals, etc.), and non-superimposed (no general, unintuitive, contradictory, etc.). However, even this is highly debatable, since Brentano claims very explicitly that e.g. in the case of color, there can be no unperceived color, it can only exist in the perception as immanent object, as phenomenon (“*Da die Farbe nur als Phänomen besteht, so ist es klar, dass es keine Farbe gibt, die nicht wahrgenommen wird*” Brentano EL 72, 12072). This seems generalisable to all other sensations as well. Sensations always have quality, intensity, and spatial localisation (Brentano PS 76, 58202) and we have the tendency to project the sensed qualities onto their causes, i.e. onto the putative external objects, as if they were their properties (Brentano PS 76, 58360-58361):

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<sup>43</sup> “[Die innere Wahrnehmung] zeigt uns psychische Phänomene z.B. ein Urteil, ein Wollen, und dergleichen.

Und diesen allen ist [...] gemeinsam die Beziehung auf ein immanentes Object, z.B. Begehren auf ein Begehrtes, Verneinung auf ein Geleugnetes, und dergleichen. Das Begehrte als Begehrtes ist in dem Begehrenden.

Obwohl wir nun, indem wir unser Begehren wahrnehmen, die immanente Existenz des Begehrten als Begehrten erkennen, so werden wir doch nicht wohl sagen dass wir das Begehrte als solches wahrnehmen, sondern nur das wir unser Begehren wahrnehmen, dessen Correlat es ist. Dieses Correlat ist eben nicht real. (so wenig wie eine gewesene, gehoffte Realität eine Realität.)”

Even when we have been better informed by science, we cannot free ourselves from the impulse to the illusion and detach the subjective quality of sensation from the presented object again.<sup>44</sup> (Brentano PS 76, 58361)

Thus the transcendent object, an external reality, never becomes part of any intentional act, it is neither one of the relata (since intentionality isn't a relation anyway), nor is it one of the correlates. Hence it is neither the intended nor the intentional object. What is the intended and intentional object, and is revealed as such and as correlate in reflection, is always only the immanent object. “Object” isn't even properly applicable to the “unpresentable force in nature”. The act is the only thing that is both real and existing, while the object (the only object in the proper sense) always exists, but is not transcendently real: it is a phenomenon. The external “object” only enters the equation as the putative correspondent, not of any act, but of the semantical sign, as *denotatum* (see Ierna 2012 for a more extensive discussion on Brentano and semiotics).<sup>45</sup> Such acts are of course improper, symbolical, and their objects, can be considered from two standpoints. First-intentionally, we fall prey to the naive assumption of their reality, second-intentionally, we see them for what they really are, i.e. as phenomena. In internal perception we also see the semantic character, the sign-character of the intentional object and hence its transcendent reference, its nature of a surrogate. For instance, a sensation of red is symbolic insofar as it acts merely as a sign in a symbolic presentation of its stimulus. If I take the sensation of red as a sign for something else, then it does not have as content what its name means, but refers beyond itself, symbolically. We properly present the signs, and improperly present through the signs.<sup>46</sup>

This perspectival account also solves the problem of properly and improperly distinct parts of mental acts. The correlates are proper parts of the act, but what the intentional object transcendently refers to is only improperly part of the act. That is to say, single sensations together form a whole which presumptively lies beyond them. We properly intend each of the single features, but not the whole, which is presented symbolically. The external object putatively presented through it cannot be said to be part of the act. The unpresentable force in nature certainly cannot be properly intended, but only *per accidens*.<sup>47</sup>

All our transcendently directed acts have this structure of improper intentions of ambiguous objects.

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<sup>44</sup> “Selbst wenn wir durch die Wissenschaft etwas besser belehrt sind, können wir uns nicht von dem Drange zu der Illusion emancipieren und die subjective Empfindungsqualität von dem vorgestellten Object wieder loslösen.”

<sup>45</sup> In EL 80 he claimed that the external object is what is named, while the internal is the meaning, and we “denominate by way of the meaning”. In EL 74, the *Psychognostic Sketch*, 12787, he then says that names are closely connected to surrogate presentations, i.e. symbolic, improper presentations, and that we “denominate by way of the surrogate presentations”.

<sup>46</sup> Compare Höfler and Meinong 1890, p. 7.

<sup>47</sup> Brentano gives the classical example of “seeing” the son of Diares, who is actually only seen *per accidens*. It is not a real perception, but only an αἴσθησις κατὰ συμβεβηκός. See Brentano, PS 78, 59574 ff.



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#### **From the Houghton Library, Harvard University, Franz Clemens Brentano Compositions, 1870-1917 (MS Ger 230):**

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