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The two Theories of Intentionality in Brentano and the Program of *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*

To the memory of Marius Dumitru (1982–2014)

1. Preliminary observations

Pages 88 f. from Franz Brentano's *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (1874) are the classical *locus* of current theories of intentionality.¹ It is here that Brentano reintroduces the problem of intentionality into contemporary philosophy, by saying that “every mental phenomenon is characterized by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called *die intentionale (auch wohl mentale) Inexistenz eines Gegenstandes*, (the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object),” or what he “might call [...] *die Richtung auf ein Objekt* (the direction towards an object),” and “*die Beziehung auf einen Inhalt*”, which I translate “relation to a content” and consider synonymous with the expression “intentional relation”² (Brentano (1995a), 88 f.). In what follows I propose an interpretation of intentionality in Brentano according to which the intentionality passage (IP), cited above, can be read through the lens of two different theories; I then claim that one of these theories performs a very important task in his 1874 work.

Before I present this thesis, I wish to make the following observation: one of the fundamental presuppositions of this study is the idea that the object to which the mental act is related in the first instance is the immanent object (Ebd., 180, 197 f.; Brentano (1995b), 139). As a result, in full agreement with Brentano, when I discuss the relation to or the direction

towards an object, I shall first consider this immanent object, and only later approach the relationship between the mental act and its immanent object, on the one hand, and the extra-mental object presented by the immanent object, on the other.

This basic idea can also be expressed in the following way: the theory of intentionality as presented in the IP is not primarily a theory of the way in which mental acts, together with their immanent objects, are related to the extra-mental objects presented by them. It is, rather, first of all a theory about *the most salient distinguishing feature separating mental phenomena from physical phenomena*. For Brentano, the clarification of this aspect play an important role in the establishment of psychology as an empirical science, because it thus allows (i) *the delimitation* of the latter's research domain, the world of mental phenomena, from the research domain of natural sciences, the world of physical phenomena; and (ii) the creation of a framework for *ordering and classifying* mental phenomena into their three fundamental classes: presentations, judgements, and emotional phenomena. As will be shown, the form of the relation to the immanent object does not only constitute the fundamental criterion for delimiting the mental from the physical, but also serves to delimit the main classes of mental phenomena³ (Brentano (1995a), 44, 50 f., 88 f., 98 ff., 197 f.).

This allows us to distinguish between two theories of intentionality: (i) the theory of intentionality as a conception of *the most salient distinctive feature of the mental with respect to the physical* (IT1); and (ii) the theory of intentionality as a way of *relating mental acts to the extra-mental objects presented by immanent objects*, be they sensible or abstract, existent or non-existent (IT2).⁴ In this context, one of the central theses of this study is the following: although the account of intentionality in the 1874 work can be valorised from the perspective of both theories, it still *fundamentally* constitutes an example of IT1. This, however, does not mean that the IT1 under discussion cannot be valorised from the perspective of IT2. By contrast, in what follows I shall put forward arguments in favour of the idea that the 1874 IT1 contains certain elements the clarification and development of which could constitute an example of IT2, namely the fact that the immanent object is permanently conceived of by Brentano as presenting an extra-mental object. In 1874 Brentano does not elaborate the IT2 involved in his empirical psychology, and when he really questions himself regarding the problem of the object to which, in the last instance, psychical acts are related,

after 1904 he offers a solution that entirely eliminates immanent objects as objects of primary relation of psychical acts.⁵ Despite these points, I shall defend in what follows the thesis that in the IT₁ of his 1874 work, a clear distinction is made, at the level of the act of sensation, between the content of the presentation and the extra-mental object presented by it.

The main elements of IT₁ are the mental act, with its relation to or direction towards a content (immanent object) proprietary to it, on the one hand, and the immanent object or the content, on the other. If we interpret this last object as being in agreement with the topic of this study, namely as an immanent object of the mental act of sensation and thus as a physical phenomenon, then, on the basis of what is said in the 1874 work, two perspectives for approaching a physical phenomenon can be discerned: (i) its correlation to a mental act that contains it; and (ii) its correlation to the extra-mental object or its physical cause, the sign of which it is (Brentano (1995a), 9 f., 19, 88 f.). It follows that one can talk about the double status of a physical phenomenon in the *Psychology* of 1874, namely the physical phenomenon (i) as the *content of sensation* and (ii) as the *sign of a physical cause* whose action on the sense organs gives rise to the presence of the phenomenon in question in consciousness. This last aspect also indicates how one can go from IT₁ to IT₂, because conceiving of the content of sensation as a sign points, from the beginning, to the extra-mental object for which it stands, namely its physical cause. From my point of view, this fact has two-fold significance: (i) it shows that in the 1874 work the distinction between the immanent object and the extra-mental object presented through the immanent object is achieved at the level of the act of sensation; and (ii) it shows that the act of sensation is connected not only to the physical phenomenon it contains, but also to the extra-mental object or physical cause to which this phenomenon refers. The clarification of this last relationship can thus lead us from IT₁ to IT₂. However, as we have seen, the establishment of psychology as a science presupposed for Brentano, in 1874, a clear delimitation of the features of mental phenomena from the features of physical phenomena contained by the former. But in this delimitation a clear distinction between the content of sensation and its cause is entailed.

The above points show that the presupposition of this study, namely that mental acts are oriented, at a basic level of analysis, towards their immanent objects, has a strictly methodological nature: the desire to establish psychology as an empirical science through the separation of the mental

from the physical led Brentano to orient himself towards the specific features of the two classes of phenomena, both present in consciousness.⁶ In this context, Brentano clearly recognizes that a physical phenomenon is a sign of the physical cause to which it points and that is presented by it (Ebd., 9). Furthermore, he does this without valorising this relation from the perspective of a theory of the distinction between the content and the extra-mental objects of a presentation.⁷

Although I shall occasionally refer to IT₂, this study will be concerned in the main with the essential aspects of IT₁. It will be helpful to note some key expressions of the language of Brentanian IT₁, which are as follows: “the intentional (or maybe mental) inexistence of an object,” “the immanent objectivity (*Gegenständlichkeit*),” “to exist as an object (objectively) in something,” “to exist immanently as an object,” the object is “present (*gegenwärtig*)” in the mind, “the mental phenomena contain an object intentionally within themselves,” “the relation (*die Beziehung*) to a content,” and “the relation to the immanent object” (Brentano (1995a), 81, 88 f. 197 f.).

Unlike these expressions, which clearly support IT₁, in the 1874 work there are comparatively few expressions as clearly in favour of IT₂. Rather, expressions that can be cited in its support are ambiguous, not least because they can be interpreted as just as easily supporting IT₁; such as: “the relation to an object (*die Beziehung auf ein Objekt*)”, the “direction towards an object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a thing)” (Ebd., VII, 88) and the phrases formed with the verb “to appear” used in such expressions: “[...] something appears in consciousness [...]” or “We speak of a presentation whenever something appears to us” (Ebd., 81, 198). Paraphrasing Twardowski,⁸ we can say that in this last case the term “something” nicely indicates the ambiguity of the term “object” in Brentano’s *Psychology*, because it can be understood either as what appears to consciousness as a content of the presentation, or as what appears to consciousness as an extra-mental object presented through the content of the presentation. The distinction between the pictorial image (a photograph or a painting) of the Salzburg Cathedral and the real Salzburg Cathedral, for example, illustrates this distinction. As we can see, within this last interpretation such expressions point to something outside consciousness, outside the act-immanent object correlation, because they introduce the problem of the relation between the immanent object of the act and the extra-mental object presented through it. The same problem is also raised by the relative clause: “... (which

is not to be understood here as meaning a thing)”, because it suggests that the object towards which the psychical act is directed is not necessarily real, and thus it points to the relation between the immanent object and the object presented through it, which is central for IT2. For our present purposes, we should exclude, from the beginning, the possibility that for Brentano psychical acts directly relate to extra-mental objects without the help of content. I interpret the relative clause under discussion as meaning that the immanent objects towards which acts are oriented do not only present real things, but can just as well present unreal things; for instance imaginary beings.⁹ The above-mentioned relative clause does not present the problem of the relation between an act and its immanent object, but rather the problem of the status of an immanent object and of the relation between it and the object presented through it; this shows, on the one hand, that IT2 is implicitly contained in IT1 and, on the other, that the expression in question finds its place in the language of IT2, instead of that of IT1. However, if we interpret this as being in agreement with our starting point, namely that of the relation to or the direction towards the immanent object, then the expression of which the relative clause is part takes the following form: “direction towards an [immanent] object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a thing).”

In the last section I shall present supplementary arguments in favour of the hypothesis according to which IT2 is a clarification and development of IT1. For this purpose, I shall refer to a text from the logic lectures (EL80), given by Brentano five years before the publication of *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, in which he approaches, this time explicitly, the relationship between the act and both its immanent object and the object presented through this object.

Before approaching these problems, I wish, however, to make an observation about the perspective I take in what follows. This paper was motivated by an interest in the historical sources of Brentano’s thinking. For this reason I start by examining the role his conception of intentionality plays *in the program of his empirical psychology*, namely the *separation* of the realm of the psychical from the realm of the physical and of the main classes of psychical phenomena. This approach differs considerably from the way in which Brentano is read by many contemporary scholars, who seem to me to be preoccupied with the problem of intentionality from the perspective of contemporary philosophy of mind. The aims of this paper are not, there-

fore, aligned with those of the contemporary mainstream, but to respect the program of Brentano's psychology.

2. The theory of intentionality from 1874 is not primarily a theory of the relation between an act, its content, and the extra-mental object, but a theory about what separates the mental realm from the physical realm

In what follows, I shall put forward arguments in support of the idea that the theory of intentionality from 1874 is primarily *a theory of the distinction between psychical and physical phenomena*. This theory can be valorised from the perspective of IT₂, but its purpose is not to clarify the relation between the contents of consciousness and the extra-mental objects to which they refer. Rather its purpose is *to circumscribe the field of research of psychology in relation to the domain of natural sciences*. Thus, we touch upon another modern aspect of Brentano's psychology that has been more or less neglected by existing exegesis, and which connects intentionality with the program of the *Psychology* of 1874.

A letter addressed to Anton Marty, the inaugural lecture from the University of Vienna, *On the reasons for the discouragement in the philosophical field* (*Über die Gründe der Entmutigung auf philosophischem Gebiete*), and the work from 1874 indicate that during this period Brentano paid great attention to Auguste Comte's program for the "positivation" of science.¹⁰ In agreement with this project, Brentano thinks that the sciences of nature can serve as a model for the edification of the sciences of the mental, due to the success they were enjoying in the modern age. For this reason he operates, in the book of 1874, with a definition of science that is applicable both to psychology and to the sciences of nature: science as an investigation of particularities, and also of the laws of succession and the co-existence of physical and mental phenomena (Brentano (1995a), 10 f., 18 f., 44 f.).

Another important idea to which Brentano pays special attention is Comte's classification of the sciences. As is well known, Comte grounds this classification in the thesis that there is an order in phenomena – this starts with the simplest phenomena, studied by mathematics, and, increases in complexity, finally reaching the social phenomena. Based on this idea, Comte advances a classification of the sciences according to which mathematics occupies the first position. In accordance with the order of phenome-

na, mathematics is followed by astronomy, physics, chemistry, physiology, and social physics.¹¹ It is interesting to note that for Comte, psychology belonged to the metaphysical stage of the spirit, and for this reason he replaces it, within the field of physiology, with the positive science of phrenology.¹² Brentano then assumes this scheme, but subjects it to significant change by introducing psychology where Comte located sociology. Brentano classifies the sciences as follows: mathematics, physics, chemistry, physiology, and psychology (Brentano (1995a), 23 f.). Like Comte, he emphasises that each class of phenomena specific to a science is built on the anterior class, and it makes possible the next. But unlike Comte, he identifies a ‘cut’ in the classification of the sciences, since for him only the phenomena of physics, chemistry, and physiology can be considered developments on those of the preceding classes. However, the mental phenomena appear to be something completely different:

But the result of a more careful comparison and an analysis of all pertinent facts certainly seems to us to prove that much more information about physiological phenomena is to be expected from chemical phenomena than from physiological phenomena about mental phenomena. The difference between physiological processes and chemical and physical processes really seems to be only that physiological processes are more complex. [...] We can hardly say the same thing of the concept of life when we apply it to the physiological and psychical realms. On the contrary, if we turn our attention from the external world to the inner, we find ourselves, as it were, in a new realm. The phenomena are absolutely heterogeneous, and even analogies either forsake us completely or take on a very vague and artificial character. It was for this very reason that we separated the psychical and physical sciences as the main branches of empirical science in our earlier discussion of the fundamental divisions of that realm. (Ebd., 50 f.)

If we supplement this quote with what Brentano says at the beginning of the second book of his *Psychology*, namely that “all the data of our consciousness are divided into two great classes – the class of physical and the class of mental phenomena” (Ebd., 77), and with the statement that “the feature which best characterizes mental phenomena is undoubtedly their intentional inexistence” (Ebd., 98), we are led in a wholly different direction – no longer that of a theory of relating mental acts to the extra-mental ob-

jects presented by immanent objects. Here we find that intentionality is the most pregnant feature distinguishing the mental from the physical realm, broadly understood as the realm of physical, chemical, and physiological phenomena. The fact that physical phenomena are conceived of as contents of psychological acts of sensation (Ebd., 98 ff.) allows us to establish the distinctive notes separating the two fields, and on this basis to distinguish two classes of phenomena, both existing in consciousness. The distinction, fundamental for IT₂, between the content of consciousness – be it a physical phenomenon or a signification – and the extra-mental object for which it stands, is not explicitly taken into account here. It is implied, however, in the way in which Brentano conceives of physical phenomena.

If we want to consider what Brentano states in the IP from the point of view of IT₂, then it must be acknowledged that this quote reveals only an *incomplete and fragmentary* view of such a theory. Approaching it from this latter point of view, we might say that only those elements of IT₂ that can serve the purpose of distinguishing the mental from the physical realm – namely the mental act and its phenomenal content – are highlighted here. The manner in which the mental relates to the extra-mental world of physical causes is not explicitly accounted for. As mentioned at the start of this paper, this should not make it impossible to reconstruct the coordinates of the version of IT₂ in the work of 1874, i.e., the coordinates of the theory that explains *how the mental act and its immanent object refer to the extra-mental object*. By contrast, the fact that Brentano conceives of physical phenomena not only as phenomenal contents of the act of sensation, but also as signs of the action of a physical cause upon the sense organs, offers sufficient elements for a reconstruction of the coordinates of IT₂, at least at the level of the act of sensation. Nevertheless, *the quote about intentionality was not written for this purpose, but first and foremost in order to emphasize the most salient distinguishing features of the psychical in contrast to the physical*.

I shall now put forward arguments in support of this idea, starting with the following considerations:

Twardowski published *On the Content and Object of Presentations* in 1894. In this work, he takes over an idea from Höfler's *Logic*, written together with Meinong, and with this intends to confront the ambiguity of the term "object" in Brentano's psychology. To do this, he distinguishes between: (i) the presented object as a content of the act or as an immanent

object, and (ii) the presented object as an object present to consciousness through the immanent object (Twardowski (1894), 1 f., 8–17).

Twardowski's distinction refers to a real problem with Brentanian psychology, namely to the fact that Brentano does not explicitly explain the relation between the mental act, its immanent object, and the object presented by the immanent object. Furthermore, Brentano is not trying, in 1874, to highlight the differences between the manner in which the distinction act–immanent object–object presented by the immanent object works in relation to sensorial and nominal presentations. From my point of view, the goal of classification that underlies this investigation into the distinction between mental and physical phenomena decisively supports the approach presented in the 1874 work. At the same time, it does not encourage other research perspectives, for example, the explicit approach that is implied by an IT2, i.e., clarification of the relation between the act, the immanent object, and the extra-mental object. To put it in another way, the decisive question of the 1874 work is: what distinguishes a mental from a physical phenomenon – and *not* how does a mental phenomenon and its content relate to the extra-mental world? The two questions are distinct and should not be confused, for they belong to different research horizons and are driven by different interests.

As we have seen, the question regarding the distinction between the two classes of phenomena by no means excludes, but rather implies the question of how the mental phenomena that we call sensations relate to the world of physical causes. In other words, it implies a distinction between the immanent object (phenomenal content or physical phenomenon) and the object presented through this content at the level of sensation. In order to make this clear, I would like to point out that *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* offers a clear and indubitable, modern answer to the above-mentioned question. According to the explanation it offers, which is consistent with the physiology of its time, *a firm line must be drawn between the physical phenomenon, that is, the immanent object of sensation constituted by the primary and secondary qualities of modern philosophy* (perceived spatial forms, but also the seen colour, the smelled odour, etc.), *and the physical cause that produced it and which is symbolised by it* (Brentano (1995a), 19, 98 ff.). This physical cause consists in processes of molecular vibration, impact, and pressure triggered by physical bodies, and vibrations that act on the sensory receptors, stimulate the afferent nerves, and produce certain

sensations – the seen colour, the felt warmth, etc. (Ebd., 47). These sensory qualities exist as such only in consciousness; they “have only a phenomenal and intentional existence” (Ebd., 92), as Brentano states, and any attempt to think about them as real properties of things leads to contradictory results (Ebd., 93 f.). Sensory qualities are, for this reason, signs of their causes or of their physical forces, and not an accurate image of those causes. But their nature as signs and, more generally, the often repeated Brentanian thesis about the falsity of external perception that considers sensorial qualities to be real, constitutes no obstacle for the modern science of nature.

On the basis of Brentano’s remarks about Comte, one could say that the main focus of the science of nature is not that of searching beyond physical phenomena in order to see whether or not they exist in reality, but of assuming from the very beginning their phenomenal status.¹³ In this framework, the science of nature does not purport to discover the absolute structure of the physical world, but contents itself with attributing to that world certain forces, for which it establishes the laws of succession and co-existence.¹⁴ These laws at the same time govern the succession and co-existence of the physical phenomena produced by the action of these forces on the sense organs. Looking at things from the perspective of such phenomena, one could say that the discourse on phenomena, regarding the laws according to which they co-exist and succeed one another, is simultaneously a discourse on the forces that produce these phenomena, and about the laws governing them. In other words, according to Brentano, we can be talking about physical phenomena but actually mean their causes (Brentano (1995a), 98 ff.). Placed in the terms of the act–content–object (presented by the content) distinction, central to IT₂, this idea can be expressed as follows: although psychical acts of sensation are characterized by the immanence of a phenomenal content, this is not the final point of relation of the acts, because the content leads, further on, to the physical cause for which it stands. This clarification of the character of signs of physical phenomena, as phenomena pointing to the physical causes that produce them, leads from the correlation sensory act–physical phenomenon as an immanent object to the correlation physical phenomenon–physical cause as an extra-mental object symbolized through it (Ebd., 88 f., 19). In this way, it becomes clear how the analysis of the status of physical phenomena in Brentanian psychology leads from an instance of IT₁ to an instance of IT₂, and also how IT₁ can be considered as a fragmentary or partial IT₂; or, conversely, how an IT₂

can be considered to be the IT1 that was developed and thoroughly clarified – in 1874 –, at least at the level of sensory acts.

The above shows that while the primary object of relation of the act of sensation is the immanent object, it is still the case that the 1874 Brentanian IT1 does not confront the difficulty of transcending the world of consciousness and of coming into contact with objects in the world.¹⁵ In the framework of Brentanian psychology, this problem is posed on two levels: that of the perception of the common person and that of the perception of the scientist. The common person does not face such a problem because she or he is dealing from the start with objects in the world and considers the proprieties of things to exist as they appear to her (Brentano (1995a), 93). Neither does the scientist face the above-mentioned problem, because she or he distinguishes from the start between the physical phenomenon and its cause and knows that phenomena abide by the same laws as their causes (Ebd., 19, 98 f.; Brentano (1995b), 92 ff.).

In conclusion, from what has been stated thus far, it can be seen that the clear and explicit distinction between psychical and physical phenomena implies a distinction between the immanent object of the act of sensation (the sensory quality, the physical phenomenon) and the physical force or the object for which it stands. For this reason, we can say that a distinction between the content of the act and its extra-mental object was made in the 1874 *Psychology* at least at the level of the act of sensation.

3. The distinction psychical act–content–extra-mental object in the Logic Lecture and the IT2

In *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, the problem of nominal presentation is not dealt with in enough detail to resolve the problem of the relationship between content and extra-mental object. However, the lectures on deductive and inductive logic given by Brentano at Würzburg University in 1869 show that the distinction implied in his analysis of sensation in the 1874 work, i.e. the distinction between content and extra-mental object, is clearly made five years before the publication of his *Psychology*. In one of these lectures, Brentano says that:

The name designates in a way the *content* of a presentation as such, that is, the immanent object; in another way it designates *that which is presented by the content of a presentation*. The *former* is the meaning of the name. The *latter* is what the name names. About this we say the name belongs to it. It is that which is the external object of the presentation, if it exists. We name by means of the meaning.¹⁶ (EL 80.13.018)

The quoted passage clearly shows that when the context demanded it, Brentano knew how to make a clear distinction between the psychical act, the immanent object or its content, and the extra-mental object presented through this content. According to this text, the extra-mental object is presented through the content or immanent object of the act. As a consequence, the act of nominal presentation is related to the extra-mental object through signification, as its content, as the act of sensory presentation is related to the physical object whose action upon the sense organs gives rise to its apparition in consciousness, precisely through its phenomenal content. In both cases, the act of presentation is related to the extra-mental object via the immanent object or the content presenting the extra-mental object for which it stands.

At this point, we see again how one can go from a theory of intentionality as a theory of distinctions between psychical and physical phenomena (IT1) to a theory of intentionality as a theory of relating mental acts to the extra-mental objects presented by immanent objects (IT2). The connection between them is the immanent object's having a double status, which can therefore be interpreted from the perspective of both theories: IT1 approaches it as content of the psychical act and sets out to establish a distinction between psychical and physical phenomena considered as objects immanent to such acts,¹⁷ and not as extra-mental physical objects. In turn, IT2 interprets the immanent object either as a sign of a physical object, as a cause (the case of sensation), or as a meaning which presents extra-mental objects (the case of nominal presentation). IT2 thus relates psychical acts to extra-mental objects via immanent objects. As I have argued, IT2 explicitly clarifies the relation between the immanent object and the extra-mental object correlated to it, a relation implicitly presupposed by IT1.¹⁸ The main goal of *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* was not, however, to clarify this relation, but to make obvious the distinctive features separating the two classes of phenomena, both present in consciousness. The section

quoted from the lectures on logic maintains the same perspective, which centres on the psychical act from the IP. Here, even more than in his 1874 *Psychology*, Brentano sheds light on these distinctions, starting from the act and from its relation to the object (the relation to the immanent object and the extra-mental object); yet he places less emphasis on the relation between meaning, as an immanent object in consciousness, and the object presented to consciousness.¹⁹

The text cited clearly shows how Brentano distinguished, in the logic lectures, between the nominal presentation *qua* act, between the signification *qua* content or immanent object, and the object presented through the immanent object. As a consequence, Brentano offers here a characterization of presentation that explains from the outset how psychical acts, with their contents, relate to extra-mental objects; something that constitutes an IT2. As I have shown, the distinctions involved in this model of intentionality can also be seen in the way Brentano treats sensations in the 1874 work, on the condition that we read his work devoted to this problem from the perspective of the distinction act–immanent object–object presented through this object, and not only that of act–immanent object.

If we now consider the quote in the logic lectures from the perspective of the IP, it must be concluded that from the distinctions clearly traced in this text only the distinction between the psychical act and its content is important – this not being a physical phenomenon anymore, but a meaning. As a consequence, according to the IP the question we should take up is the following: what are the features distinguishing the psychical act of nominal presentation from its meaning as an immanent object, and not how does this act relate to the object presented through its content? If we take into account the fact that the immanent object presents the extra-mental object, it can be observed that the elements involved in the first question, the act and the immanent object, are sufficient for addressing the second. This, however, demands, on the one hand, a change in focus and, on the other, a consideration of the immanent object not only as a content of the act, but also as an object presenting an extra-mental object.

Although the distinction between the psychical act, the immanent object, and the object presented through the immanent object, was extremely important for Brentano's students and the philosophy of the 20th century in general, this is not the distinction that Brentano was attempting to evince or clarify in the IP. Rather, he was concerned with the distinction between

psychical and physical phenomena. As I have observed, achieving this distinction was of paramount importance for his psychology because (i) it allowed the separation of the psychical from the physical; (ii) it allowed psychology to aspire to the status that natural sciences had already reached, the status of an empirical science; and (iii) it thus contributed to the establishment of a new philosophy guided by theoretical interest and using a method in accordance with the nature of phenomena.²⁰ This last point is especially significant because it shows how the program of the 1874 *Psychology* is connected to the intentional relation and how Brentano's program led him to accord special weight to the analysis of physical phenomena and their features. In addition, the same feature of intentionality allowed for the separation of the main classes of psychical phenomena – something that constituted another major task of his psychology. Moreover, if we consider the way in which the distinction between the content and the object of presentation was achieved in the Brentano School, namely through the writings of Meinong, Höfler, and especially Twardowski, it was surely the distinction between the act and its immanent object offered in the 1874 *Psychology* that made possible the distinction between the content and the extra-mental object almost 20 years later on the part of his students.²¹ In any case, as we have seen, this distinction only makes explicit a relationship already present at the level of sensory acts in the 1874 *Psychology* and approached as such in the 1869/70 logic lectures.

The last argument that I wish to make in favour of this idea is the following: In the first chapter of his 1874 work, Brentano seems to think that the empirical psychology he set out to establish can found the practical disciplines of logic, ethics, and aesthetics. The distinction he achieves between the act and the immanent object – mainly as a distinction between psychical and physical phenomena – constitutes such a foundation, which was to be harnessed by the disciplines in question. This understanding means that one possible explanation for his very brief confrontation of the problem of nominal presentation in 1874 is that its treatment was reserved for a science, the logic, which empirical psychology was supposed to found only later. But in order to do this, empirical psychology must be itself founded upon the task of achieving a distinction between its research domain – the world of psychical phenomena – and the research domain of natural sciences – the world of physical phenomena. Seeing things from this perspective, we can conclude that nominal presentation could be approached only after

achieving this primary distinction. From my point of view, this suggests that analysis of the problem of intentionality in the 1874 work must take into account the program and the goals of this work as formulated by Brentano at the time he was writing.²²

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Notes

- 1 Brentano, F., (1874a), *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkte*. Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 115 f. / Brentano, F., (1995a). *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*. Eds. Kraus, O. and L. McAlister, L., trans. Rancurello, A. C. et al. London: Routledge (all parenthetical page numbers refer to this edition). In this edition the expressions “die *Beziehung auf einen Inhalt*” and “die *Beziehung zum Objekt*” were translated as “reference to a content” and “reference to an object”. Despite this, in what follows I shall adhere to the way in which B. Müller translates the expression “die *Beziehung*,” and I shall consistently replace the above-mentioned translations with “relation to a content” and “relation to an object” (see Brentano, F., (1982/1995b), *Descriptive Psychology*. Ed. and trans. Müller, B. London: Routledge, 23 ff. *et passim*).
- 2 In the EL 80 *Logik* manuscript, used by Brentano as a text for the *Deduktive und Induktive Logik* lecture during the winter semester 1869/70 (and recently made accessible on the internet by Robin Rollinger), Brentano characterizes and separates the main classes of psychological phenomena strictly on the basis of their relationship with the immanent object, without in any way referring to the intentional inexistence of their object: “1. All psychological phenomena have in common a *relation to a content*. This distinguishes them from any other phenomenon. 2. This relation to a content is a diverse one. According to its main features, three classes of psychical phenomena can be distinguished: *presenting* (where something always appears), *judging* (where something is permanently accepted or rejected, affirmed or denied), *loving or hating ...*” (“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 ...*)” (Brentano, F. *Logik* (Spring 2011 edition). Rollinger, R. (ed.) URL = <<http://gandalf.uib.no/Brentano/texts/el/logik/norm/>> (henceforth EL80); EL80. 13.003). This shows us that the work, due to which the problem of intentionality was reintroduced into contemporary philosophy, is not that in which Brentano first defined psychical phenomena on the basis of their relation to a content. In light of his manuscripts, newly accessible to us, it can be said that this had already been achieved around 1870, in the manuscript of the lectures on deductive and inductive logic, for instance. This fact, however, does not exclude the possibility that this idea appeared in another, earlier manuscript of his lectures. At any rate, it is important to mention that both in the aforementioned logic lectures, as well as in the *Psychology* of 1874, the context in which he treats psychical phenomena played a decisive role in establishing the perspective from which he approached the relation to a content. In the logic lectures, Brentano is interested in the separation of the main classes of psychical phenomena: presentations, judgements, and emotional phenomena, because the first two classes of phenomena are extremely important for the logical investigations, especially for the idea that judging is a type of intentional relation fundamentally different from presenting (EL80.13.004). On the other hand, in the 1874 work, this issue, while important, constitutes only a subsequent stage of his psychological research, chiefly occupied with separating its research domain – the world of psychical phenomena – from the research domain of natural science – the world of physical phenomena. For this purpose, Brentano will not only refer to the relation to a content, as he does in the lectures on logic, but will also discuss the features of the object contained by the psychical act. If we take into consideration the fact that physical phenomena are contents or immanent objects existing intentionally and phenomenally in psychical acts, then by bringing into discussion the relation between psychical acts and immanent objects, we explicitly name the two poles: psychical and physical phenomena – the explicit distinguishing of which is one of the major tasks of empirical psychology (see *infra*).

- 3 I shall not go into detail about this problem here. I only mention that Brentano believed that German Idealism constituted the last phase of philosophical decay in the modern era and considered himself a *regenerator philosophiae*. His goal was to contribute to the inauguration of a new era of philosophical rebirth, an era characterized by the dominance of theoretical interest and by using a method conforming to the nature of phenomena. If we take into account the fact that psychology was one of the fundamental disciplines of this philosophy, we can distinguish two layers – the significance of which is revealed by the Brentanian gesture of separating psychical phenomena from physical phenomena on the basis of intentionality: the division of the world of phenomena on the basis of intentionality first of all contributes to the establishment of empirical psychology because it delimits its research domain and, further, constitutes the fundamental criterion for separating the main classes of psychical

phenomena. Through this, it contributes simultaneously to the establishment of a new philosophy put forward by Brentano, because psychology is one of the fundamental disciplines through which the program of this philosophy is achieved. The following passage from Ms. H 45: ‘Gesch. d. Phil. Einteilung der Wissenschaften’ (n. 25253) shows this clearly: “I. Übernatürliche Wissenschaft II. Natürliche Wissenschaft (einseitige Unabhängigkeit) 1. abstrakte Wissenschaft 1) Mathematik 2) Philosophie im weiteren Sinn a) physische Wissenschaft b) psychische Wissenschaft (philosophische Wissenschaften im engeren Sinn) 2. Konkrete Wissenschaft” (*apud* Hedwig (1987), XIII; about this problem, see Brentano (1869); Brentano (1895); Werle (1989); Hedwig (1987) and Tănăsescu (2011)). It is worth noting that contemporary philosophers are especially interested in the problem of intentionality in Brentano and neglect, to a great extent, his reflections about the evolution of philosophy over wider historical periods, as well as the role assigned to psychology in achieving the philosophical program he put forward.

- 4 Both Twardowski’s paper *On the Content and Object of Presentations* (1894/1977) and Husserl’s *Logical Investigations* (1900–01/2001) offer theories of intentionality in this sense.
- 5 See Brentano (1977).
- 6 For this reason, P. Simons talks in his introduction to the second English edition of Brentano’s *Psychology* about the methodological phenomenalism adopted by Brentano in this work (Simons (1995), XVI). This idea is also taken over and developed by T. Crane, who emphasizes both the distinction between the physical phenomenon and the reality to which it refers, and the fact that physical phenomena constitute the object of study of the science of nature (Crane (2006), 25 ff.). It must be added that this “phenomenalistic” vision of science (Brentano (1995a), 14, 72) does not focus on the problem of the real or unreal existence of the physical phenomenon, but primarily on the correlations between phenomena and the laws governing these correlations (Ebd., 98 ff.). Brentano, under the influence of Comte, had already defined the establishment of the laws of succession and co-existence of phenomena as the main task of science, an idea used as such in his 1874 work (see on this problem Brentano (1869), 105, 111, 114 f.; Brentano (1995a), 99; and Tănăsescu (2011)).
- 7 Husserl, who explicitly elaborated an IT₂, paid much less attention than Brentano to intentionality as a feature separating mental from physical phenomena (see Vth *Logical Investigation*, §§9–11, and the Appendix “External and internal perception: physical and psychical phenomena” of the same work).
- 8 Twardowski refers to the ambiguity of the term ‘*Vorgestellt*’ (‘presented’) (Twardowski (1977), 11–17).
- 9 This is the only sentence in the IP justifying the interpretation of Brentanian intentionality from the perspective of the problem of the way in which consciousness relates to non-existent entities, customary for authors preoccupied with the philosophy of mind in the analytic tradition (see on this topic Crane’s remarks in Crane (2006), 21 ff.; see also Chisholm (1967), who discusses from

the start the problem of intentionality in Brentano from the perspective of the orientation of acts “upon objects that do not exist” (Chisholm (1967), 7). The thesis of this study, however, is that the IP answers another problem, namely: what is the most salient distinguishing feature separating physical phenomena from psychical phenomena?

10 Brentano (1874b), 85–100, 156 f.; Brentano (1895a), 23 f.

11 Comte (1830), 86 ff., 96 f., 111 ff.

12 Comte (1838), 610 ff.

13 Brentano (1869), 104 f.; see also 110 f.

14 For scientific research it is important that the correlations between the contents of sensations adequately express the correlations between the physical forces they present and that can be translated using the mathematical language of the science of nature. The relations between the two are described by Brentano as follows: the sensible world is spatially three dimensional and temporally unidimensional, while the world of physical forces that produces it is spatially and temporally analogous to it (Brentano (1995a), 98 ff.). Brentano believes that we cannot and do not need to go beyond these analogies, since it is in the spirit of modern science theorized by Comte and adopted by him to stop looking for the final causes of phenomena, and instead to concentrate on studying their correlations (Brentano (1869), 114 f.).

15 For B. Smith and D.W. Smith (1995), 14) the theories of intentionality of the sort offered by Brentano in the IP face such difficulties.

16 “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.”

17 Because of the theoretical framework in which Brentano establishes his empirical psychology, that of the distinction between the science of nature and the science of psychology, in the IP and in general in the 1874 work only the problem of the distinction between the psychical phenomenon and its immanent object (understood *qua* physical phenomenon and not *qua* abstract content, e.g., concept) is discussed.

18 Seeing things from this point of view, we can say that the theory put forward by Twardowski in his work on the content and object of presentation constitutes a theory of the connections between the act, the content, and the object explicating the relationship between the content and the extra-mental object – as yet unclarified in Brentano’s 1874 work. On the other hand, Husserl’s reply to Brentano’s IT1, namely the theory of intentional experience from his 5th *Logical Investigation*, is an IT2 theory that sheds doubt on the very principles of Brentano’s empirical psychology: the evident character of inner perception and the distinction between a psychical phenomenon and a physical phenomenon.

- 19 Brentano takes up this last problem only in Chapter VII of the 1869/70 lecture “Einteilung des Begriffe und Namen,” and what he says here confirms what we have been said about the orientation of his analysis towards evincing the characteristics of the act: when he discusses the relation of the act to the content, Brentano designates the immanent object through the term *Bedeutung* (meaning) (see the EL80 passage quoted above); however, when he goes on to discuss the relation between content as an immanent object referred to by the expression, and the objects presented by it, he replaces the term “meaning” with “concept” (*Begriff*) (EL80.13.018, 13.024). We shall not go into the details of this issue here, but it is worth mentioning that in EL80, just as in the dissertation, Brentano seems to think that the universal (species, genus, etc.) does not exist as such in reality, but only in the mind. What exists in reality is not the universal as such, but things presented by it (EL80.13.025; Brentano (1975), 159).
- 20 See n. 3 above.
- 21 Although the thesis of this study is that the distinction immanent object (content of presentation)—object presented through it is implicitly present in the account of sensation given in the 1874 *Psychology* and explicitly in the lectures from 1869/70, I shall not defend the thesis that this distinction dampens the importance of the distinction between the content and the object of presentation explicitly made by Twardowski, twenty years later. The arguments I offer in favour of this idea are the following: the distinction between the object and the content of presentation from the logic lectures is only one distinction among many others made by Brentano in this work. It is used, in particular, by Brentano, for the names of real things; although he also approaches the problem of fictional names, for instance Jupiter, and suggests that the distinction in question also applies to them, the clarification of this problem does not constitute, however, a capital distinction in his logic (EL80.13.009, 13.012 ff.). Twardowski’s work, on the other hand, is, from its very beginning, an IT2 established on the foundations of the Brentanian IT1 (Twardowski (1977), 1). It is devoted only to the distinction between the content and the object of presentation and regularly attempts to demonstrate that the distinction in question functions not only in relation to common language, an idea otherwise easy to accept, but also in relation to objectless presentations, such as the presentation of the negation of any object, for instance *nothing*, or in relation to impossible presentations, for instance the *round square* presentation, or to imaginary presentations, such as those like *golden mountain* or beings like *Jupiter* and *centaurs* (Ebd., 18. f). Second, we should point out that around 1904, when Brentano explicitly confronted the problem of the clarification of the status of immanent objects, he regularly eliminated these entities (universals, negations, privations, etc.) and preferred the reistic solution according to which only real things exist and can be presented (I shall not go into an analysis of the reistic issues here, one of the major topics of Brentanian scholarship in the last half of the past century (on this problem see Brentano (1977), as well as the editor’s

introduction to this work; see also Kamitz (1983), 175–185, Chrudzimski and Smith (2004)).

- 22 This work was supported by a grant from the Romanian National Authority for Scientific Research, CNCS-UEFISCDI, project number PN-II-ID-PCE-2011-3-0661, and was translated into English by Marius Dumitru.

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