

BRENTANO'S THESIS (REVISITED)

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1 Introduction

What is the intentionality thesis actually about? Needless to say that the famous intentionality quote from Brentano's *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* gave rise to many different glosses on how to understand what is meant there by intentionality. Since the 1950s, it has often been referred to as a theory about the irreducibility of the mental to the physical.¹ This conception owes much to Chisholm's interpretation of Brentano's thesis in 1957, according to which the thesis could be expressed in terms of the irreducibility of intentional *sentences* in the context of psychological descriptions:

We may ... re-express Brentano's thesis ... by reference to intentional sentences. Let us say (1) that we do not need to use intentional sentences when we describe nonpsychological phenomena...But (2) when we wish to describe perceiving, assuming, believing, knowing, wanting, hoping, and other such attitudes, then either (a) we must use sentences which are intentional or (b) we must use terms we do not need to use when we describe nonpsychological phenomena (Chisholm 1957, 172f.)

Three years later, Quine reacted to Chisholm's interpretation in a comment that would shape much of the further reception of the so-called 'Brentano thesis', making it a thesis "of a piece with the thesis of indeterminacy of translation" (Quine 1960, 221) and more particularly a thesis about the irreducibility of the mental to the physical and about the reality of the mental as well:

¹ A short survey of this kind of reading is proposed by Moran (1996, 1-2).

One may accept the Brentano thesis as either showing the indispensability of intentional idioms and the importance of an autonomous science of intention, or as showing the baselessness of intentional idioms and the emptiness of a science of intention. My attitude, unlike Brentano's, is the second. (Quine 1960, 221)

According to Quine, Brentano was wrong to the extent that he appealed to the indispensability of intentional idioms to show the indispensability of mental objects and attitudes. To use intentional idioms in the Quinean way is simply to "postulate translation relations as somehow objectively valid though indeterminate in principle relative to the totality of speech dispositions" (*ibid.*).

Quine's reception of Brentano's thesis and the conception of intentionality that came with it had an important influence on Davidson, who took the indeterminacy of translation of intentional idioms as the basis for his anomalous monism.² That things, actions or events are said to be intentional simply means that "we can describe [them] in a certain vocabulary – and the mark of that vocabulary is semantic intentionality" (Davidson 1987, 46). Chisholm's direct and indirect influence on Quine and Davidson ultimately had the effect of quickly making Brentano's thesis on the intentionality as the mark of the mental a thesis on the intentionality as the mark of some idioms or vocabulary about the mental – a thesis about intensionality. Although this interpretation has proven fruitful in discussions about physicalism, it remains questionable whether Brentano's thesis on intentionality as the mark of the mental is really a thesis about the irreducibility of the mental to the physical, and more particularly, whether a reformulation of the intentionality thesis in terms of intentional sentences is really appropriate. In the following paper, I will first discuss a presupposition in Chisholm's understanding of intentional sentences. This presupposition – namely, that intentional sentences are about intentional objects and that these objects possess a diminished form of existence – supports of course his reading of Brentano's thesis, but there are good reasons, as I will try to show, to question this presupposition. As I will argue, Brentano was not in the first place arguing against reductionism, although he certainly would have disputed it: rather, he took the reality of the mental as it is given in experience, but wanted to identify a common ground shared by all

² See Davidson (1980, 149) for an explicit acknowledgment of this.

mental phenomena which would still take into account the intrinsic diversity of mental phenomena. In this respect, intentionality was introduced as a feature that comes in different varieties and that still provides a golden thread to the unity of sensations, presentations, judgments, strivings, willings, desirings, etc., which constitute every man's mental life.

My reading of the 'Brentano thesis' differs from Chisholm's in that I take intentionality to be a generic feature that is displayed very differently by different mental phenomena. In my view, it does not simply consist in a discriminatory feature which distinguishes the mental from the physical. Furthermore, I do not think that the intentionality quote implies that the direction toward an object and the intentional containment of an object in an act amount to the same thing. Although these two predicates are rightly attributed to intentional acts, they express different intentional properties, as I will try to show. My point here is based in part on Brentano's own use of the terms 'direction' (*Richtung*) and 'content' (*Inhalt*), which supports the distinction suggested between the two predicates. I will leave here open the question as to whether Brentano really did have in mind the distinction that I am proposing. I only want to show that there are benefits to read Brentano with this distinction in mind. One of these benefits concerns the problematic issue of the intentionality of sensations. Already a few years after the publication of his *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, Brentano's thesis about the intentionality of sensations was rejected by some of his students, among them Stumpf and Husserl, for not being able to account for the distinction between sensory and non-sensory content. According to them, there is no intentional object to be found in sensory contents. Chisholm (1989) also made a similar point, disputing the claim that Brentano attributed intentionality to sensations. Following Chisholm, Brentano rather wanted to say that truths about sense qualities are actually truths about the self or person which senses these qualities.³

As I want to show, focusing on the distinction between direction and content as two distinct intentional properties allows us to answer some objections made by some of Brentano's students, most notably Husserl and Stumpf, concerning the intentionality of sensations. Since there is also some textual evidence that show that Brentano had in mind different conditions (and not merely different descriptions of the

³ Chisholm (1989, 5).

same condition), my current proposal can be seen as a defense of Brentano's position against some of his students, and indirectly as a defense for the thesis of the intentionality of sensations.

2 The Intentionality Quote

Let us start with the Intentionality Quote, as it is the basis of the discussions which are of interest to us here:

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, relation to a content, direction toward an object (which is not to be understood here as a reality), 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. (Brentano 1995, 68)

Since Husserl, it has been customary to divide this quote into 3 different theses⁴:

(T1) Every mental phenomenon is characterized by the direction toward an object and its immanent objectivity.

(T2) The object (of a mental phenomenon) is not a reality.

(T3) Every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself, although they do not all do so in the same way. In presentation something is presented, in judgment something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on.

Following this analysis, the Intentionality Quote would involve a psychological thesis (T1) on the nature of the intentional relation, coupled with an ontological thesis (T2) on the nature of the object of the intentional acts, supplemented with a thesis on the different ways these relations may occur through diverse intentional correlations: presenting/presented, judging/judged, etc. (T3). (T1) seems at least ambiguous since it expresses both the directionality of intentional acts and their property of containing something as object. Whether these two expressions are synonymous or simply correlative, is an issue I will later discuss, but (T1) as it stands clearly involves more than a

⁴ See Husserl (1901, 366f.) and Smith & MacIntyre (1982, 48).

psychological thesis. (T2) is also problematic since it is a negative thesis. It does not tell us what the object of a mental phenomenon is, it simply tells us that it is not a reality. As for (T3), it might express two things: either it is simply a thesis about different modes under which one might be in relation to an intentional object, or it is a thesis about different intentional correlations (acts and their correlates), and in that sense (T3) – or at least the second part of it – would not necessarily concern intentional objects but simply intentional correlates.

Taken together, (T1) and the first part of (T3) seem to express two criteria that are necessary in order for an act to be intentional:

(C1): an act x is intentional iff x is a relation between a thinker and an intentional object

(C2): an act x is intentional iff x contains something in itself as an object (i.e. contained object, or 'content').

By symmetry and transitivity, this makes the right parts of (C1) and (C2) equivalent: x is a relation between a thinker and an intentional object iff x contains something in itself as an object.

Are (C1) and (C2) simply equivalent propositions or are the terms 'intentional object' and 'content' in (C1) and (C2) synonymous, making the propositions intensionally equivalent? To my knowledge, there is no explicit acknowledgment of the intensional equivalence of (C1) and (C2) in Brentano's writings, but this of course does not preclude the plausibility of the synonymy thesis. In my view, Chisholm's reading of Brentano's thesis presupposes the synonymy thesis: the right parts of (C1) and (C2) are not only equivalent propositions given that, following his view, the terms 'intentional object' and 'content' in (C1) and (C2) are synonymous and (C1) and (C2) are intensionally equivalent.⁵ In the first case, the alleged synonymy of 'intentional object' and 'content' in (C1) and (C2) is the presupposition for the thesis that the object of an intentional act is always a content, i.e. an immanent object. In the second case, the intensional equivalence of (C1) and (C2) leads to the thesis that 'intentional relation' and 'intentional inclusion' are synonymous expressions. I will later return to this specific consequence that results from the intensional equivalence of (C1) and (C2), but we can simply add here that the expression 'content' is

⁵ Interestingly, we find in Dennett (1969, 21-22) an interpretation of (C2) in terms of propositional contents and of (C1) in terms of presented objects.

used here to stress the containment expressed in (T3). Whether the content is the same thing as the intentional object is a question I will discuss later, but I am just presuming here that (T1) and (T3) are different theses.

Chisholm's interpretation of (C1) and (C2) as co-extensive is confirmed also by his interpretation of (T2). According to (T2), since the object of the mental phenomenon is not a reality, it should only enjoy a kind of diminished existence. This is the conclusion presented in Chisholm (1960) and (1967):

Brentano's use of the expression 'intentional inexistence' (he didn't use the term 'intentionality') may also suggest an ontological or metaphysical doctrine concerning the types of being or existence. Did he mean to say that, in order for us to direct our thoughts toward objects that do not exist, such objects must be available to us in at least some kind of 'inexistence'? If he was inclined to accept any such realm of being in 1874, he explicitly rejected it in his later writings.⁶

Intentional inexistence, the mode of being of immanent objects, is therefore seen as a

Mode of being (intentional inexistence, immanent objectivity, or existence in the understanding) that is short of actuality but more than nothingness.⁷

This characterization of intentionality was decisive for Chisholm's formulation of the criteria by which sentences that are used intentionally are distinguished from sentences that are not. If the objects of all intentional acts enjoy a diminished form of existence in the mind, it is easy to see that intentional sentences, like

Mary is thinking about a centaur

are failing existential generalization. The quantified version of (a),

$\exists x(x \text{ is a centaur} \ \& \ \text{Mary is thinking about } x)$

⁶ Chisholm (1960, 4-5). See also Chisholm (1957, 169).

⁷ Chisholm (1967, 201).

is simply false. It is also easy to see that sentences about intentional objects will not be immune to the failure of the substitution of co-referring terms *salva veritate*. If Mary believes that Cicero was a great emperor but does not know that Tully is the same person as Cicero, her sentences about Cicero and Tully will be sentences about two different (immanent) objects.

By stating both the synonymy of 'object' and 'content' and the intensional equivalence of (C1) and (C2), Chisholm built an influential theory of intentionality and reference inspired by Brentano, thereby developing Brentano's criterion for distinguishing between the mental and the physical – only mental acts have the property of being intentional – into an argument against the reduction of mental properties to physical properties.

But the interpretation of (T2), which is presupposed here, is more problematic and tends to conflate existence with reality, which Brentano strictly separates. According to him, realities are individual substances. The reality of an individual substance obtains independently of its existence: both chairs and centaurs are real since both are bodies, although only chairs exist. By saying that the object of a mental phenomenon should not be understood as a reality, Brentano is therefore not committed to the conclusion drawn by Chisholm that intentional objects enjoy a diminished form of existence. In my view, he simply means that the object of a mental phenomenon should not be understood as an individual substance, which amounts to say that the question of its existence or non-existence is irrelevant. In other words, the object of a mental phenomenon is a non-real entity; an *entia rationis*, or an *irrealia* as Brentano usually labels this kind of entity.⁸ If Chisholm's reading of (T2) is unsatisfactory regarding what Brentano really intended with this thesis, then it is hard to see which role the synonymy thesis should play, if it does not fulfill anymore the role it was supposed to (namely to give the basis for Chisholm's reading of (T2)).

3 Intentional object, content and thought-object

As we noted in the last section, the synonymy of 'intentional object' (also called 'immanent object') and 'content' and the intensional

⁸ I therefore disagree with Antonelli (2002, 22) who reads (T2) as affirming "that objects of thought can be not only concrete realities, 'things' in the strict sense of the word, but also unreal entities and *entia rationis*."

equivalence of (C1) and (C2) advocated by Chisholm means that the object of an intentional act is always a content. According to Chisholm's interpretation of Brentano, the immanent object then serves as a mediator to the external object, the object of the outside world, regardless of there being one. Beside their trivially distinct immanent objects, the presentation of a centaur and the presentation of a horse simply differ in respect to the highly probable absence of an external object in the first case. In that case, the act is directed towards something which is simply not there, but it has its direction thanks to the immanent object. Chisholm's idea runs as follows:

(1) an actual intentionally inexistent unicorn is produced when one thinks about a unicorn; (2) one's thought, however, is not directed upon this actual intentionally inexistent unicorn; and yet (3) it is in virtue of the existence of the intentionally inexistent unicorn that one's thought may be said to be directed upon a unicorn.⁹

What is precisely the ontological nature of the intentional object in that case? As Sauer (2006, 7) remarked, there are two ways of interpreting the ontological nature of the intentional object following this reading of the Intentionality Quote, and more specifically of (T1), of the synonymy of 'object' and 'content' (or 'thought-object', as used by Sauer) and the intensional equivalence of (C1) and (C2):

(T1a): When one thinks of a thing *A* that, if it exists spatio-temporally, is an entity independent of consciousness, then the intentional object is the modified mental counterpart of *A*, the *entia rationis* thought, that is the intentional correlate.

(T1b): One and the same thing may exist in two different ways: as a simple object of thought or *in spatio-temporal reality*. Therefore, every object of thought exists in the first sense and some of them exist also in the second sense.

According to Sauer (2006), the mistake of Chisholm (but also of Kraus and Smith)¹⁰ is to interpret (T1) with the presupposition that (T1a) and (T1b) are expressing the same thing and seeing the inten-

⁹ Chisholm (1967a, 11).

¹⁰ See Smith (1994, 41) and Kraus (1919, 26).

tional object as having “a diminished form of existence”. I agree with Sauer that Brentano's formulation of (T1) does not imply this conclusion. I also agree with him that Brentano never held neither (T1a) nor (T1b). This is basically the point of the remark made to his student Marty in a letter of 1905, where Brentano emphasizes that

by an object of a presentation (*Objekt der Vorstellung*) I meant what it is that the presentation is about, whether or not there is anything outside the mind corresponding to the presentation.

It has never been my view that the immanent object is identical with 'object of presentation' (*vorgestelltes Objekt*). The presentation does not have a “presented thing” as object, it has ‘the thing’ as object. For example, the presentation of a horse does not have a ‘presented horse’ as object, it has ‘a horse’ as object (immanent object, i.e. the only one to be properly named object).

However, this [immanent] object need not exist. The person thinking may have something as the object of his thought even though that thing does not exist.

Of course it has long been customary to say that universals, qua universals, ‘exist in the mind’ and not in reality, and such like. But this is incorrect if what is thus called ‘immanent’ is taken to be the ‘contemplated horse’ (*gedachtes Pferd*) or ‘the universal as object of thought’ (*gedachtes Universale*).¹¹

Brentano's own confusing terminology, even in this very important clarification, certainly played a role in the ‘absurdities’ attributed to him by some of his former students. Let us simplify this terminology a little. Following this remark, the so-called ‘object of presentation’ (also called ‘content’, ‘object of thought’, or simply ‘correlate’) is the (non-real) correlate of the (real) act and should not be confused with

¹¹ Brentano (1930, 87-8). English translation (significantly modified) in Brentano (1966, 51). Interestingly, we find a very similar remark in an earlier unpublished letter of 1891 from Brentano to Marty, where Stumpf is accused of confusing the correlate with the intentional object: “I found out that [Stumpf] believed that ‘red’ and ‘presented red’, ‘man’ and ‘presented man’ are one and the same [...]. I clarified the issue the best I could [...] and proposed him to think once more about the arguments [...]” (“Ich fand, dass [Stumpf] glaubte, ‘Rot’ und ‘vorgestelltes Rot’, ‘Mensch’ und ‘vorgestellter Mensch’ seien eins und dasselbe. [...] Ich legte ihm die Sache, so gut ich konnte, klar [...] und bat ihn schließlich, für sich allein noch einmal die Argumente zu überdenken”). This letter quite discredits Kraus' (1930, 192) reading of the 1905 letter, according to which Brentano conceived of the immanent object as a correlate, but wasn't able anymore in 1905 to remember his own earlier view correctly.

the ‘immanent object’. We will call the first simply ‘content’, and the second the ‘intentional object’ to avoid further confusions. For every act of presentation p , there is a content cp such that not only p and cp are interdependent, but also that being aware of p also means to be aware of cp , and the other way round as well. Presenting a horse or a unicorn does not make an ontological difference in that respect, since the correlation holds between the act and its correlate: the presented-horse or the presented-unicorn. This correlate (or ‘content’) should be seen only as a modified distinctional part of the act of presenting a horse. It is not, according to Brentano in the *Psychology*, the primary object of the act, but belongs (as a modified distinctional part) to the secondary object of the act.¹² The correlate as a modified distinctional part of the act is therefore distinct from the unmodified ‘immanent object’. These are two distinct kinds of entities, the first being non-real and the second real, but this distinction does not imply a distinction with respect to different modes of existence.

4 Centaur cases

If Brentano does not defend (T1a) nor (T1b) he still has to provide an explanation for centaur cases: How can a judgment like the one voiced by “there are no centaurs” both be true and about centaurs? If the judgment is about centaurs, then these must have the same kind of existence than horses, tables and chairs. But then, negative existential judgments about horses, tables and chairs should be true as well. It seems that two other options are available: either such judgments are about intentional centaurs (with a diminished kind of existence), or they are not about centaurs at all. Contrarily to Chisholm, I do not think that they are about intentional centaurs. Or at least, I do not think that Brentano found much interest in such a solution.

Many elements in Brentano’s writings confirm this attitude. He proposed in his career different strategies to address the centaur cases: in some writings, he suggested to regard negative existential judgments as a rejection of some *entia rationis* (the presented-centaur) or as the rejection of negative states of affairs (the non-existence of the centaur).¹³ In 1911, a true negative existential judgment like the one

¹² See for instance Brentano’s argument against the thesis that the concept of a tone is a relative concept, which provides sufficient support to this statement. See Brentano (1874/1995, 185/101).

¹³ See Brentano (1930, 133) and Srednicki (1965, 79).

voiced by the assertion “there are no centaurs” is best rendered by the following assertion: “someone who judges that there are non-centaurs judges correctly”. The negative entities supposed here are then simply fictions, comparable to Aristotle’s strategy concerning the indefinite names (*onoma aoriston*).¹⁴ Brentano was not very clear about the right solution to adopt concerning negative existential judgments. In 1885, in a lecture on logic, he preferred to say that they simply do not have any object.¹⁵ If Brentano was never really satisfied with the solutions he developed concerning negative existential judgments, I believe that the way these judgments are treated remains an exceptional case in his theory, and not a paradigmatic case, as it is often considered to be and as it is treated as such by Chisholm.¹⁶

If intentional inexistence is not a diminished kind of existence, then there is a distinction to be made between the being-object of intentional objects and their existence: the intentional object ‘is-an-object’ independently of the acceptance or the denial of its existence.¹⁷ The centaur cases and the specific treatment of judgments about their existence or non-existence are interesting cases from the perspective of the second issue, but they show no specific particularity when considered from the perspective of the first issue. A clear illustration of this is to be found in Brentano’s letter to John Stuart Mill of 1873, partly reproduced in the *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*:

The proposition, ‘A centaur is a poetic fiction,’ does not imply, as you rightly point out, that a centaur exists, rather it implies the opposite. But if it is true, it does imply that something else exists, namely a po-

¹⁴ See Brentano (2008/1995, 417/231). Even if his conception would have allowed him to overcome this problem, Bolzano too left a place in his theory for purely negative presentations (*rein verneinende Vorstellungen*), a subcategory of objectless presentations expressed by indefinite terms (*onoma aoriston*). See Bolzano (1837, 416f. and 421 (volume 1)); Bolzano (1837, 48 (volume 2)); Bolzano (1837, 220f. (volume 4)).

¹⁵ See Brentano (EL81, 13550): “one has to distinguish 1) between the object of the presentation and the presentation [...] and 2) between the object of the judgment and the judgment [...] the formers are often missing (like in the case of the true negative judgment)” “[m]an muss unterscheiden 1) zw[ischen] dem Object d[er] Vorstell[un]g u[nd] der Vorstell[un]g [...] 2) ebenso zw[ischen] d[em] Object d[es] Urtheils u[nd] dem Urtheil [...] Die ersteren fehlen oft. ([wie] beim wahren negativen Urtheil)”.

¹⁶ For a different interpretation of Brentano’s theory of the contents of judgment, see Mayer-Hillebrand (1959, 320f.).

¹⁷ I use the expression ‘to be-an-object’ in order to underline the fact that one cannot deduce from ‘x is-an-object’ that x is, or exists.

etic fiction... The truth of the proposition does not require that there be a [centaur], but it does require that there be something else. If there were not something which existed merely in one's thought, the proposition would not be true.¹⁸

Just recall that for Mill, such propositions indicate that the copula 'is' does not always express existence, therefore distinguishing between two uses of the 'is', merely nominal in the case of centaurs and existential in the case of judgments about existing things. Brentano's answer to Mill was an attempt to convince him that this distinction was unnecessary and that there is only the existential use of the copula. In the centaur cases, it is simply that the predicate 'is a poetic fiction' does not function attributively, as predicates usually do, but in a modifying way, as predicates like 'is dead' or 'is painted' do. The modifying function of the predicate is such that it does not predicate the thing which the sentence seems to be about, but something else. In the centaur cases, Brentano tells us that such sentences acknowledge the existence of 'something which existed merely in one's thought, but not in reality' (*etwas, was bloß in der Einbildung, nicht aber in Wirklichkeit bestehe*). It would of course be tempting to characterize this 'existing merely in one's thought' as some kind of diminished existence, as Smith does and as the English translation suggests. However, this characterization goes completely against what Brentano aims at in his argument against Mill, since accepting two kinds of existence would still leave us with two uses of the copula. If Brentano's point against Mill is supposedly right, then one should avoid this characterization.

Brentano's point against Mill is not isolated from the way he regards the centaur cases, as shown by his treatment of judgments like the one voiced by the assertion: 'Jupiter is a non-Ens'.¹⁹ But the centaur cases are more problematic when one considers them from the perspective of true negative existential judgments. Here, Brentano's solutions are multiple and the issue is complicated.²⁰ But we can sum it up the following way: in order for a judgment to be true, it has to be evident. Brentano accepts two kinds of evidence, what he calls axiomatic evidence and the evidence of inner perception. It is on the basis

¹⁸ Brentano (1995, 70).

¹⁹ Brentano (1995, 170).

²⁰ I discuss this issue in Fréchette (2011).

of the first kind of evidence that a judgment like “There is no A that is a non A” is true. The true judgment voiced by ‘lions exist’ is best formulated by ‘whoever judges that lions exists judges rightly (correctly)’. On the other hand, a true judgment like “centaurs do not exist” means that whoever judges that centaurs exist judges falsely (incorrectly)”. True negative existential judgments are true since they express the rejection of someone who judges so-and-so. Therefore, in the case of true negative existential judgments, Brentano is not defending the thesis that we do *reject* the existence of centaurs: negative existential judgments are simply the rejection of the existence of something else. His way of dealing with judgments about centaurs shows that Brentano is not confusing existence with reality: centaurs are real, but rejecting their existence does not mean that one takes a stance (accepting or rejecting) on their *existence*. If he would defend a view as the one Chisholm attributes to him, he would have no need to propose this particular treatment of centaur cases.

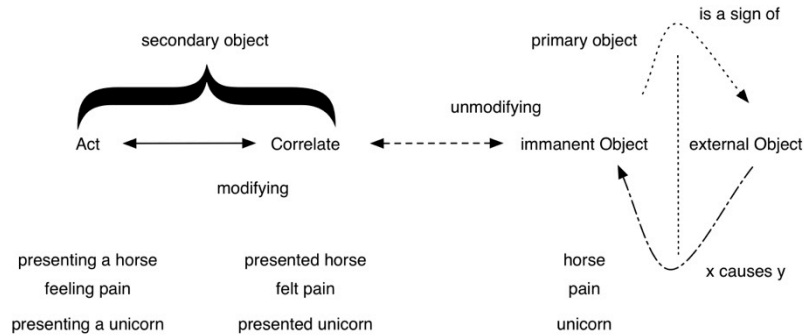
The so-called centaur cases and the treatment reserved to them by Brentano show that two issues should be distinguished when considering intentional objects: their being-object and their existence. Centaurs are intentional objects as are tables and chairs insofar as they are objects of a presentation, but presenting a centaur is by no means an indication of its existence. The problem of the existence of centaurs appears only from the point of view of judgments: an agent without any judicative abilities would simply not be able to deal with this problem, since the concept of existence, according to Brentano, only appears upon reflection on judgments.²¹

Considering both the distinction between intentional object and content discussed in the previous section and the particular treatment of centaur cases offered by Brentano, we could summarize his view as follow: (a) there is a distinction between the act-correlate and the intentional object: the first is a distinctional modified part of the act and the second is a non-real (demodified) counterpart of the correlate; (b) That (C1) and (C2) are extensionally equivalent does not imply the synonymy of the terms ‘object’ and ‘thought-object’ (or ‘content’): (C1) is a thesis about the intentional object, while (C2) is a thesis about the correlate. These two ‘conditions’ are merely a description of what is involved in every intentional act, they are not intensionally equivalent; (c) the question about the existence or non-existence of

²¹ Brentano (2008/1995, 233/163).

intentional objects is a question that arises on the level of judgments, not on the level of presentations. There is nothing structurally distinct between the presentation of a red patch and the presentation of a centaur:²² both have intentional objects which are indistinguishable (from the point of view of the presenter) from the modified mental counterparts, or intentional correlates. From the point of view of the person who presents these objects (and only present them, without judging about them or evaluating them), the intentional correlates necessarily (and trivially) have the same ontological status, since the act of presenting does not allow for modalities or qualities. The question of existence or non-existence cannot be raised from the standpoint of the presenter, and therefore the distinction between content and object cannot be made from that perspective.

As to (T2), if we distinguish between existence and reality, (T2) cannot be seen, as Chisholm and Husserl suggested, as a thesis about the ontological status of the intentional object, but merely as a thesis about the intentional object as being an *irrealia*. This is basically what the negative formulation aims at. The following diagram illustrates our last remarks:



According to our interpretation of the theory, for every act of presentation, there is a correlate to the act and an intentional (or immanent) object. As we have already said, to be-an-object is not a diminished kind of existence: that intentional objects 'are-objects' makes them simply a kind of entity, an *irrealia*, distinct from the secondary object,

²² Husserl (1901/2001, 299/99) formulated the very same idea.

which is a *realia*. Brentano, at least before the reistic turn, recognized both *realia* and *irrealia* in the ontology of the act. This means that to present a centaur and to present a horse both involve the real correlates and the intentional objects. But does this mean that centaurs and horses both exist under the same mode? If it were the case, Brentano would believe that judgments expressed by sentences like 'there are no centaurs' are true judgments. He could not have this belief if horses and centaurs would exist under the same mode.

This is basically the line of reflection that supported much of the interpretations inspired by Chisholm and which argued for a second mode of existence for intentional objects. In my view, this move is unnecessary as shown by Brentano's own conception of centaur cases. On the right side of the diagram, we find the external object, which is the cause of the intentional object. Conversely, the intentional object is a sign of the external object. But it should be stressed here that the external object is in no sense an element of the intentional relation. In sum, when I have presentation of some white unicorn, there is only one proper relative, the presenting; the object named by 'the white unicorn' is an improper relative of the presenting construed by demodification of the non-real correlate. However, this analysis is possible only at the judicative level.

5 An objection

One could naturally object to this reconstruction that having both a correlate and an intentional object seems to be overloading the theory: if the distinction between correlate and intentional object is only the result of our critique of the synonymy thesis, then we still must show why this distinction is important in Brentano's theory. As we will see, this distinction becomes crucial when one takes into account the nature of inner perception and the importance of other classes of acts like judgments and acts of will or desire.

Brentano's basic idea about inner perception is that our mental acts are both object-directed and self-directed (or 'innerly perceived'). When I hear a tone, my act is directed upon the tone (the intentional object, which is the primary object), but it is also self-directed. The secondary object of my hearing is the hearing itself *with its correlate*. Since there is no unconscious consciousness according to Brentano, every mental act is accompanied by inner perception.

In his letter to Marty, he sketches an argument, which one can already find in the *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, in order to show the importance of this distinction. We can reconstruct this argument in the following way: if the immanent object and the correlate were one and the same thing, the (primary) object of the hearing would be a heard tone, and therefore the concepts of tones, colours (but also every other concept of intentional object) would simply be relative concepts, whose parts are relative to what is seen, heard, imagined, etc. The detail of the argument *ad absurdum* runs as follows:²³

suppose the tone would be same as the heard tone; the heard tone would be the primary object of the act of hearing and a correlate as well; correlates being also part of the object of inner perception, the hearing of the tone would be (together with its correlate) the primary object of the hearing of the tone, and not its secondary object; therefore, we could not think anything at all except relations to ourselves and to our thoughts, and this is undoubtedly false.²⁴

This argument aims to show that one needs a distinction between the correlate and the intentional object if one is to defend the thesis that intentional objects are not merely relations to one's own thoughts, i.e. if the intentional object is not merely a part of the act. In order to accept this argument, one must of course accept the thesis that inner perception accompanies every mental act. It is not the place here to evaluate if Brentano's reasons to support this thesis are justified, but since it is quite obvious that he held this thesis his whole life, there is no point questioning it here.²⁵ Moreover, since this argument involves inner perception, it shows quite well that the distinction between the correlate and the intentional object goes hand in hand with the acknowledgment of the inner perceivability of mental acts.

Up to now, what I wanted to stress is that there are good reasons to support the view that Brentano did not regard the expressions 'content' and 'intentional object' as synonymous. Since the 'content' (or correlate, to stick with our terminology) is no real part of the object

²³ I take the formulation of the argument from Sauer (2006), who discusses two different versions of it.

²⁴ Brentano (2008/1995, 150/101).

²⁵ See the first section of Brentano (1995) on inner consciousness, which precisely argues extensively against unconscious consciousness. But see also his conception of superposed acts in Brentano (1995/1982). His *Theory of Categories* (Brentano 1933/1981), written in the late period, also confirms this position.

(the 'intentional object' in our terminology) – it is a distinctional part of the intentional object in a modified sense – (C1) and (C2) as such just cannot be intensionally equivalent in a determinative (non-modifying) sense. Therefore, it would make good sense to see (C1) and (C2) as expressing two different conditions. Two further considerations should help to support this reading: first, Brentano's thesis on the intentionality of sensations and the actual use of the expressions 'direction' and 'content', which also seems to show that Brentano did not consider (C1) and (C2) as intensionally equivalent.

6 Intentionality of sensations

It has often been underlined that Brentano's conception of intentionality, which entails that pains, horses and unicorns are all intentional objects in the same sense, faces some difficulty when it comes to the object of sensations. One of Brentano's first students, Carl Stumpf, made this point very early: he disagrees with Brentano's theory which holds that what characterizes the sensing of pain is the intentional inexistence of its object. According to Stumpf, Brentano neglects the distinction between sensing (*empfinden*) and presenting (*vorstellen*).²⁶ According to him, there is a categorial distinction between these two classes (you can localize your pain, but you cannot localize your memory of it, for instance) that Brentano fails to underline. What unites these categories is not their intentional character, but their dependence upon sensory perception. According to Stumpf, intentionality is therefore a property of only some mental acts, namely of those which are based on some presenting.

Husserl made a similar point a few years later. If we are to understand intentionality as the direction toward an object, as Brentano suggested, we should first avoid the mistake of empiricism whereby the attributes of the sensations (the colour as seen, the tone as heard) are confused with the properties of objects. According to Husserl, Brentano's theory makes this mistake and it is therefore not able to account for the difference between the fact that I see a painting by Yves Klein and that I perceive some unordered blue patches²⁷. Husserl's response to Brentano's account is to say that while I am directed toward the painting, I am merely experiencing the sensory contents.

²⁶ See for instance Stumpf (1916).

²⁷ See Husserl (1901/2001, 694f./335f.).

My *seeing a painting* is intentional, but my *experiencing a sensory content* is not.

What these objections have in common is that they show the difficulty of attributing an intentional direction to sensations, a position that Brentano would be forced to admit if he holds that every mental act is intentional.²⁸ But is this really his position? To my knowledge, he does not offer any specific argument for the *directedness* of sensations, although he offers many (indirect) arguments for the *intentionality* of sensations. Following his view, sensations have as a primary object a sense-quality and are their own secondary object. To see a blue patch is to have a localized sense-quality of blue as a primary object and to be conscious of seeing it. Sensory pleasure and displeasure are constituted slightly differently: feeling pain not only consists in having a localized sense-quality (and being conscious of it), it also means feeling some displeasure regarding this sensation. Or in other words, the *feeling* of pain has a sensation (or better: a *sensing*) as intentional object, while the *sensation* of pain itself has only a sense-quality as intentional object.²⁹ Sensations (or *sensings*), being mental phenomena, are intentional as well.

As we have said before, Brentano does not offer any specific argument for the intentional character of sensations other than their categorization as mental phenomena. Just as mental phenomena are fully intentional, so too are sensations. But it would be rather counter-intuitive to say that they are directed toward something. Indeed, in the absence of an explicit argument for the directedness of sensings, it is reasonable to question the claim. If one claims the intensional equivalence of (C1) and (C2), as Chisholm does and as Smith seems to do as well, one should be bound to say that assertions like:

my sensing of an itch in my foot has a localized sense-quality as intentional object

and

my sensing of an itch in my foot is directed toward a localized sense-quality as intentional object

²⁸ See in particular his criticism of Hamilton in Brentano (1995, 68f).

²⁹ See Brentano (1995, 164).

are intensionally equivalent. But I see a difficulty in this, since two meanings of 'direction' seem to be involved here: First, it seems odd, at least *prima facie*, to say that my toothache is about an object in the same sense as my wish to smoke a cigarette is about a cigarette, but according to their reading of Brentano's thesis, they should say both of the toothache and the wish that they are about something. Accepting the synonymy thesis leads to the consequence that there must be something that sensations are about. Second, the direction involved in (b) seems rather to be a direction toward a location, more specifically, a body part. In other words, it seems that the talk of directedness of sensations is based on a misunderstanding: it makes good sense to say that my sensing of an itch is directed toward my foot, but *this* sense of 'direction' is certainly not the same as the directedness of my wish to smoke a cigarette. The directedness of sensings depends basically (and exclusively) on the location of the sense-quality in the body, whereas it seems that the directedness of my wish involves the kind of directedness discussed above. Therefore, it seems odd to take the term 'direction' in (b) as meaning the same thing as 'relation' in (C1) or 'direction' in (T1).

While the synonymy thesis is bound to this reading of the intentionality of sensations, Brentano himself – at least to my knowledge of his works – does not seem to hold the strong thesis that all intentionality is directional. On the contrary, he accepts different classes of intentional attitudes (presentings, judgments, lovings and hatings), which gives a good indication in my view that he was not advocating for the thesis that intentionality only comes in one kind. If one accepts that different varieties of intentionality are referred to in the Intentionality Quote, then there are a few alternatives to the problem of the directedness of sensations and to the synonymy thesis:

One could leave aside either one or the other condition of the synonymy thesis: leaving out (C1) would mean that intentionality is directedness and only directedness. On the other hand, leaving out (C2) would lead to the view that in order for some mental act to be intentional, it needs to contain something as an object. Spelling out intentionality solely in terms of directedness³⁰ makes it difficult to

³⁰ I take aboutness to be one form of directedness, but I do not take a stance here on the particular case of aboutness, but stick with directedness in general. The main reason is that aboutness is often understood in terms of semantic content, while Brentano has a much wider conception of directionality than aboutness understood in

give an account of the intentionality of sensations. Therefore, it is no surprise to see Husserl develop such an account and rejecting the intentionality of sensations.³¹ On the other hand, spelling out intentionality solely in terms of some kind of containment of an object in a subject gives an interesting model of the intentionality of sensations, which is close not only to much of what Brentano has written, but also to his main source of influence: Aristotle.³² But it certainly is a remote sense of intentionality that barely copes with the originality of the concept developed by Brentano.

Two more nuanced options seem interesting here: the first is developed by Tim Crane under the label of ‘weak intentionalism’. According to Crane, all mental states are intentional and directed toward an object. The problematic case of bodily sensations is then just slightly different than beliefs, but structurally similar to them: in the sensation, something is sensed namely the body.³³ In other words, the sensation is directed toward the part of the body where this sensation is felt. The idea behind this thesis is that bodily awareness (being aware of one’s own pain sensation, for instance) is a kind of perceptual experience. Since perception is intentional, so too are sensations. Or to put it in Martin’s words: “in having bodily sensations, it appears to one as if whatever one is aware of through having such sensation is a part of one’s body”.³⁴

In the context of Brentano’s theory, I see two difficulties with this account: first, we are still left with the problem of using the term ‘direction’ both in the sense of a location and in a non-locational sense. The second difficulty is the absence, in Crane’s account, of an epistemological distinction between inner and outer perception. He argues that mental phenomena are intentional but refuses the distinction between inner and outer perception. This appears most clearly in his treatment of bodily sensations: for him, bodily sensations are a

that sense. This was the dominant view in the philosophy of mind of the 1980s. See for instance the first sentence of Dennett and Haugeland (1987), but more generally McGinn (1982), Searle (1983) and Dennett (1989).

³¹ Husserl (1901).

³² The main source of influence is Aristotle, *De Anima*, 2.11, 423a27-424b10. Brentano (1867, 79f.) interprets Aristotle’s view that the senses receive the form without its matter as meaning that the objects of sense perception are objectively (*objectiv*) contained in the agent.

³³ See Crane (1998).

³⁴ Martin (1995, 269).

form of awareness (of one's own body). This is because attending to a sensation of pain in my ankle for instance is necessarily dependent on focusing on (or an awareness of) my ankle as a part of my body: in Brentanian wording, in order for me to have an inner perception of my sensing, I must first have an outer perception of the location of the sense-quality which would be an awareness of the part of the perceived world but which would have the same epistemic value as inner perception. While I find this treatment of bodily sensations attractive in itself, it would hardly be an attractive option for Brentano, since the epistemic superiority of inner perception is left aside. According to Brentano, felt location belongs to outer perception: it would be a contradiction for him to attribute to it a kind of awareness which is exclusive to inner perception.³⁵ This epistemic superiority being one of the core distinctive features of mental phenomena, along with intentionality, another solution should be found in order to reassess the intentionality of sensations from a Brentanian standpoint.

The alternative I am proposing here is (again) to reject the synonymy thesis: more specifically in the case of sensations, it would mean to reject the directionality of sensations while still maintaining the distinction between inner and outer perception and the classification of acts. But it would also mean to add a specification regarding presentings and sensings which might not be explicitly formulated in Brentano's writings, but which would be perfectly compatible with the spirit of his ideas.

Why reject the directionality of sensations? It might help to underline that the concept of direction implies the concept of an alternative (or at least an opposite) direction. I can *love or hate* expensive bottles of wine, I can *accept or reject* that it is raining, but there is no 'opposite direction' when it comes to presenting or sensing. It would

³⁵ Brentano has only one concept of awareness which he refers to as 'inner consciousness' or 'inner perception'. It is quite probable that he would have rejected the idea of bodily awareness put forward by Crane, since he rejected a very similar idea by Lotze (see Brentano's critique of Lotze in Brentano 1995, p. 192f.). In a nutshell, Lotze's theory of local signs provides an account of our qualitative perception of spatially extended sensations in which the distinction between feelings and sensations plays a crucial role: bodily feelings enjoy a relative independence from sensations which allows the formers to account for the subjectivity of our experience by letting sensations out of the explanation. For Brentano, localization results exclusively from sensations and there is no other epistemic access to it other than inner perception (of sensings).

certainly make sense for Brentano to say that my sensing of pain in my foot is directed to this one part of my body, but not because all mental states are directed towards perceived parts of the world (Crane): only to the extent, and quite indirectly, that I am *accepting* (and not *rejecting*) that my foot hurts. Taking my sensing of pain in isolation, or taking my presentation of a red patch, or even of a centaur, in isolation, does not give me any alternative direction.

Following this idea, to sense a pain in my foot and to love expensive bottles of wine are both intentional acts, but they are intentional on a very different basis: what they have in common from a descriptive standpoint is that their object is contained in themselves, but only my loving of expensive bottles of wine has a direction.

The obvious objection here is to say that this account would still be a departure from Brentano's theory, since according to him, the non-synonymy of 'content' and 'intentional object' applies to all acts, from sensings to wishings. So a distinction between the direction of the pain and the correlate of the act of feeling pain would be required.

To answer this objection I will just recall that the argument supporting the distinction between 'content' and 'intentional object' is an argument based on inner perception. Perception, and therefore inner perception, is a judgment. So in order to distinguish between the content (the correlate) and the intentional object, a judgment is needed. In other words, there is no descriptive distinction between the content and the intentional object in an isolated presenting *without inner perception*. It is through inner perception that I make this distinction. But inner perception involves a judgment.

7 Direction and content

My proposal is certainly unorthodox, but it is not so far-fetched when one considers Brentano's use of the terms 'direction' (*Richtung*) and 'content' (*Inhalt*) in his *Psychology*. While 'content' is mostly, but not exclusively, used for contexts concerning sensory contents, the term 'direction' (*Richtung*) seems to appear almost exclusively in contexts of mental acts of higher order, like judgments and acts of love and hate.

The occurrences of *Richtung* and *gerichtet sein* in the *Psychology* are not so numerous and are easy to list:

- the 'direction of the will' in Aristotle's *De Anima*, the directions of feelings and desires (*Gefühlsrichtungen*) (2008, 21, 69, 268);

- the direction towards an object (*Richtung auf ein Object*) (2008, 106);
- the direction (of inner consciousness) towards our own mental activities (Brentano 2008, 118);
- the direction of the act of sensation towards the physical phenomena, which is its primary object (Brentano 2008, 164).³⁶
- the direction of two mental activities toward the same primary object, like seeing and hearing or presenting and desiring. (Brentano 2008, 177; 182);
- the direction of striving (*Streben*) (Brentano 2008, 198);
- the direction of desire and love toward an object (Brentano 2008, 223; 278);
- the direction of acceptance and rejection towards a presented object (Brentano 2008, 243); acceptance and rejection are modalities of the direction (Brentano 2008, 269);
- the direction of will and affection (Brentano 2008, 258);
- the direction of the presentation of inner consciousness (Brentano 2008, 286).³⁷

In sum, there seems to be textual evidence for the individual and separate treatment of the predicates ‘...is directed toward_’ and ‘...contains _ as object’. Besides, it is worth noting that Brentano never uses the expression ‘Richtung auf einen Inhalt’ nor ‘gerichtet sein auf einen Inhalt’ (to be directed toward a content). The fact that a mental activity contains an object is at least partly different from the fact that a mental activity is directed towards an object, although in some cases they might be indistinguishable. I think that this is the case with the class of presentations (including sensings): there is a sense of speaking of the direction of a presentation, but only to the extent that this presentation is taken as a part of a larger whole which includes a judgment. When taken in isolation, presentations just do not seem to show any direction. This would also explain in part the confusion between the correlate of the act and the intentional object, since on the level of presentations, the distinction between both of them simply do

³⁶ This is the only use of ‘direction’ in relation with sensations.

³⁷ There are also three other indirect uses of the term ‘direction’ in the *Psychology*: a) there is no unconscious will that would be directed toward bodily movements (Brentano 2008, 133); b) the falsity of Mill’s and Bain’s view according to which the hearing is directed toward itself as object and identical with the heard (pp. 140, 141, 147); c) Brentano’s criticism of the view that inner perception has the same direction as outer perception (p. 184).

not appear to be evident. In brief, what I propose here are two things: 1) as for the distinction between (C1) and (C2), taken as a distinction between kinds of intentionality, it only appears when one takes mental acts as a whole and not in isolation. An isolated description of the presentation act does not give us the distinction between the correlate and the intentional object. From the standpoint of the isolated description, to say that a presentation is directed towards an object (intentional object) or that it contains something within itself as objects (correlate, content) just seems to amount to the same thing.

8 Final remarks

In short, the idea that I am proposing here is to distinguish between two kinds of intentional properties. I do not claim that this was exactly what Brentano had in mind in his *Psychology*, especially regarding sensations. It is more of an alternative view that, I think, is able to preserve important insights from Brentano's *Psychology* while providing an answer to the objections made to him by his students, most notably by Stumpf and Husserl, regarding the intentionality of the sensations. My main target was the synonymy thesis, namely the thesis according to which 'direction' and 'inclusion' are two synonymous terms that express one and the same characteristic of intentional acts. While many commentators of Brentano, among them Chisholm and Smith, tend to understand Brentano's thesis as implying the synonymy, I showed that there are good reasons to question the synonymy claim. First, it presupposes that the expressions 'intentional object' and 'content' are synonymous as well. As I have tried to show, there are good reasons to believe that Brentano was against the synonymy of these two expressions, not only because there is written evidence that indicates this, but also because Brentano needs the distinction between non-real correlates of acts (what I called 'contents') and intentional objects, many of which are real (tables, chairs, centaurs, etc.).

Second, I suggested that there is no textual evidence that should lead us to regard Brentano's treatment of centaur cases as paradigmatic cases for his conception of intentionality. By stating that the intentional containment of an object in an act is the same thing as the intentional relation between a thinker and an intentional object, proponents of the synonymy thesis are led to see (T3) as a mere specification of (T1), thereby refusing the distinction between inten-

tional object and content (or 'correlate'). Therefore, centaurs, like any other intentional object, must combine the two following (often) incompatible properties:

being the non-real correlate of an act
being a real object

Their way of avoiding the incompatibility is to understand (i) in the sense of a diminished kind of existence: according to this reading, (i) centaurs have a diminished kind of existence and (ii) they are real. Therefore, in their view, Brentano would solve Russell's third puzzle by saying that it is not self-contradictory to deny the existence of centaurs since in that case, is not a non-entity which is the subject of the proposition 'The centaur Chiron does not exist' but a 'diminished entity', an intentional object with a diminished kind of existence. This reading is misleading, as I stressed: the different solutions proposed by Brentano to the treatment of centaur cases shows on the contrary that he never actually found a satisfactory solution for the treatment of true negative existential judgments. Moreover, most of his solutions try precisely to avoid positing intentionally existing centaurs as the basis of the true negative existential judgment. And when they do posit such entities, there is no indication in the respective writings that this treatment should be generalized to all intentional objects. My proposal, with respect to that case, was to distinguish between the being-object of centaurs and the denial of their existence: I might be presenting a centaur without taking a stance on its existence or non-existence. In that case, the fact that my presentation has an intentional object has no existential significance. The question of existence only comes into question with higher-order cognitive and affective acts like judgments, wishings, etc. Therefore, not only should one limit the extension of the problem of the existence of intentional objects to the realm of judgments and affective acts: Brentano's treatment of centaur cases, understood in this way, shows that he accepts, on the level of presentations, that there is always both a correlate and an intentional object, but on the level of judgments, he refuses most of the time to use these intentional objects in order to solve Russell's third puzzle. I proposed to regard Brentano's different suggestions (put forth throughout his career) for the treatment of centaur cases as different attempts to avoid the treatment of intentional objects as having a

‘diminished form of existence’ (Smith), his point against Mill being precisely to avoid two different meanings of the copula. Rather, what his treatment of centaur cases shows is that Brentano remained true most of his life to the distinction between existence and reality: that centaurs are real does not imply that they exist. By rejecting (rightly) the existence of centaurs, I am not implicitly introducing their existence which I then reject: the concept of existence appears to him only at a higher level of mental acts, namely judgments: as I have stressed, a Brentanian agent without judicative ability would not be able to discriminate between centaurs and chairs regarding the issue of their existence. Therefore, Brentano’s actual treatment of centaur cases may be seen according to a certain view as an indication of the synonymy thesis, but there is as much evidence that the centaur cases suggest precisely his stance against the synonymy thesis.

Third, I then added a further consideration directed against the synonymy thesis: I presented a further objection to the distinction between correlate and intentional object, based on Brentano’s account of inner perception. If the correlate and the intentional object were one and the same (and if we accept that every mental act is an object of inner perception), the distinction between the primary (the sensed blue) and the secondary object (my sensing of the blue together with its correlate) would disappear. Inner perception being a core feature of all mental phenomena, it is better to stick with it.

Fourth, I addressed a problematic issue for the proponents of the synonymy thesis: the intentionality of sensations. If one is to accept the synonymy thesis, one has to admit that sensations have a direction in the same sense than that of higher-level mental acts. I suggested that this was counter-intuitive, thereby providing another reason to go against the synonymy thesis without leaving completely the spirit of Brentano’s thesis. The solution was, here again, to see the two features of ‘intentional direction’ and ‘intentional inclusion’ as two distinct features which are not always both discerned in every mental act: sensations *include* an intentional object, but it is impossible from the point of view of the sensing agent to discriminate between the intentional object (what it is directed toward) and the correlate (what it contains).

What are the benefits of revisiting Brentano’s thesis in the way that I have proposed? First, it allows for a reading of Brentano’s oeuvre which is not fully determined by his change of mind, which occurred

around 1900, concerning the possibility of presenting (and judging about, wishing, etc.) intentional objects which are not real. According to my reading, core features of the intentionality thesis like (C1) and (C2) do not have a reistic import as they do according to Chisholm. It allows therefore for some continuity in Brentano's understanding of intentionality. Second, it defuses somewhat the objections made by Husserl and Stumpf concerning the intentionality of sensations, thereby offering an alternative view which complies with Brentano's thesis on the intentionality of sensations. Third, it readjusts somewhat the focus of the Brentano's thesis: admittedly, intentionality has much to do with intensionality, but it would be a mistake to assess Brentano's thesis from the point of view of semantics. Reassessing the intentionality of sensations in a way which does not refer to a semantic approach (like Chisholm 1989) certainly is closer to Brentano's spirit. Fourth, I think that distinguishing direction from content gives a more contrasted account of what was meant in the intentionality quote, showing that there was more to Brentano's concerns than simply providing an account of semantic content and a theory of reference, as it is often considered to be the case since Chisholm. Lastly, I think that the account proposed here is less restrictive from a hermeneutical standpoint, since it takes into account the different theses held by Brentano. Whether this really reflects Brentano's account is another question, but it certainly tries to remain true to Brentano's spirit.³⁸

³⁸ I would like to thank Arek Chrudzimski, Denis Fiset, Kevin Mulligan, and Peter Simons for their comments on different versions of this paper. Thanks also to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (Grant 756-2009-0557) for its support.

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