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Austro-German Transcendent Objects before Husserl

Hamid Taieb¹

Abstract

In the famous *Appendix to the paragraph 11 and 20* of his Vth *Logical Investigation*, Husserl criticizes the concept of "immanent object" defended by Brentano and his pupils. Husserl holds that intentional objects, even non-existent ones, are "transcendent". Yet, long before Husserl's criticism, Brentano and his pupils, in their theories of intentionality, took into account, besides "immanent" objects, also transcendent ones, in a way similar to Husserl, since such transcendent objects were not necessarily objects that exist. The "immanent object" (*immanenter Gegenstand*) was also called "presented-thing as presented" (*Vorgestelltes als Vorgestelltes*), whereas the transcendent object was called "object *tout court*" (*Gegenstand schlechweg*) or "presented-thing *tout court*" (*Vorgestelltes schlechweg*). Even if it is in Marty that one finds the clearest distinction between these two kinds of objects, other pupils of Brentano, and Brentano himself, made similar distinctions. Despite its importance, this point has been neglected in the Brentanian literature. In the first part of this article, I present the way immanent and transcendent objects have been distinguished in the School of Brentano. In the second part of the article, I present some problems linked to the distinction of two objects for every mental act, an immanent and a transcendent one; these problems could explain the abandonment of the notion of "immanent object" by many philosophers of the Brentanian tradition. I conclude with some remarks on the distinction between content and object in the School of Brentano.

¹ This paper has been presented during the conference "Mind And Language – Franz Brentano's Legacy in Prague. Commemorating the Centenary of Anton Marty's Death", at the Academy of Sciences of Prague in May 2014. I thank the participants for their comments. I am especially grateful to Guillaume Fréchette and Maria van der Schaar for their written remarks on previous drafts of the paper.

1. Introduction

In his 1890's *Logic*, in the paragraph 6, called "act of thought and content of thought", Höfler affirms that the word "object" (i.e. indistinctly "*Object*" or "*Gegenstand*") has two meanings². In one sense, "object" stands for the "immanent" or "intentional object" (*immanentes, intentionales Object*) of the mental act. The role of this object with respect to the mental act is said to be analogous to the one of the grammatical object with respect to the psychic activity understood as a verb³. This immanent or intentional object is the correlate of the mental act, something described as a "presented-thing" (*Vorgestelltes*), a "judged-thing" (*Beurtheiltes*), etc. Moreover, it is called "content" (*Inhalt*) by Höfler. This object is meant to be an "image" (*Bild*) or "quasi-image" (*quasi-Bild*), i.e. a "sign" (*Zeichen*), of a thing. This last consideration leads to the second sense of "object". In this second sense, the word "object" ("*Object*" or "*Gegenstand*") stands for "that which subsists in itself" (*das an sich Bestehende*), a "thing in itself" (*Ding an sich*), or a "reality" (*Wirkliches, Reales*), "toward which our presentations and judgments are so to say directed" (*worauf sich unser Vorstellen und Urtheilen gleichsam richtet*)⁴. Thus, we have here *two* objects, which are apparently both the term of an intentional relation: the immanent object or content is the term of an intentional relation because Höfler calls it an "intentional object", i.e. such expression leads to think that this entity is *intended*; and the "thing in itself" (*Ding an sich*) is *also* the term of an intentional relation, since Höfler says that it is that toward which presentations and judgments are "directed". The first entity seems to be a kind of mediator, in the sense that its cognition leads, in one manner or another, to the cognition of the second entity.

Twardowski is quite charitable, when he affirms, in his work *On the Content and Object of Presentations*, published in 1894⁵, that the first clear distinction between content and object has been made in Höfler's *Logic*: there is no clear distinction, in Höfler's text, between content and object, since the "content" is, precisely, the *term* of an

² Höfler 1890: 6-7.

³ Usually, grammarians distinguish the "internal" and the "external" object of a verb (e.g. hitting a stroke vs. hitting a ball). One way to understand the opposition is to hold, like Twardowski (1996: 160-161 and 171-172), that the internal object appears concomitantly to the activity expressed by the verb, whereas the external object pre-exists to that activity. Höfler's reference to the object in grammar here evokes rather the internal object.

⁴ In view of the aforementioned grammatical distinction, Höfler could have equated this second sense of object with the grammatical notion of external object.

⁵ Twardowski 1894: 4.

intentional relation, and is described as an intentional “object”⁶. Nevertheless, Höfler’s *Logic* underlines an important point: a theory of intentionality which wants to give an account of the link between thought and reality cannot reduce the meaning of “object” to “immanent entity”. In the final analysis, one should admit that there is a sense of “object” which means “non-immanent thing”. As a matter of fact, the reason that Höfler gives for such distinction among “objects” concerns the problem of the access to the outer world: if the objects of mental acts were only immanent things, then the link between “thought and being” (*Denken und Sein*) would become impossible. Thus, “object” should also refer to mind-independently actually existing entities. Now, there are other reasons for rejecting the reduction of “object” to “object existing in the mind”. If the objects of mental acts were just immanent, every judgment would have an existent term, i.e. a judgment directed toward the square, a judgment directed toward the circle and a judgment directed toward the square circle would all three have an existent term. Thus, every negative existential judgment would be incorrect, and, as a corollary, every affirmative existential judgment would be correct. As Marty says:

We have to ask the one who admits, besides the true object, also a mental object, which one should be called “object” in the *proper* sense. Because it is obvious, given that the meaning is a different one here and there, that only one of them can be the proper and first one. Thus, should maybe the immanent object be the proper object and the true one simply be called “object” relatively, on the basis of its similarity with it? I think that it is not hard to see that this assumption is impossible. Because what should be called “proper object of a presentation” is what should exist if the affirmative judgment grounded on the presentation is to be correct. But then, since an immanent object exists always and for every presentation, every affirmative judgment would be correct, and anything that anybody actually considers to be true would be true. (Marty 1916: 57)⁷

⁶ Note that in the second edition of his *Logic*, published in 1922, Höfler does not call the content “object” anymore, and talks of his initial account of the distinction between content and object as “partially deficient” (*teilweise mangelhaft*) (see Höfler 1922: 33 n. 2). I thank Guillaume Fréchette for having invited me to take into account the second edition of Höfler’s text.

⁷ *Wer außer dem wirklichen auch ein mentales Objekt annimmt, den müssen wir fragen, welches von beiden im eigentlichen Sinne Objekt genannt werde. Denn daß, da der Sinn hier und dort ein verschiedener ist, nur einer der eigentliche und primäre sein kann, ist ja selbstverständlich. Soll also etwa das immanente das eigentliche Objekt sein und das wirkliche bloß beziehungsweise so genannt werden, wegen seiner Ähnlichkeit mit jenem? Ich glaube, es ist nicht schwer einzusehen, daß diese Annahme unmöglich ist. Denn eigentliches Objekt einer Vorstellung ist doch wohl das zu nennen, was existieren muß, damit ein auf die Vorstellung gegründetes affirmatives Urteil richtig sei. Allein danach wäre, da ein immanentes Objekt stets und bei jeder Vorstellung existiert, jedes affirmative Urteil richtig, und es wäre alles wahr, was jeglicher tatsächlich für wahr hält.*

Thus, a theory of intentionality, even beyond the question of the access to the outer world, cannot reduce the category of “object” to the one of “immanent object”: mental acts, in the final analysis, must be understood as directed toward “non-immanent objects”, may these objects exist or not. At any rate, Husserl takes into account such objects in his theory of intentionality. He calls them “transcendent” (*transzendente Gegenstände*), by contrast to immanent objects. In the famous *Appendix to the paragraph 11 and 20* of the *Vth Logical Investigation*, published in 1901, Husserl writes:

If I present God, or an angel, or an intelligible thing-in-itself, or a physical thing or a round square etc., what I mean is what is named and transcendent in each case, in other words the intentional object: it makes no difference whether this object exists or is imaginary or absurd. (Husserl 1984: 439.20-24; transl. Findlay, slightly modified)⁸

Note that for the act to be directed toward such a “transcendent object”, the existence of the former is not required, as it is made clear by Husserl, who talks of “imaginary” or “absurd” objects as “transcendent”. Thus, it seems recommended, even if one admits immanent objects, to widen the category of “object” and to talk also of “transcendent objects”, in order to avoid a Protagorean, absurd theory of intentionality in which every affirmative existential judgment would be correct. I stress that in the School of Brentano, as it is shown by the quotation of Marty, and as it is affirmed in Brentano’s *Psychology*, “nothing is judged which is not presented” (*nichts wird auch beurtheilt, was nicht vorgestellt wird*). In other words, it is “the object of a presentation” that “becomes the object of an affirmative or negative judgement” (*der Gegenstand einer Vorstellung <wird> Gegenstand eines anerkennenden oder verwerfenden Urteils*)⁹. Thus, among Brentanians, in order to avoid Protagoreanism, even the objects of presentation should be considered as “non-immanent”¹⁰.

It is well known that Brentano and Marty, from approximately 1904 onwards, abandoned the notion of “immanent object” because of the philosophical problems that

⁸ *Stelle ich Gott oder einen Engel, ein intelligibles Sein an sich oder ein physisches Ding oder ein rundes Viereck usw. vor, so ist dieses hier Genannte und Transzendente eben gemeint, also (nur mit anderem Worte) intentionales Objekt; dabei ist es gleichgültig, ob dieses Objekt existiert, ob es fingiert oder absurd ist.*

⁹ Brentano 1925: 38.

¹⁰ I stress that the idea here is not to hold that Brentanians want to defend Protagoreanism, but that they may be committed to such a theory if they admit immanent objects without transcendent ones.

such a concept entails¹¹. What is less known is that distinctions between immanent intentional terms and non-immanent, or “transcendent”, intentional terms have been made in the School of Brentano long before Husserl’s *Logical Investigations*¹². The immanent intentional term has been called “presented-thing as such”, i.e. “as presented” (*Vorgestelltes als solches*, i.e. *als Vorgestelltes*)¹³ or, more simply, “immanent object” (*immanenter Gegenstand*), whereas the transcendent intentional term has been called “presented-thing tout court” (*Vorgestelltes schlechweg*) or “object tout court” (*Gegenstand schlechweg*). Even if it is in Marty’s texts that one finds the clearest distinction of this kind (*Vorgestelltes als Vorgestelltes* vs. *Vorgestelltes schlechweg* and *immanenter Gegenstand* vs. *Gegenstand schlechweg*), other pupils of Brentano have made similar distinctions. One can even find similar distinctions in Brentano himself. However, in view of such distinctions, the question also arises as to whether mental acts are directed toward immanent or transcendent objects. As an answer, the Brentanians seem to have introduced a “perspectival” theory of intentionality: one and the same object, the immanent one, would be grasped differently according to the points of view of primary, or outer consciousness and secondary, or reflexive consciousness, i.e. primary consciousness would grasp it as “transcendent”, whereas secondary consciousness would grasp it as “immanent”¹⁴.

In the first part of this article, the longest one, and which will be rather historical, I will give an overview of the way immanent and transcendent objects have been contrasted by Austro-German thinkers before Husserl. In the second part, which will be rather systematic, I will discuss the problems linked to the distinction of two objects for every mental act, an immanent and a transcendent one, i.e. the problems of the “perspectival” account of intentionality. These problems could be part of the reasons that led to the abandonment of the “immanent object” by many philosophers of the

¹¹ On this point, see notably Chrudzimski 2001a and 2001b.

¹² Husserl started developing his own theory of the intentional object in the summer of 1894, after having read Twardowski’s *Zur Lehre vom Inhalt und Gegenstand der Vorstellungen*. See the texts Husserl 1990/1991 and 1979. Note that these two texts are posthumous. For more philological information, see Schumann 1990/1991 and Rang 1979.

¹³ The fact that “presented-thing as such” is a *terminus technicus* in the School of Brentano is confirmed by the presence of the entry “*Vorgestelltes als solches*” in the index of subjects of Marty’s *Untersuchungen zur Grundlegung der allgemeinen Grammatik und Sprachphilosophie* (1908: 748 b).

¹⁴ As will be seen below, this “perspectival” interpretation is to be found in Chrudzimski 2001.

Brentanian tradition. In the light of my analyses, I will conclude with some remarks of clarification on the distinction between content and object in the School of Brentano¹⁵.

2. “The presented-thing as presented” and “the presented-thing *tout court*”: an overview

a. Marty

In his lectures on *Descriptive Psychology*, held in 1893-1894¹⁶, Marty affirms that every mental act has an “intentional relation” (*intentionale Relation*) to an “immanent” or “intentional object” (*immanentes, intentionales Object*). He also calls the immanent object “content” (*Inhalt*). Thus, just as in Höfler, “object” (in a certain sense) and “content” are somehow equated: the content is the term of an intentional relation. Marty says that the immanent object is the “correlate” (*Korrelat*) of the mental act, a “presented-thing”, a “loved-thing” or a “judged-thing as such” (*Vorgestelltes, Geliebtes, Beurteiltes als solches*), i.e. as presented, loved or judged. Whereas the act is real, the immanent object is said to be “unreal” (*nicht real*). Thus, in the reduplication “as presented”, “presented” is a “modifying determination” (*modifizierende Bestimmung*), which changes the meaning of the name to which it is added: whereas a wise man is a real man, a presented man is not a real man, but an unreal entity¹⁷. For Marty, following Brentano, an unreal entity is something that does not have a proper generation or corruption, but is generated or corrupted when something else is generated or corrupted, and that cannot act nor undergo a causal effect¹⁸. By contrast, a real entity, or a “thing” (*Ding, res*), has a proper generation and corruption, and can act and undergo a causal effect¹⁹. Thus, the immanent object is something that is only generated when the mental act is generated

¹⁵ The following pages, above all the ones on Marty, will develop some of the analyses presented in Cesalli and Taieb 2012. I will distance myself somewhat, in my own name, of the conclusions of this article as regards Brentano’s theory of intentionality, namely as concerns the idea, defended in the article, that the “correlate” of the mental act, in Brentano, is not an “intentional object”.

¹⁶ Marty 2011: 9 and 166.

¹⁷ On modifying determinations in the Brentanian tradition, see Brentano 1925: 61-62 n. 1, as well as Twardowski 1984: §4 and 1979.

¹⁸ Note that although causally inefficacious, an unreal entity exists, so that “unreal” does not mean “non-existent”.

¹⁹ On this definition of reality, see Brentano, Ps 34, *Von den Relationen*, undated: n°51075 and 2013: 466-467, as well as Chrudzimski 2004: 138-139.

and corrupted when the mental act is corrupted. In sum, the immanent object is a mind-dependent unreal entity, described as a “presented-thing as such”, i.e. “as presented” (*ein Vorgestelltes als solches*, i.e. *als Vorgestelltes*). Marty compares this object to an “image” (*Bild*), like Höfler. In his lectures, Marty contrasts the “immanent” or “intentional object” and the “true object” (*wirkliches Objekt*), and says that every act has an immanent object, whereas only some mental acts have a true object. Thus, by “true object” (*wirkliches Objekt*), Marty seems to refer to mind-independently actually existing entities, like Höfler with his second sense of “object”²⁰.

Yet, in 1894, in the 5th article of the series *On Subjectless Propositions*²¹, Marty distinguishes again the “immanent object”, or “presented-thing as presented” (*Vorgestelltes als Vorgestelltes*) from another kind of object, namely from what he calls “object *tout court*” (*Gegenstand schlechweg*) or “presented *tout court*” (*Vorgestelltes schlechweg*). Marty, again, affirms that every act has an immanent object understood as a correlate. Thus, the immanent object exists in every case. By contrast, he says of the “object *tout court*” or “presented *tout court*” that it can be existent or non-existent. He gives “horse” as an example of an existent “object *tout court*” and “centaur” as an example of a non-existent “object *tout court*”. Thus, apparently, an “object *tout court*” does not need to exist in order to be, precisely, an “intentional object”, i.e. in order to be intended, by contrast with the “true object” of Marty’s *Descriptive Psychology*, which seems to be an existent thing. In other words, Marty’s “object *tout court*” is equivalent to the Husserlian “transcendent object” (mentioned in the introduction), which can exist or not, be “imaginary” or even “absurd”²². Thus, there is a distinction between two objects, the immanent one and the “object *tout court*”. The target-object, in the final analysis, is not the immanent object but the object *tout court*. Marty explicitly says that the act of acknowledgement (*Anerkennung*) is intentionally directed toward the “object *tout court*”: “horse” and not “presented-horse” is acknowledged in a judgment. Moreover, in a

²⁰ The German term “*wirklich*” has different translations in English, notably “actual” and “efficient”. On the legitimacy to translate it as “true” in this context, see Brentano 2013: 465, where “a true triangle” (*ein wirklicher Dreieck*) is contrasted with “a presented triangle” just as “a true King” (*ein wirklicher König*) is opposed to “a King on the chessboard”. Once the “true” and the “immanent” object have been contrasted in such manner, one can still further ask, like Marty 1916: 57 quoted above, which of these objects can “properly”, i.e. “truly”, be considered as the “object” of the act, in the sense of that toward which the act is intentionally directed (I thank Maria van der Schaar for having drawn my attention on this point).

²¹ Marty 1918: 164-166.

²² For a confirmation, see Marty 1908: 395 n. 1, where (the later) Marty explicitly equates his “object *tout court*” (*Gegenstand schlechweg*) with Husserl’s “transcendent object” (*transzendenter Gegenstand*).

letter to Husserl from 1901, Marty, who distinguishes again between “presented-thing as presented” (*Vorgestelltes als solches*) and “presented-thing *tout court*”, writes:

The object of the presentation of blue is: blue, not: presented blue. But this is quite compatible with my view that there corresponds to every presentation a correlate which necessarily exists if the presentation exists. For this does not assert that this correlate *as such* (that is, the presented blue) is the object of my presentation. At all events this is not the case for a *primary act of consciousness*. The presented-thing as such is in fact the object of *secondary consciousness*. (Marty 1990: 233; transl. Mulligan and Schumann, slightly modified)²³

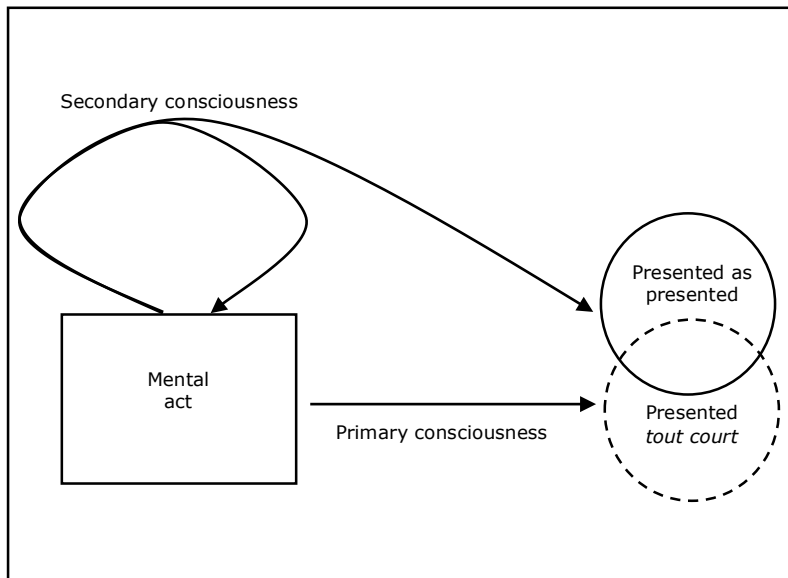
Thus, even in presentations, the target-object is the object *tout court*. Nevertheless, Marty maintains the existence of an immanent correlate for every mental act. He says that such an immanent correlate does not forbid the act being directed toward “blue”, because its admission “does not assert that this correlate *as such* (that is, the presented blue) is the object of my presentation”. Marty affirms that the correlate as such, i.e. the presented blue as presented, is the object of secondary consciousness, i.e. reflexive consciousness, whereas primary consciousness, i.e. outer consciousness, is directed toward blue. It not easy to understand what Marty means here. I suggest following A. Chrudzimski’s interpretation of this text²⁴. According to A. Chrudzimski, who also uses this text to understand Brentano’s theory of intentionality in the same period, Marty would say that primary consciousness is directed toward the immanent correlate, but that it “falsely” sees this correlate as something transcendent, whereas secondary consciousness would “rightly” see it as something in the mind. Thus, the distinction between “immanent object” and “object *tout court*” would be somehow “perspectival”, one and the same entity being “seen as” something different according to different kinds of consciousnesses (see Figure A below: the undashed circle, which is grasped by secondary consciousness, stands for the immanent object appearing “rightly”, or with its “correct” nature, i.e. as immanent, whereas the dashed circle, which is grasped by

²³ *Der Gegenstand der Blauvorstellung ist: Blau, nicht: das vorgestellte Blau. Allein dies verträgt sich sehr wohl mit meiner These, dass jeder Vorstellung ein Korrelat entspricht, welches notwendig existiert, wenn die Vorstellung existiert. Denn damit ist ja nicht behauptet, dass dieses Korrelat als solches (also das vorgestellte Blau) Gegenstand meiner Vorstellung sei. Wenigstens gilt dies nicht, wenn es sich um den primären Bewusstseinsakt handelt. Das Vorgestellte als solches ist in Wahrheit Gegenstand des sekundären Bewusstseins.*

²⁴ The text is quoted in Chrudzimski 2001: 105 n. 123.

primary consciousness, stands for the immanent object appearing “falsely”, or with its “incorrect” nature, i.e. as transcendent; the overlapping of the circles serves to indicate that they both stand for one and the same entity, namely the immanent object).

Figure A²⁵



In brief, primary consciousness is directed toward an immanent object, a “presented-thing as presented”, but in the final analysis, it grasps something *tout court*. Thus, the target-object of primary consciousness, from the “perspective” of primary consciousness itself, is the object *tout court*.

b. Kerry and Hillebrand

As said in the introduction of this article, the distinction between “presented-thing as presented” and “presented-thing *tout court*” is not only to be found in Marty. Indeed, a similar distinction seems to be present in Benno Kerry’s texts. In the 8th article of the series “On Intuition and its Psychic Working”, published in 1891²⁶, Kerry distinguishes

²⁵ This figure is inspired by the one in Chrudzimski 2001: 106.

²⁶ Kerry 1891: 135. This text is quoted and discussed in Twardowski 1984: 19.

between “presented-thing” (*Vorgestelltes*) and “presented-thing as presented” (*Vorgestelltes als Vorgestelltes*). These two expressions also have as synonyms, respectively, “content of presentation” (*Vorstellungsinhalt*) and “content of presentation as content of presentation” (*Vorstellungsinhalt als Vorstellungsinhalt*). Here, again, it seems that there is a kind of “perspectival” comprehension of intentionality²⁷: every act would be directed toward a presented-thing, but this thing would not be seen “as presented”, but “*tout court*”. Indeed, as Kerry writes:

One can only judge about a presented-thing, but one does not have to judge about a presented-thing-*as-presented*: round and square, even if they can only exist as presented, are not considered for this reason to be distinct-*as-presented*. (Kerry 1891: 135)²⁸

Just as in Höfler and Marty, content and object are somehow assimilated in Kerry’s text, since that toward which the act is directed is said to be a “presented-thing” (*Vorgestelltes*), also called “content of presentation” (*Vorstellungsinhalt*).

Franz Hillebrand makes some similar distinctions. Marty says, in the passage of *On Subjectless Propositions* quoted above²⁹, that he is following Hillebrand and his book *The New Theories of Categorical Inferences*, published in 1891³⁰. In this book, Hillebrand distinguishes between “object” (*Gegenstand*), also called “content” (*Inhalt*), and “presented object” (*vorgestellter Gegenstand*) or “presented-thing as presented” (*Vorgestelltes als Vorgestelltes*). He considers that primary consciousness is directed toward the object or content, whereas secondary consciousness is directed toward the “presented object” or “presented-thing as presented”. Hillebrand affirms that every presentation entails the existence of a “presented object”. Besides, he holds that the object *tout court* can be existent or non-existent. Thus, Hillebrand seems to theorize a distinction similar to the one made by Marty.

²⁷ On this “perspectival” account, see the section on Marty right above.

²⁸ *Nur über Vorgestelltes kann man urtheilen, aber man muss nicht über Vorgestelltes, als solches, urtheilen: rund und viereckig, wenn sie vielleicht auch nur vorgestellt existieren können, werden darum doch nicht als vorgestellt für verschieden erklärt.*

²⁹ Marty 1918: 164-166.

³⁰ Hillebrand 1894: 36-38 and 39 n. 1.

c. Brentano

One finds in Brentano's texts some distinctions that are similar to those mentioned above.

As I said before, the immanent object in Marty's *Descriptive Psychology* is an unreal correlate of the mental act. Now, such considerations are present in Brentano's own lectures on *Descriptive Psychology*. In a well known passage of these lectures, Brentano affirms that the intentional relation, "relating a subject to an object" (*welche ein Subjekt zu einem Objekt in Beziehung setzt*), is peculiar, because in this relational situation, by contrast with other relational situations, one of the correlates, the mental act, is a real entity, whereas the other, the "seen-thing" (*Gesehenes*), "presented-thing" (*Vorgestelltes*), etc., is an unreal entity:

1. Hence, the peculiarity which, above all, is generally characteristic of consciousness, is that it shows always and everywhere, i.e. in each of its separable parts, a certain kind of relation, relating a subject to an object. This relation is also referred to as "intentional relation". To every consciousness belongs essentially a relation.

2. As in every relation, two correlates can be found here. The one correlate is the act of consciousness, the other is that <thing> which it is directed upon.

Seeing and what is seen, Presenting and what is presented, Wanting and what is wanted, Loving and what is loved, Denying and what is denied etc.

As highlighted already by Aristotle, these correlates display the peculiarity that the one alone is real, <whereas> the other is not something real. (Brentano 1982: 21; transl. B. Müller)³¹

There are many places, in Brentano's texts, where he equates this unreal correlate with an "object"³². For example, in the *Appendix* of 1911, in the *Psychology from an empirical*

³¹ 1. Vor allem also ist es eine Eigenheit, welche für das Bewußtsein allgemein charakteristisch ist, daß es immer und überall, d.h. in jedem seiner ablösbaren Teile eine gewisse Art von Relation zeigt, welche ein Subjekt zu einem Objekt in Beziehung setzt. Man nennt sie auch "intentionale Beziehung". Zu jedem Bewußtsein gehört wesentlich eine Beziehung. 2. Wie bei jeder Beziehung finden sich daher auch hier zwei Korrelate. Das eine Korrelat ist der Bewußtseinsakt, das andere das, worauf er gerichtet ist. Sehen und Gesehenes, Vorstellen und Vorgestelltes, Wollen und Gewolltes, Lieben und Geliebtes, Leugnen und Geleugnetes, usw. Bei diesen Korrelaten zeigt sich, wie schon Aristoteles hervorhob, die Eigentümlichkeit, daß das eine real, das andere dagegen nichts reales ist.

³² Note that according to a recent, minority opinion, the "unreal correlate" and the "immanent object" in Brentano would be distinct entities. This opinion is defended in Sauer 2006, Antonelli 2008 and Fréchette 2013. For the classical interpretation, which equates the "unreal correlate" and the "immanent object",

standpoint, when Brentano lists all fictional entities, as opposed to real entities, he counts, as fictional, “the objects as objects, like acknowledged-thing, denied-thing, loved-thing, hated-thing, presented-thing” (*die Objekte als Objekte, wie Anerkanntes, Geleugnetes, Geliebtes, Gehaßtes, Vorgestelltes*)³³. Very clearly, in a text from the *Nachlass*, manuscript M 76, *Zur “Metaphysik”*, dated from 1915, Brentano includes in a proper a class of “*entia rationis*” (beings of reason) entities like “thought-of-thing” (*Gedachtes*), “acknowledged-thing” (*Anerkanntes*), etc. This class of *entia rationis* is called the class of the “intentional” or the class of the “objective”:

23. The so-called *ens rationis*.

24. Different classes of it. (...)

29. Also the expressions “thought-of-thing”, “acknowledged-thing”, “negated-thing”, “correctly negated thing”, “loved-thing”, “correctly loved-thing”, etc. designate *entia rationis*. One cannot present something as thought-of, but as thinking, whereby the thing that the one who is thinking thinks is presented *in modo obliquo*. One would err if one was considering that the thought-of object thought-of *in modo obliquo* is the thought-of thing as thought-of, for example, when someone is thinking a table, a thought-of table, it is rather a table. We can designate this class with an expression already usual in the Middle Ages as the class of the “intentional”. (Another designation, usual at that time, as the class of the “objective”, i.e. that which is subsisting as object of someone who is thinking, would be very misleading nowadays (...)). (Brentano, M 76, *Zur “Metaphysik”*, 1915: n°30874-30876)³⁴

In the last mentioned text, the manuscript M 76, the object is said to be a “thought-of thing as thought-of” (*gedachtes Ding als Gedachtes*). This reminds us of the distinction made by Marty between “the presented thing as presented” and “the presented thing *tout court*”. And indeed, Brentano has a similar distinction. In his logic lectures of the

and which I follow, see Chisholm and Baumgartner 1982: XIII, Mulligan and Smith 1985: 637, Smith 1994: 55-56, Chrudzimski 2001: 21-22 and 2004: 155-156. On this debate, see Cesalli and Taieb 2012.

³³ Brentano 1925: 162.

³⁴ 23. Das sog. *ens rationis*. 24. Verschiedene Klassen desselben. (...) 29. Ebenso bezeichnen die Ausdrücke “Gedachtes”, “Anerkanntes”, “Geleugnetes”, “Mit recht Geleugnetes”, “Geliebtes”, “mit recht Geliebtes” u. dgl. – *entia rationis*. Man kann nicht etwas als gedacht vorstellen, sondern als Denkendes, wobei dann das Ding, das das Denkende denkt, in modo obliquo vorgestellt wird. Man würde irren, wenn man meinte, das in modo obliquo Gedachte Objekt sei das gedachte Ding als Gedachtes, z.B. wenn einer einen Tisch denkt, ein gedachter Tisch, vielmehr ist es ein Tisch. Wir können diese Klassen nach einem schon im Mittelalter üblichen Ausdruck als die Klasse des “Intentionalen” bezeichnen. (Eine andere, damals übliche, Bezeichnung als Klasse des “Objektiven” d.h. als Gegenstand eines Denkenden Bestehenden, würde heutzutage sehr missverständlich sein. (...)).

seventies, collected in the manuscript EL 80³⁵, Brentano mentions the distinction between “the presented as presented” (*das Vorgestellte als Vorgestelltes*) and “the presented as that, as what it is presented” (*das Vorgestellte als das, als was es vorgestellt wird*)³⁶. He says that one can present a “fiction” (*Fiktion*) as a “thing” (*Ding*), for example when one presents people living on Mars or a phantom. It is clear that here ‘people living on Mars’ or ‘a phantom’ are not understood as mind-dependent objects, precisely because they are presented *as things*: mind-dependent objects are not things, but *irrealia*. In the same lectures, Brentano distinguishes between the “immanent object”, which is also called “content”, and “that which is presented through the content of the act” (*das, was durch den Inhalt einer Vorstellung vorgestellt wird*). That which is presented through the immanent object or content is, I think, an “object *tout court*” – including “things” which do not exist, like men on Mars, a phantom, etc.³⁷. If this object *tout court* exists, then the act has what Brentano calls an “external object” (*äußerer Gegenstand*), i.e. a mind-independently actually existing entity, Höfler’s “thing in itself” (*Ding an sich*) or Marty’s “true object” (*wirkliches Objekt*). Thus, it seems that there is, in these lectures, a distinction between, on the one hand, mind-dependent, “immanent” objects, and, on the other hand, transcendent objects, which can sometimes, not always, be given in the outer world. In a text from the *Nachlaß*, in the manuscript Ps 34, *Von den Relationen*, dated from 1908, Brentano mentions again the distinction between “the presented as presented” and “the presented as that, as what it is presented”. He says that the “presented as presented” is a correlate, and he contrasts this correlate and “the presented as that, as what it is presented”, which seems to be a transcendent object. At least, the “presented as presented” or correlate seems to be mind-dependent, since

³⁵ Brentano 2011: 28, 35 and 41. For a more precise dating of the lectures, see Rollinger 2011.

³⁶ The importance of the notion of “presented-thing as such” (*das Vorgestellte als solches*) in Brentano’s logic lectures has been underscored by Rollinger 2009: 6-8. The distinction between, on the one hand, the “presented as such” and, on the other hand, “the presented as that, as what it is presented” (*das Vorgestellte als das, als was es vorgestellt wird*) is not mentioned.

³⁷ The fact that Brentano has a concept of “object *tout court*” has been defended in Kent 1984: 33 and 44. More precisely, Kent attributes to Brentano a concept of “object *per se*”, which clearly echoes Husserl’s transcendent object: “‘Intentional inexistence’ and ‘immanent objectivity’ do not denote an ontological category. They are used as ontologically neutral ways of saying that something is an object of a mental act. (...) Whenever we mentally refer to something, we refer to it as an object. We are in a sense referring thereby to neither an existent object nor a non-existent object. To have an object before the mind, as Brentano suggests, is for something to be presented independently of its existential status. In itself this is merely a contingent fact about our epistemic powers. The world is so constituted that we are able to perceive and think about things independently of perceiving or thinking about them as existing or not existing”.

Brentano calls it also the “objectified” or the “objectized” object (*das Objekt als objektiviertes objiziertes*), which apparently indicates that it is produced by the subject:

The so-called psychic relation, for example when someone presents something. One says that it is a relation from the one who is presenting to something that he presents. What he presents need not to be in reality; but one says that it is in his presentation. This being is not a being in the proper sense. The requirement that both things between which there is a relation should be or at least be somehow effectively does not properly hold for this relation; as *correlatio*, the presented-thing appears as such, not as that as what it is presented. The one who is presenting is very misleadingly called “subject”; one should call him the “objectifying” one or the “objectizing” one, since the object is *correlatio* as “objectified”, “objectized”. (Brentano, Ps 34, *Von den Relationen*, 1908: n°51001-51002)³⁸

Thus, we would again have a distinction between an immanent object understood as an unreal correlate – rejected in 1908, the date of the text above –, and an object *tout court*, which can exist or not, be “imaginary” or even “absurd”. The distinction between immanent object and object *tout court* that one finds in Marty’s texts, or in Hillebrand, seems to have its roots in Brentano³⁹.

I stress that O. Kraus, in the notes of the volume *Truth and Evidence*, clearly attributes to Brentano the distinction between immanent object and object *tout court*. Indeed, he says:

Some people distinguish now – following old lectures from Brentano – act (= intentional relation), content (immanent object) and *thirdly*: object *tout court*.⁴⁰

³⁸ Die s.g. psychischen Beziehungen z.B. wenn jemand sich etwas vorstellt. Man sagt, es sei dies eine Beziehung des sich Vorstellenden zu etwas, was er sich vorstellt. Das was er sich vorstellt, braucht dabei nicht in Wirklichkeit zu sein; man sagt aber, es sei in seiner Vorstellung. Dieses Sein ist kein Sein im eigentlichen Sinn. Die Bedingung, daß jedes der beiden, zwischen denen die Relation statt hat, sei oder wenigsten irgend wie tatsächlich sei, wird also bei dieser Relation nicht eigentlich gestellt; als *Correlatio* erscheint das Vorgestellte als solches, nicht als das, als was es vorgestellt wird. Das Vorstellende wird sehr mißverständlich Subjekt genannt; man sollte es das Objektivierende oder Objizierende nennen, denn das Objekt als objektiviertes objiziertes *correlatio* ist.

³⁹ Other texts where Brentano mentions, in a similar manner, “the presented as presented” and “the presented as that, as what it is presented” are Ps 48, *Zur Psychognosie (Vorarbeiten)*, and EL 81, *Fragmente*, both quoted in Fréchette 2015.

⁴⁰ *Manche scheiden nun – alten Vorlesungen Brentanos folgend – zwischen Akt (= intentionale Beziehung), Inhalt (immanenter Gegenstand, immanentes Objekt) und drittens: Gegenstand, Objekt schlechtweg* (Kraus 1930: 191).

However, I think that Brentano did not always have a very clear terminology, using the expression “immanent object” sometimes to name the unreal correlate, i.e. the “content” of the act, for example in the intentionality-quote of the *Psychology* or in EL 80⁴¹, but sometimes also to name the “object *tout court*”, for example in the famous letter to Marty of the 17th of March 1905⁴².

3. The “perspectival” theory: some critical remarks

I would like now to make some critical remarks concerning the “perspectival” theory of intentionality, according to which one and the same entity, the immanent object or unreal correlate, would be “seen as” something different depending on different kinds of consciousnesses: primary consciousness would grasp the immanent object not “as presented”, but as an object “*tout court*”, i.e. as transcendent, whereas secondary consciousness would grasp it as that what it is, namely “as presented” or “as immanent” (see Figure A above). This theory seems to me to be problematic.

To begin with, the Brentanian- or Martyian-like “perspectival” theory of intentionality should probably not be understood as saying that the difference between “immanent” and “transcendent object” is a logical difference. One could refer here to some remarks of Twardowski concerning the distinction between content and object of mental acts. Twardowski, in the 6th paragraph of *On the Content and Object of Presentations*, affirms that the difference between content and object is not a mere logical distinction, depending on two different “points of view” (*Gesichtspunkt*) on one and the same entity. First of all, he stresses that nobody would defend, in the case where the object exists, that the distinction between content and object is a mere logical distinction: someone who judges about the existence of the sun does not mean the psychic content “sun”, but “something *toto genere* different from this content” (*etwas von diesem Inhalt toto genere Verschiedenes*)⁴³. But even in the case where the object does not exist, the distinction between content and object cannot be a mere logical distinction:

⁴¹ Brentano 1924: 124-125 and Brentano 2011: 35.

⁴² Brentano 1930: 87-89 and 1952: 119-121. This also explains why Kent 1984, quoted above, equates Brentano’s “immanent” object with an object *tout court*.

⁴³ Twardowski 1894: 29.

It is tempting to believe that in this case <i.e. in the case where the object does not exist> there is no real difference between content and object, but only a logical one; and that this one entity appears sometimes as content, sometimes as object, because of the two points of view from which one can look at it. But this is not so. (...) Namely, if the content and the object of a presentation were not really but only logically different, then it would not be possible, say, for the content to exist while the object does not exist. But this often happens. If one makes a true judgment which denies an object, the one must surely have a presentation of the object which one judges and denies. The object is therefore presented as an object by means of a corresponding content. Whenever this is the case, the content exists, but the object does not exist; for it is this object which is denied in a true negative judgment. If content and object were really the same, then it would be impossible for the one to exist and for the other at the same time not to exist. (Twardowski 1894: 29-30; transl. Grossmann)⁴⁴

I think that Brentano or Marty would defend exactly such position with respect to the distinction between immanent object and object *tout court*. Quite clearly, they say that the immanent object is always existent, whereas the object *tout court* is sometimes existent, sometimes non-existent (Marty, for example, affirms it in the aforementioned 5th article of the series *On Subjectless Propositions*⁴⁵).

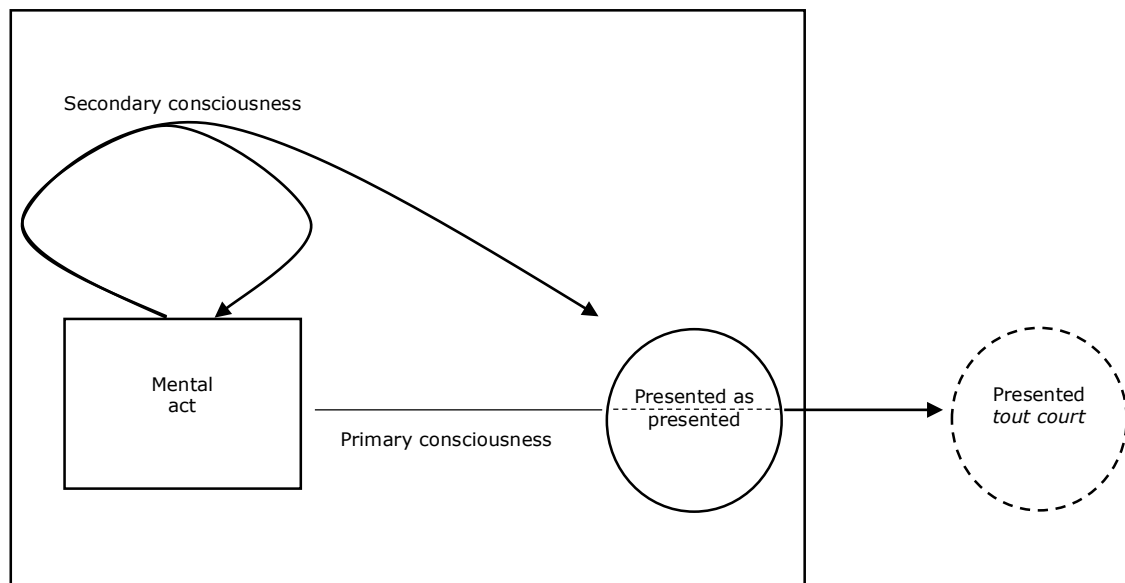
Now, as I said, I think that there is a problem with such a theory. Indeed, in this theory, primary consciousness is directed toward the immanent object, but it does not see this object *as immanent*, but as something ontologically very different from what it is. In other words, primary consciousness does not have, as an intentional term, an immanent object, but the object *tout court*. Since primary consciousness does not see the

⁴⁴ *Dass Inhalt und Gegenstand einer Vorstellung von einander verschieden seien, dürfte kaum in jenem Falle bestritten werden, wo der Vorstellungsgegenstand existiert. Wer sagt: Die Sonne existiert, meint offenbar nicht den Inhalt seiner Vorstellung von der Sonne, sondern etwas von diesem Inhalt toto genere Verschiedenes. Nicht so einfach verhält es sich mit den Vorstellungen, deren Gegenstände nicht existieren. Leicht könnte hier Einer der Ansicht sein, in diesem Falle bestehe zwischen Inhalt und Gegenstand kein realer, sondern bloß ein logischer Unterschied; Inhalt und Gegenstand seien in diesem Falle in Wahrheit Eines; nur der doppelte Gesichtspunkt, unter welchem man dieses Eine betrachten könne, lasse es bald als Inhalt, bald als Gegenstand erscheinen. Aber dem ist nicht so. (...) Wenn nämlich Inhalt und Gegenstand einer Vorstellung nicht in realer, sondern bloß in logischer Weise von einander verschieden wären, so wäre es nicht möglich, dass der Inhalt etwa existiere, während der Gegenstand nicht existiert. Gerade dieses ist aber oft der Fall. Wer ein wahres Urteil fällt, welches einen Gegenstand leugnet, der muss doch den Gegenstand, den er in verwerfender Weise beurteilt, vorstellen. Es wird also der Gegenstand durch einen entsprechenden Inhalt als Gegenstand vorgestellt. So oft dies der Fall ist, existiert der Inhalt; der Gegenstand existiert aber nicht, denn er ist es ja, der im wahren negativen Urteil verworfen wird. Wären Inhalt und Gegenstand in Wahrheit dasselbe, so könnte nicht das Eine existieren und das Andere im selben Augenblick nicht existieren.*

⁴⁵ Marty 1918: 164-166).

immanent object at all, it does not see an immanent object as the object *tout court*, but only, and strictly, the object *tout court*. Marty says that the immanent object is like an image. Yet, an image that leads to the perception of something else without being seen as an image is a peculiar kind of image, namely a *trompe-l'œil*. The immanent object, since it directly leads primary consciousness to the cognition of something that is non-immanent, functions like a *trompe-l'œil*. In sum, the immanent object is “transparent” for primary consciousness (see Figure B below).

Figure B



But in that case, the problem is that the immanent object loses its main utility. Indeed, the immanent object is supposed to give an existent term to every intentional relation. Marty, for example, says it in a letter to Husserl from the 7th of June 1901:

Yet the nature of every relation entails, in my opinion, that if one term of the relation exists, the same necessarily holds also of the other term. The intentional object must therefore exist as often as the “intention” exists. (Marty 1990: 227; transl. Mulligan and Schuhmann)⁴⁶

⁴⁶ (...) die Natur jeder Relation bringt es m.E. mit sich, dass, wenn ein Glied derselben existiert, dies notwendig auch vom anderen gilt. Der intentionale Gegenstand muss also existieren, so oft die “Intention” existiert.

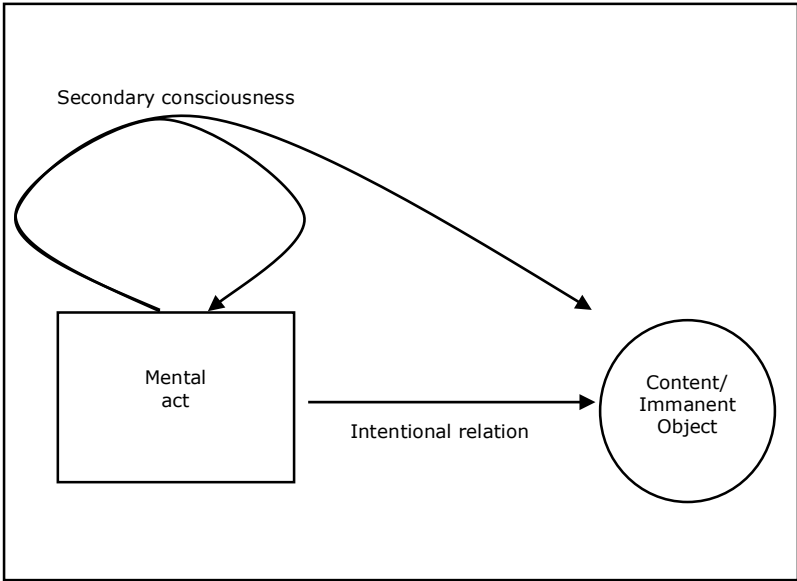
But if one considers that the immanent object is absolutely not intentionally grasped by primary consciousness, the intentional relation is not directed toward the immanent object anymore, and mental acts do not all have an existent term anymore. Thus, it becomes quite useless to admit immanent objects in a theory of intentionality. The preceding considerations could be part of the reasons that led to the rejection of such objects in the School of Brentano.

4. Conclusion: on content and object

On the basis of my analyses, I would like to conclude with some remarks of clarification on the distinction between content and object in the School of Brentano.

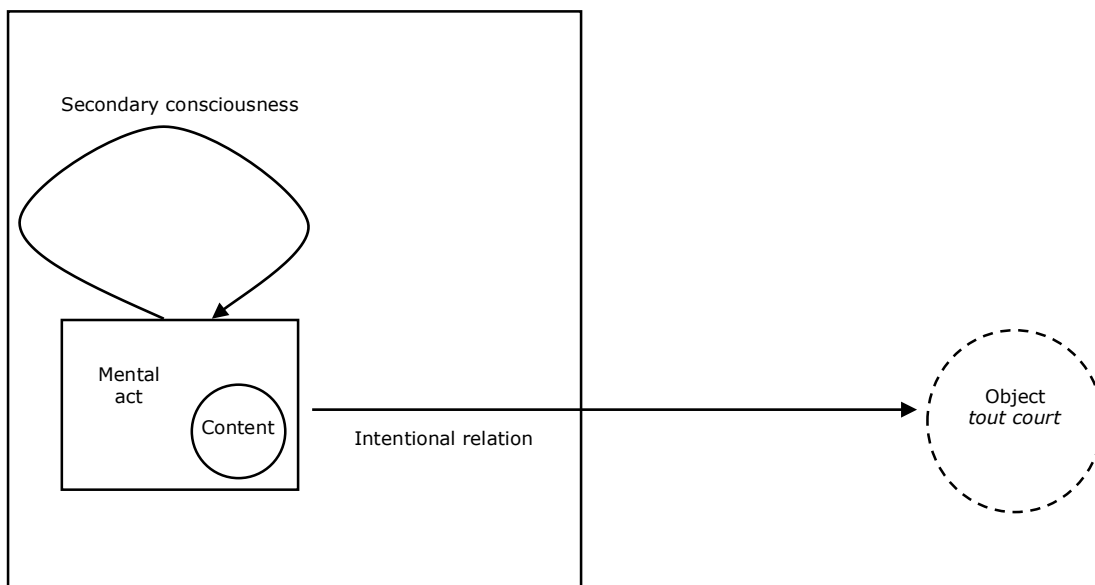
For Austro-German authors, every mental act has undoubtedly a content, in the sense that every mental act has a feature that gives to the act its intentional directedness. Thus, even if one abandons “immanent intentional terms” in his theory of intentionality, one should maintain mental contents. This is precisely what Twardowski does, in *On the Content and Object of Presentations*. As we saw it before, in Brentano, Marty and Höfler, the “content” (*Inhalt*) of the act is also an “immanent object”. It is the term of an intentional relation (see Figure C below).

Figure C



Twardowski has a very different comprehension of what a content is. For Twardowski, the content of a mental act is never the term of an intentional relation, but the content is part of the *fundament* of the intentional relation. The intentional relation has its “starting point” in the act enriched by its content, and is directed toward an object, which is understood as “object *tout court*”, and which can exist or not, be “imaginary” or even “absurd” (see Figure D below).

Figure D



More precisely, Twardowski considers that the act and the content form “a single psychic reality” (*eine einzige psychische Realität*). The act is real, whereas the content is unreal. The object, as Twardowski explicitly says, can be “real” or “unreal”, “existent” or “non-existent”, “possible” or “impossible”⁴⁷. Thus, there is no unreal correlate understood as something in front of the act anymore. Certainly, Twardowski says that the content is “presented” (*vorgestellt*), but in a peculiar sense: following a distinction found in Robert Zimmermann’s *Philosophical Propaedeutic*⁴⁸, Twardowski affirms that the content is presented “in” the presentation (*in der Vorstellung*), but not “through” the presentation (*durch die Vorstellung*). The only thing which is presented “through” the presentation, i.e. the only thing which is the term of an intentional relation, is the object

⁴⁷ Twardowski 1984: 40.

⁴⁸ Zimmermann 1867: §18 and 26, quoted and discussed in Twardowski 1984: 18 and 20.

tout court. As a consequence, the intentional relation does not always have an existent term. Twardowski says it explicitly:

It is not surprising that we assert here relations which are such that one of their terms exists, while the other does not – and hence relations between existents and nonexistents. (Twardowski 1894: 27; transl. Grossmann)⁴⁹

Even if Twardowski, in *On the Content and Object of Presentations*, says that he is following Brentano's and Höfler's theories, he is in fact not, but he is bringing something quite new in the School of Brentano: the clear distinction between content and object. This distinction, as Höfler says, took some time, and Höfler was not, according to me, the one who invented it, at least not in his *Logic*: even if Höfler, in his paper *Are we Psychologists?*, published in the *Proceedings* of the Vth Congress of Psychology held in Rome in 1905⁵⁰, mentions the fact that Twardowski attributes to him the distinction between content and object, and agrees with this attribution, Meinong, who worked with Höfler on his *Logic*, does not attribute this "invention" to Höfler or to himself, but to Twardowski. Indeed, Meinong, in *On Objects of Higher Order*⁵¹, says that he missed the aforementioned distinction in *Psychological-Ethical Researchs on the Theory of Values*, written in 1894⁵², i.e. three years after Höfler's *Logic*, and quotes Twardowski as a reference on the distinction between content and object. In *On Objects of Higher Order*, Meinong considers that a strict distinction between content and object leads to the rejection of "immanent objects", i.e. things like "the presented golden mountain, the presented difference, the presented past, the presented round square" (*der vorgestellte goldene Berg, die Vorgestellte Verschiedenheit, die Vorgestellte Vergangenheit, das vorgestellte runde Viereck*). He says that the affirmation of the existence of a "presented golden mountain" (*der vorgestellte goldene Berg*) is nothing more than the affirmation of the presentation itself. This is exactly what we will find in Brentano during so-called "reism", namely in his later theory, in which he only admits *realia*, or "res", i.e. things, in

⁴⁹ Dass hier Relationen von der Art behauptet werden, dass das eine ihrer Glieder existiert, das andere nicht, also Relationen zwischen Existierendem und Nicht-Existierendem, darf nicht befremden. A similar reading of Twardowski's theory of intentionality has been recently defended by M. van der Schaar, who holds that the "content", for Twardowski, is not the "target" of the act, and that intentionality, for him, is "a directedness of the act towards an object that transcends the act" (see van der Schaar 2016: 57 and 65).

⁵⁰ Höfler 1906: 327. This is the place where Höfler says that it took time for the distinction between content and object to be made.

⁵¹ Meinong, 1971: 382-383.

⁵² Meinong 1968.

his ontology. For example, in a text published in the volume *The Renunciation of the Unreal*, under the title “About Thinking and About *Ens Rationis*”, dated from 1907 or 1908 by Franziska Mayer-Hillebrand, the editor, Brentano affirms:

When I say: “there is a thought-of red thing” and “there is someone thinking a red thing”, I say the same thing. (Brentano 1952: 369)⁵³

The only entity that exists is someone who is thinking a mental act with a content “in it”, i.e. an act of thinking which includes the content “red”. The existence of the immanent object is rejected.

Höfler, in *Are we Psychologists?*, affirms that Brentano missed the distinction between content and object⁵⁴. It is true that Brentano and Marty, before the rejection of immanent objects, somehow equated content and object, since they admitted an internal term for every intentional relation, namely the unreal correlate or “presented as presented”. But at the same time, they distinguished between the “presented as presented” and the “presented *tout court*” or “the presented as that, as what it is presented”. It shows that they were aware of the fact that the content cannot be the ultimate target of the mental act, and that the object, in the final analysis, should not be considered as an internal entity. In fact, in a very problematic manner, they talked of two different objects for every mental act, one being a kind of mediator, an image, a sign, or maybe a *trompe-l’œil*, the other being that of which the image or sign is the image or sign. Since such a theory entails many philosophical problems, they decided to reject it. Marty, in his *Investigations Towards the Foundation of General Grammar and Philosophy of Language*⁵⁵, when he criticizes the notion of “immanent object”, quotes the *Appendix to the paragraph 11 and 20* of the *Vth Logical Investigation*, in which Husserl says:

The transcendent object would not be the object of *this* presentation, if it was not *its* intentional object. (Husserl 1984, 439.15-17; transl. Findlay)⁵⁶

⁵³ *Sage ich: “Gedachtes Rotes ist” und “ein Rotdenkendes ist”, so sage ich dasselbe.*

⁵⁴ Höfler 1906: 327 n. 1.

⁵⁵ Marty 1908: 395.

⁵⁶ *Der transzendente Gegenstand wäre gar nicht Gegenstand dieser Vorstellung, wenn er nicht ihr intentionaler Gegenstand wäre.*

One could somehow invert the proposition, and say: “if the object of *this* presentation is the transcendent object, the immanent object cannot be *its* intentional object”. As soon as one considers that the target-object of a presentation is an object *tout court*, or a presented *tout court*, one has to admit that no immanent object, unreal correlate or “presented as presented”, can be the intentional object of the presentation. It took a long time, but finally, Brentano and Marty admitted that the only thing that is presented is a presented *tout court*. Paradoxically, the “presented as presented” is, in fact, absolutely not presented. Unless one says that the word “presented”, in the reduplication, is not a modifying determination, but means “presented *tout court*”, “*Vorgestelltes schlechtweg*”. Such an interpretation of the reduplication is in no way forbidden, as Marty himself realizes in his *Investigations*:

Some people call also the immanent object of the presentation the “presented as such”. But we avoid this expression, because it is not unequivocal and has also for sure a meaning from the point of view of the one who denies the immanent objects.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ *Manche nennen den immanenten Vorstellungsgegenstand auch das “Vorgestellte als solches”. Doch vermeiden wir diesen Ausdruck, da er nicht unzweideutig ist und ganz wohl auch auf dem Standpunkte dessen einen Sinn hat, der die immanenten Gegenstände leugnet* (Marty 1908: 392 n. 1). Besides, on the fact that the reduplication “as presented” is ambiguous and applies both to the content and to the object *tout court* with two distinct meanings, see Twardowski 1984: 19-20.

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