

# A PROBLEM OF THE INTENTIONAL RELATION OF PRESENTATION IN BRENTANO'S EMPIRICAL PSYCHOLOGY

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It is well-known that Franz Brentano's *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (1874) is the work in which the problem of intentionality was reintroduced in contemporary philosophy.<sup>1</sup> There are two main reasons why Brentano focuses on intentionality here: (i) on the basis of this characteristic the field of research of psychology, the realm of mental phenomena, is separated from the field of research of natural science, the realm of physical phenomena; (ii) intentionality is the decisive criterion for differentiating the main classes of psychical phenomena in Brentanian psychology: *presentations*, *judgments*, and *emotional phenomena*.<sup>2</sup> According to the 1874 work these classes help distinguish different

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F. BRENTANO, *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt*. Bd. 1. Hrsg. von O. KRAUS, Hamburg, Meiner, 1924; *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt*. Bd. 2. *Die Klassifikation der psychischen Phänomene*. Hrsg. von O. KRAUS, Hamburg, Meiner, 1925/*Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (henceforth PES). Eds. O. KRAUS and L.L. MCALISTER. Trans. A.C. RANCURELLO et al., London, Routledge, 1995, pp. 88-89 (all parenthetical page references to this edition).

<sup>2</sup> Contemporary scholars usually neglect these aspects and read the intentionality passage from the perspective of the problem referring to the way in which consciousness relates to non-existent entities (see for instance Chisholm, who begins his discussion of the problem of intentionality in Brentano from the perspective of the orientation of the acts "upon objects that do not exist").

ways in which consciousness relates to the object. This is due to the fact that in this work physical phenomena play an important role. They are the counterparts with regard to which Brentano highlights the features of mental phenomena; the mental states related to them, the sensations or the sensory presentations, are dealt with in greater detail. On the other hand, nominal presentations receive little attention in this work. By contrast, in the EL 80 *Logik* manuscript, used by Brentano as a text for the *Deduktive und Induktive Logik* lecture during the winter semester 1869/70 at Würzburg University, he pays close attention to nominal presentation.<sup>3</sup> His explanations of this issue in the 1869/70 lecture allow us to observe how the features of mental phenomena highlighted in the intentionality passage work in the case of nominal presentation. For this reason, in what follows I shall consider the analysis of linguistic expressions in the logic lecture as directly relevant to the problem of intentionality in the class of presentations. The purpose of the above statement is to highlight a major difficulty of Brentanian psychology at the level of presentation. To put it briefly, this difficulty consists of the fact that in his *Psychology* Brentano gives a general characterisation of presentation, which clarifies its peculiarity with respect to the classes of mental acts based upon it — judgments and emotional phenomena. This characterisation — the official thesis of Brentanian psychology is: *in presentation, something only appears to consciousness, without the latter in any way positioning itself towards it* (PES, p. 81; p. 198). Here we deal with a characterisation of a class of mental acts that starts *from the object and not from the act*. It neglects an important difference between two sub-classes of presentations because it creates the impression that the intentional relation proprietary to sensory and to nominal presentation

(R.M. CHISHOLM, 'Brentano on Descriptive Psychology and the Intentional', in: E.N. LEE, and M.H. MANDELBAUM (Eds.), *Phenomenology and Existentialism*, Baltimore, Hopkins Press, 1967, p. 7; see also Crane's critical remarks on this reading grid (T. CRANE, 'Brentano's Concept of Intentional Inexistence', in: M. TEXTOR (Ed.), *The Austrian Contribution to Analytic Philosophy*, London, Routledge, 2006, pp. 21-24).

<sup>3</sup> The lecture was recently made accessible on the Internet by Robin ROLLINGER: F. BRENTANO, *Logik* (Spring 2011 edition). Ed. R. ROLLINGER, <<http://gandalf.uib.no/Brentano/texts/el/logik/norm/>> (henceforth EL80); on the topics dealt with in it see R. ROLLINGER, 'Brentano's Logic and Marty's Early Philosophy of Language', *Brentano Studien* 12/2006/2009, pp. 77-98.

is the same thing. In my opinion it is difficult to defend this thesis since intentional relations to the object proper to the two sub-classes of presentation are quite different.

Before I deal with this issue I want to clarify two aspects that I mentioned above. The first comment refers to the three fundamental classes of mental phenomena in Brentano: presentations, judgments and emotional phenomena. The law of founding mental phenomena governs the relationship between these classes. According to this law, any mental phenomenon is either a presentation or is based upon a presentation: "Nothing can be judged, desired, hoped or feared, unless one has a presentation of that thing" (PES, p. 80). In virtue of this law, in *Descriptive Psychology* Brentano designates the mental phenomena founded upon other phenomena 'superposed acts'.<sup>4</sup> I shall use this expression in what follows as a generic name for the class of judgments and emotional phenomena, both founded upon presentations. The way in which he conceives of the acts of judgment and emotional phenomena in his 1874 work, as simple judicative or affective attitudes, consisting in the positive or negative orientation towards the presented object, in its acceptance or rejection (PES, pp. 198-200; pp. 239-240), is entirely in agreement with this law. In order to accept something as existent or in order to reject it as non-existent, for example, the idea of life on Mars, I must first present it. In this way, the presented object becomes a judged object, as an accepted or rejected object in judgment. Unlike the presentation 'life on Mars', simply understood, without any for or against pronouncement, in the judgment 'There is life on Mars' I accept or consider as existent in a real way what the mentioned presentation names.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> F. BRENTANO, *Deskriptive Psychologie*. Eds. R.M. CHISHOLM and W. BAUMGARTNER, Hamburg, Meiner, 1982/*Descriptive Psychology* (henceforth DP). Trans. and ed. B. MÜLLER, London, Routledge, 1995, p. 90 (all parenthetical page references to this edition).

<sup>5</sup> For Brentano, any categorical judgment can be reduced to an existential judgment and the existential judgment is the basic form of the judgment (PSE, pp. 210-221). For example, the judgment of outer perception 'A tree is green' is to be reduced to the judgment 'A green tree is'. It must be said that the main clause under debate does not constitute for Brentano a propositional attitude directed toward its proper propositional content since he firmly rejected the existence of such contents (see Brentano's criticism of this position in the version supported by Meinong, PSE, pp. 227-228; p. 287). For him, instead, the above sentence gives expression to the judicative intentional

The second comment refers to the fact that in *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* the fundamental classes of mental phenomena are described both as different ways in which consciousness relates to the object and as distinct types of *existence of the object in consciousness*. By this expression in the 1874 work Brentano continues to use the terminology of containing in the improper way that he had used earlier in his dissertation.<sup>6</sup> This terminology allows him to treat the three basic psychical acts (presentation, judgments and emotional phenomena) as different manners in which the object is contained in the soul (as presented, judged, loved, or hated object). This remark is important to my problem because in his empirical psychology Brentano takes intentionality to be the property of mental states *to contain their object intentionally*. Starting from this idea, in the last part of the paper I shall distinguish four different senses in which mental acts contain their object. Another important idea here is that this categorization of the relations of intentional containing in Brentano intersects, but does not coincide with, the Brentanian classification of mental phenomena.

The last part of the paper will use the results of analysis for the intentional relation in sensory presentation and for the intentional relation of signification in nominal presentation as discussed in the first and second parts of the paper respectively.

relation to the presented object. In this case the relation manifests itself in the form of the belief that the presented object, the green tree, actually exists. The rejection of the propositional entities and the fact that the presented object takes the place of these entities has led interpreters to speak of the non-propositional theory of judgment in Brentano. According to it, the judgment is a specific intentional relation directed toward the presented object. (See on this topic, R.M. CHISHOLM, *Brentano and Meinong Studies*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1982, pp. 17-36; J.L. BRANDL, 'Brentano's Theory of Judgement', in: E.N. ZALTA (Ed.), *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2014 Edition), <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/brentano-judgement/>>.

<sup>6</sup> In his first work Brentano considers the accidental categories (quality, quantity, action, affection, etc.) as different kinds of existence in first substance (F. BRENTANO, *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*. Edited and translated by R. GEORGE, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1975, p. 97; p. 99; p. 108).

## 1. SENSORY PRESENTATION IN BRENTANO'S EMPIRICAL PSYCHOLOGY

In Brentanian psychology, sensations are those mental phenomena in which a certain sensory quality merely appears to consciousness or is merely given or present in it (PES, p. 198), without the latter in any way positioning itself towards it. Brentano cites as examples of sensations “hearing a sound, seeing a colored object, feeling warmth or cold”. Corresponding to them are the following sensory qualities, phenomenal contents or physical phenomena: “a color [...] which I see, a chord which I hear, warmth, cold, odor which I sense” (PES, pp. 79 f.). With respect to sensory qualities it is worth noting that there is an important difference between the manner in which they are treated in Brentano's empirical psychology and in his lectures on descriptive psychology held at the University of Vienna after 1880. In the *Descriptive Psychology* Brentano deals exclusively with sensory qualities as immanent objects of sensations of the subject to whom they belong and pays no attention to the physical forces whose action upon sense organs gives rise to them (DP, pp. 23-24; pp. 111-129). In contrast, in *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* both perspectives are addressed: sensory qualities are treated both as immanent objects of sensation and as *signs of the physical causes* that act on the sense organ.<sup>7</sup> As stated above, an important aim of focusing on intentionality in Brentano's empirical psychology is the separation of the world of mental phenomena from the world of physical phenomena, the research field of natural science. This last aspect leads Brentano to pay particular attention to the connection between physical phenomena and the physical forces that are indicated by the phenomenal contents of sensation because this correlation plays a decisive role for natural science.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Sensory qualities are signs of physical causes they indicate (PES, p. 19; pp. 98-100). These causes consist of processes of molecular vibrations, impact and pressure triggered by the physical bodies, vibrations that affect the sensory organs, stimulate the afferent nerves, and produce certain sensations: the heard chord, the felt cold, etc. (PES, p. 47).

<sup>8</sup> We encounter a problem here that is an important part of the program of the 1874 *Psychology*. Despite its significance, the problem receives little attention in the specialist literature (see on that subject my papers: I. TĂNĂȘESCU, ‘Empfindung, äußere Wahrnehmung und physisches Phänomen als Gegenstand der Naturwissenschaft in Brentanos empirischer Psychologie’, in: *Franz Brentano et*

The above characterisation of sensation is fully in line with the official thesis of Brentanian psychology on presentation: in presentation something only appears to consciousness, because Brentano's description of the intentional relation of sensation completely fulfils the condition of presentation: in sensory presentation a certain sensory quality merely appears to consciousness without the latter taking any attitude towards it, as is the case in judgments and emotional phenomena.<sup>9</sup>

Secondly, Brentano's characterisation of sensation agrees to a large extent with his description of intentionality in his 1874 work. According to the intentionality passage:

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 judgment something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on (PES, pp. 88 f.).

I do not want to go into the details here of the interpretation of this quote, which is the most cited and disputed excerpt of the Brentanian philosophy. I shall limit myself to noting that according to this quote every mental phenomenon, including sensation, is characterized (i) by the intentional inexistence of the object, (ii) by *the relation to a content*, and (iii) by a 'direction toward an object'. It is commonplace in specialist literature that by intentional inexistence of the object Brentano understands the existence in the soul as form, species or intention in the Aristotelian-Scholastic sense. In the background of this conception is the Aristotelian perspective on sensory knowledge. According to this perspective, sensory cognition consists of taking on the form of the thing without

*la philosophie* (special issue of *Revue Roumaine de Philosophie* 1-2/2011), pp. 103-131), and 'The two Theories of Intentionality in Brentano and the Program of Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint', *Brentano Studien* 13/2010/2015 (forthcoming).

<sup>9</sup> Judgments of outer perception well illustrate this attitude because they express the belief, specific for common sense, in the real existence of phenomenal qualities: there is the seen green, the felt smell, the heard sound, etc. (PES, p. 9; p. 19; pp. 93-94.).

its matter.<sup>10</sup> By 'the intentional inexistence of an object' Brentano understands exactly the result of this receiving, namely the immaterial presence of form, species or intention in the cognitive faculty.<sup>11</sup> Interpreted at the level of physical phenomenon, intentional inexistence means phenomenal existence, i.e., the existence as sensory quality or phenomenal content that appears in consciousness by the action of the physical forces on the sense organs. On the other hand, the 'relation to a content' corresponding to this existence consists of the improper containing of the cognized object in the sensory faculty, in the fact that the mental act of sensation contains

<sup>10</sup> ARISTOTLE, *De an.* II, 424a17-2; III, 431b30-432a1 (trans. J. A. SMITH in: *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. The Revised Oxford Translation (Bollingen Series, 71.2). Ed. by J. BARNES, Princeton, Princeton UP, 2 volumes, 1995; on this problem, see R. SORABJI, 'From Aristotle to Brentano: The Development of the Concept of Intentionality', in: H.J. BLUMENTHAL and H.M. ROBINSON (Eds.), *Aristotle and the Later Tradition* (Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy, Suppl. 9), Oxford, Oxford UP, 1991, pp. 226-227; pp. 247-248; V. CASTON, 'Aristotle and the Problem of Intentionality', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 58/1998, pp. 249-250; pp. 254-256; pp. 291-293.

<sup>11</sup> In his habilitation thesis, Brentano already distinguishes between being materially contained in something, and being improperly, objectively (as a form or as an object in late scholastic terms) contained in the sense organ: "Material, as a physical property, the warmth is in the warm body; as an object [objectively, I.T.] the warmth [...] is in the one who feels." (F. BRENTANO, *Die Psychologie des Aristoteles, insbesondere seine Lehre vom Nous Poietikos*, 1867 (Nachdruck Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967), p. 80 [my translation]); see too PES, p. 88; on the traditional interpretation of the intentionality quote see H. SPIEGELBERG, "Intention" and "Intentionality" in the Scholastics, Brentano and Husserl", in: H. SPIEGELBERG, *The Context of the Phenomenological Movement*, Den Haag, Martinus Nijhoff, 1981, pp. 3-26; A. MARRAS, 'Scholastic Roots of Brentano's Conception of Intentionality', in: L.L. McALISTER (Ed.), *The Philosophy of Brentano*, London, Duckworth, 1976, pp. 128-139; K. HEDWIG's groundbreaking papers: 'Intention. Outlines for the History of a Phenomenological Concept', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 39/1978-79, pp. 326-340; 'Über das intentionale Korrelatenpaar', *Brentano Studien* 3/1990/1991, pp. 47-61; 'Über die moderne Rezeption der Intentionalität Thomas-Ockham-Brentano', in: J. FOLLON and J. McEVOY (Eds.), *Finalité et intentionnalité. Doctrine thomiste et perspectives modernes. Actes du Colloque de Louvain-la-Neuve et Louvain, 21-23 mai 1990*, Paris, 1992, pp. 211-235; see also D. MORAN, 'The Inaugural Address. Brentano's Thesis', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Publications*, Suppl. 70/1996, pp. 1-26; C. McDONNELL, 'Brentano's Reevaluation of the Scholastic Concept of Intentionality into a Root-Concept of Descriptive Psychology', *Yearbook of the Irish Philosophical Society* 2006, pp. 124-171; M. ANTONELLI, 'Franz Brentano's Intentionality Thesis', in: A. SALICE (Ed.), *Intentionality. Historical and Systematic Perspectives*, München, Philosophia, 2012, pp. 109-144; I. TĂNĂSESCU, 'Franz Brentano's Dissertation and the Problem of Intentionality', in: I. TĂNĂSESCU (Ed.), *Franz Brentano's Metaphysics and Psychology*, Bucharest, Zeta Books, 2012, pp. 154-169; on the interpretation of the intentionality quote from the point of view of analytical philosophy see R.M. CHISHOLM, 'Brentano on Descriptive Psychology'; B. SMITH, *Austrian Philosophy. The Legacy of Brentano*, Chicago-La Salle, Open Court, 1994, pp. 35-45; A. CHRUDZIMSKI, *Intentionalitätstheorie beim frühen Brentano*, Dordrecht, Kluwer, 2001; D. JACQUETTE, *Brentano's Concept of Intentionality*, in: D. JACQUETTE (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Brentano*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2004, pp. 98-131; W. SAUER, 'Die Einheit der Intentionalitätskonzeption bei Brentano', *Grazer Philosophische Studien* 73/2006, pp. 1-26.

the sensory quality improperly, i.e., intentionally or phenomenally as Brentano said (PES, p. 92).<sup>12</sup>

With regard to the last phrase, ‘direction toward an object’, i.e., the direction of the sensation towards the sensory quality that it contains, can only be used here in an improper sense, namely as a simple equivalent of the relation to a content. The direction towards the phenomenal content consists exactly of the fact that the sensation merely contains its sensory quality, without thereby taking any attitude towards it, as is, for instance, the case of outer perception. But there is no direction in a proper sense here, one that would be synonymous with the *orientation* of the sensory act towards the sensory quality as distinct from the simple presence of this quality in consciousness.<sup>13</sup> In order to underscore this lack of direction I shall speak in the last part of the paper about the relation of bare intentional containing of sensation. As I shall show in the next section, in the case of nominal presentation there are elements that can be interpreted as a possible direction towards the immanent object. From my point of view this is a significant difference between the subclass of sensory presentation and that of nominal presentation. As I have already said, this difference is not reflected in the official characterisation of presentation in Brentano’s empirical psychology.

## 2. THE DIRECTION TOWARDS AN OBJECT AS A RELATION OF SIGNIFICATION

As I have remarked previously, in the *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* the problem of nominal presentation is not dealt with in sufficient detail to clearly state the nature of the intentional relation

<sup>12</sup> F. BRENTANO, *The True and the Evident*. German edition by O. KRAUS, Leipzig, Meiner, 1930. English edition by R.M. CHISHOLM. Trans. by R.M. CHISHOLM, E. POLITZER and K.R. FISCHER, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966, pp. 52-53.

<sup>13</sup> I have dealt with this problem extensively in my paper ‘Die Frage der Intentionalität der Empfindung in Brentanos Psychologie’, in: M. FÜRST, W. GOMBOCZ und CH. HIEBAUM (Eds.), *Analysen, Argumente, Ansätze*, Bd. 2, Frankfurt, Ontos Verlag, 2008, pp. 85-94. Fréchette’s paper provides an analysis of the intentionality of sensation from the perspective of contemporary philosophy of mind, and not from the traditional perspective (see G. FRÉCHETTE, ‘Brentano’s Thesis (Revisited)’, in: D. FISSETE and G. FRÉCHETTE (Eds.), *Themes from Brentano*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2013, pp. 91-119).

specific to it. The lectures on deductive and inductive logic that Brentano held at Würzburg University in 1869 allow us, however, to formulate a clear point of view of this problem. In this text, Brentano says:

The name designates in a way the *content* of a presentation as such, that is, the immanent object; in another way it designates *that which is presented by the content of a presentation*. The *former* is the meaning of the name. The *latter* is what the name names. About this we say the name belongs to it. It is that which is the exterior object of the presentation, if it exists. We name things by means of the meaning (EL 80.13.018).<sup>14</sup>

On the basis of this quote, the following observations on nominal presentation can be made: (i) unlike the sensory presentation whose relation to a content cannot be described as a direction towards the object, in the case of nominal presentation we deal with a relation to a content that can be described as such a direction; (ii) this direction consists of the fact that the word points to the meaning associated with it (EL 80.12.990; 13.024); (iii) this relation is different from the judicative or emotional attitude of the superposed acts — unlike the polarized directions of these acts, we are dealing with a unique, unpolarized intentional direction; (iv) Brentano offers within the quoted text a characterisation of nominal presentation starting from the act and not from the object, as is the case in his general characterisation of presentation.

In the logic lecture Brentano does not analyse the distinctions that exist between the two types of relations to a content specific to sensory and to nominal presentations, for instance the fact that the latter's object is abstract, while the former's is sensory. But if we take into consideration the emphasis he puts on the idea that there exists a unique intentional relation of presentation, undifferentiated as a function of its sub-classes and embodied in the fact that in presentation something only appears to consciousness, without it in any way taking an attitude

<sup>14</sup> "Der Name bezeichnet in gewisser Weise den *Inhalt* einer Vorstellung als solcher, den immanenten Gegenstand. In gewisser Weise *das, was durch den Inhalt einer Vorstellung vorgestellt wird*. Der *erste* ist die Bedeutung des Namens. Das *zweite* ist das, was der Name nennt. Von ihm sagen wir, es komme der Name ihm zu. Es ist das, was, wenn es existiert, äußerer Gegenstand der Vorstellung ist. Man nennt unter Vermittlung der Bedeutung."

towards it,<sup>15</sup> then it becomes clear that the differences between the relation of bare intentional containing of the sensory presentation and that of designating the immanent object of nominal presentation did not play any role. On the contrary, they were subsumed by the intentional relation of presentation understood as a simple appearance of the object in consciousness. Considered in the context in which it was formulated, this general characterisation of the act of presenting is correct, because despite the distinctions between them, both sensible and nominal presentations can be described as appearances of an object in consciousness. For instance, consider a source of light as a phenomenal presence of a certain red spot in consciousness or Socrates appearing to consciousness through the lens of his feature of being a son of Phainarete, and not, for instance, that of being Plato's teacher (EL. 80.13.013).

Although Brentano does not say as much, from my point of view this means that for him there are only two basic types of intentional relations, one where the subject takes, in one way or another, an attitude towards the object, and another where the object only appears to consciousness. The first is the polar intentional relation of the judgments and emotional phenomena, the second is the non-polar intentional relation, unique and specific to presentation. This last relation does not admit any polarisation on the part of the act, but only on the part of the object. I cannot see positively or negatively a white surface, but I can see either a *white* or a *black* surface. The only opposition possible here is also the opposition of the presented object, and not the opposition of the intentional relation of presentation. It is also worth noting here that these two types of relations give expression to the law of founding mental phenomena, because the polar intentional relation is specific only to phenomena founded upon presentations and is manifested as a simple judicative or affective attitude, positive or negative, towards the presented object: I *believe* or I *do not believe* in the existence

<sup>15</sup> PES, p. 81; p. 198; F. BRENTANO, *Grundzüge der Ästhetik*. Hrsg. von F. MAYER-HILLEBRAND, Hamburg, Meiner, 1988, pp. 78 ff. Regarding the tripartite classification of intentional relations in Brentano, see Husserl's remark in this regard saying that there is a much greater diversity of the species of intentional relations than those enumerated by Brentano. (E. HUSSERL, *Logical Investigations*. Vol. II. Ed. D. MORAND. Trans. J.N. FINDLAY, London, Routledge, 2001, pp. 96-97).

of life on Mars; the presentation, in turn, is characterized by the *relation of intentional containing proper to the* fact that in it something only appears or is present in consciousness, without the latter taking any kind of attitude towards what is present in it.

I shall illustrate what has just been said with an example provided by Brentano. In the case of the nominal presentation proper to the expression 'son of Phainarete', we must distinguish between the expression as such, 'the son of Phainarete', its meaning as an immanent object or mental content, and the extra-mental object *presented* through this content (EL80.13.013).<sup>16</sup> The relation between expression and its content or immanent object is named by Brentano using the terms *bedeutet* or *bezeichnet* (EL80.13.019), terms corresponding to the relation to a content or to the direction towards an object in the intentionality passage and that can be translated as 'signifies'. By contrast, in order to name the relation between an expression and an extra-mental object presented through the immanent object, Brentano used *bezeichnen* as a synonym for *nennen* (designate) (EL80.13.018 f.; 13.062). It must be observed, however, that in the case of the relation between expression and immanent object we are dealing with another type of relation to a content than what we have thus far considered as being the relation of bare intentional containing proper to sensory presentation. In order to emphasise this distinction I shall consider the expression '*der Sohn der Phänarete*' ('the son of Phainarete') as a sign (i) without signification and (ii) with signification. Starting from Brentano's thesis according to which linguistic expressions have the function of awaking in the mind of the person hearing them the presentation thought about by the person saying them,<sup>17</sup> I shall consider that the two cases occur when the expression '*der Sohn der Phänarete*' is heard by two persons, one who

<sup>16</sup> See too K. TWARDOWSKI, *On the Content and Object of Presentations. A Psychological Investigation*. Trans. R. GROSSMANN, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1977, p. 9.

<sup>17</sup> Meaningful linguistic expressions have the following functions: they give expression to the mental phenomenon taking place in the person saying them; they awake the presentation associated with this expression in the mind of the person I speak to — the function of signification evinced by the text; they name their object via their signification. (see F. BRENTANO, *True and Evident*, pp. 45-48, and K. TWARDOWSKI, *On the Content and Object*, pp. 9-10, whose clear systematization I followed here.)

does not understand German and another who does. In both cases, the expression in question is not only a simple physical phenomenon, a simple sound formation, but also a meaningful expression, with an inherent function of signification. Despite all this, in the first case, the expression does not come to be correlated with the meaning it has, but only remains a phenomenal content of a certain auditory act since the one who hears it does not understand the language.<sup>18</sup> However, if the expression is heard by someone who does understand German, then it is not considered only as a phenomenal content of an auditory act, but two other supplementary relations are conferred on its corresponding phenomenal content: on the one hand, it refers to or signifies its meaning, the property of being a son of Phainarete conceived of as a mental content or immanent object associated with it; on the other hand, the expression names or designates the extra-mental object it refers to and names it precisely through the fact that it signifies the immanent object or the meaning of the expression '*der Sohn der Phänarete*'. Strictly speaking, we could say that in the case of nominal presentation we do not deal with one, but with two immanent objects or contents: (i) the expression *qua* sound-specific phenomenal content of the corresponding auditory act and (ii) the meaning associated with it, described in turn by Brentano as an immanent object of consciousness. In this context, the corresponding phenomenal content is not conceived any longer in its function as a sign of the physical cause producing it, but as a sign with meaning, a function manifested through the fact that it points to the meaning as an immanent object.

As said above, in the case of sensory presentation we deal with a relation to a content that cannot be understood as a direction towards an object in the proper sense. On the contrary, the relation of signification of nominal presentation does not consist in the simple presence of a certain phenomenal content in consciousness, but in the fact that this content refers to — is directed towards — the abstract immanent object associated with it. This 'reference' can be interpreted as a 'direction towards an object' in the sense of the intentionality passage. This direction

<sup>18</sup> See also E. HUSSERL, *Logical Investigations*, I, pp. 191-192 and II, pp. 117-118.

constitutes, at the level of the class of presentation, a different type of relation to a content than the relation of bare intentional containing of sensory presentation. In this latter case, we are only dealing with the presence in consciousness of a phenomenal content of a certain type, in our case auditory. The relation of nominal presentation consists, however, of the fact that the phenomenal content points to the meaning as an immanent object, but an object that no longer has a sensory character. I have mentioned, however, that Brentano does not give any importance to this distinction of the relation to a content in the case of the two types of presentations, but rather describes presentation in general through a feature common to them, namely by saying that in presentation something appears in consciousness: Socrates appears through his property of being a son of Phainarete, the source of light appears as a red spot on the horizon.

### 3. BARE INTENTIONAL CONTAINING AND THE RELATION OF SIGNIFICATION

In the intentionality passage Brentano said:

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 (PES, p. 88).

In what follows, I shall consider the relation to a content from this quote as a relation of intentional containing<sup>19</sup> and in order to give a categorization of this relation in Brentano I shall use it in four different ways: a general one, valid for all classes of psychological phenomena, and three particular ones, valid, in turn, for the sub-class of sensory presentations, for the sub-class of nominal presentations, and for the classes of superposed acts. Proceeding in this way, I begin from the presupposition that, in Brentanian empirical psychology, consciousness *manifests itself in a real way through three types of intentional relations*: the relation of

<sup>19</sup> On this problem, see D. MÜNCH, *Intention und Zeichen. Untersuchungen zu Franz Brentano und zu Edmund Husserls Frühwerk*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1993, pp. 68-73.

*bare intentional containing* of the sensory presentation, the relation of *signification* of nominal presentation, and the *attitude* towards the object of the superposed acts. These types of intentional relation do not coincide with the Brentanian classification of mental phenomena, for the following reasons: (i) the superposed classes are grouped together because the same type of intentional relation is specific to them, namely a polar intentional attitude, either judicative or affective, towards the object; (ii) the Brentanian general characterization of presentation focuses on the relationship between *object* and act — *in presentation, something only appears to consciousness* (PES, p. 198), and does not pay any attention to the major differences existing between the two subclasses of presentations discussed above at the level of their intentional relation with the content.

As a consequence, the following types of intentional relations can be distinguished in Brentanian psychology:

1. The relation of intentional containing in general — a relation expressing the general property of psychical phenomena which intentionally contain their object: “We can, therefore, define mental phenomena by saying that they are those phenomena which contain an object intentionally within themselves” (PES, p. 89). As said above, we are taking into consideration a containing *of the object in the act* in an improper, intentional sense. This relation offers a general characterization of all psychical phenomena abstracting from the differences between them and considers that they are different ways of containing the object of the act in an improper, intentional sense.<sup>20</sup> As a consequence, we deal here with a characterization of the *intentional relation as a genus* of the species of intentional relations proper to Brentanian psychology. As such, it applies to all classes of mental acts, but it does not confer specificity to any of them because one must add to it the specific difference of each class in part: the attitudinal neutrality of the class of presentation or, in contrast, its positively-negatively polarized orientation

<sup>20</sup> We also find such general characterisations in *Descriptive Psychology* (DP, p. 23; p. 139; p. 155).

specific for superposed acts.<sup>21</sup> In the intentionality passage Brentano illustrates the intentional containing under discussion by exclusively referring to the Aristotelian-Scholastic thesis of immaterial, intentional presence of the object known in the faculty of knowing.

This relation of intentional containing in general is specified in Brentanian psychology through the following three species of intentional relations:

1<sub>a</sub>. The relation of containing in an improper sense of sensory presentation, which I shall name a relation of *bare intentional containing*. In this context, the 'bare' adjective has the role of indicating the specificity of sensory presentation by contrast with nominal presentation. Unlike this presentation which, as shown above, can be characterized by a direction towards an immanent object, the intentional relation of sensory presentation cannot be described as orientation, direction, or aiming towards such an object. It only contains its object, without in any way being oriented in an attitudinal sense towards it. Brentano generally describes sensory presentation by saying that in it a certain sensible quality (the heard sound, the seen colour, the felt warmth or cold, etc.) appears to consciousness, without any attitude towards them being taken by the subject presenting them (PES, pp. 80-81). For instance, the sensory act will not consider the perceived sensible qualities as existent or non-existent, as is the case with perceptual judgments (PES, pp. 93-94). This specific difference of sensory presentation is added to the proximate genus of the intentional relation of presentation, a genus consisting in its attitudinal neutrality, in the fact that in presentation something only appears to consciousness (PES, p. 81; p. 198).

1<sub>b</sub>. The relation of intentional containing specific to the superposed acts of judgment and emotional phenomena. Unlike attitude neutrality specific to the class of presentations, in the case of the superposed classes we are dealing with a relation to a content manifesting itself as a direction towards the immanent object and which admits the positive-negative

<sup>21</sup> According to the mereological terminology in the *Descriptive Psychology*, the intentional relation as a genus constitutes a logical part of its species. This part can be separated in thought from each of these species through abstraction (DP, p. 23).

polarity: I accept or I reject, judicatively or affectively, the existence or the value of something (PES, pp. 198 f.).

1<sub>c</sub>. The relation of intentional containing specific to nominal presentation. We deal here with the relation of signification between the expression and its sense as an immanent object of consciousness. For instance, there is the relation between the word 'man' and the sense of rational animal associated with it and conceived of as an immanent object (EL80-13.018). In addition to the relation of bare intentional containing of sensory presentations and in addition to the polarized intentional attitude of superposed acts, this constitutes *a third type of intentional relation to a content in Brentanian psychology*. Although this sense will be especially important for the Brentanian discussion of intentionality after 1904, the *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* does not offer sufficient elements for its analysis.

There are no indications in his psychology that Brentano would have noticed the difference between the kinds of intentional relations of the two subclasses of presentations. Furthermore, I think that even if he had noticed it, he would not have given it any importance because at that time he remained deeply committed to the idea of presentation as mere presence of the object in consciousness.<sup>22</sup> The fact that in the aesthetics lectures he categorically rejects the idea that there could exist an important distinction between the intentional relation of sensation, on the one hand, and the intentional relation of presentation in general, on the other, confirms what I have just said because it clearly shows that Brentano was not at all willing to give up the idea of the uniqueness of the intentional relation of presentation.<sup>23</sup> His texts also show that he would not have agreed with his students' idea of distinguishing additional types of intentional relations beyond what he himself had distinguished.<sup>24</sup> At the same time,

<sup>22</sup> From a historical point of view, in the background of this thesis lies the Aristotelian-Scholastic thesis according to which knowledge consists of the mere presence of an object in the consciousness, without its matter (see for instance K. HEDWIG, 'Über das intentionale Korrelatenpaar', pp. 51-52).

<sup>23</sup> F. BRENTANO, *Grundzüge der Ästhetik*, pp. 78-80.

<sup>24</sup> See in this regard the repeated criticism of Meinong's thesis according to which assumptions constitute another type of intentional relation than the three relations distinguished by Brentano (PSE, pp. 285-286; ID., *Die Abkehr vom Nichtrealen*. Mit Einleitung und Anmerkungen hrsg. von F. MAYER-HILLEBRAND, Hamburg, Meiner, 1974, p. 144; p. 219); against the criticism of the Brentanian

this is in agreement with the thesis of the unique attitudinal neutrality of presentation.

The above can also be expressed in the following way: of all the mental acts analysed in Brentanian psychology, sensory presentation is the one that is characterized by a relation of intentional containing in the most proper sense, because it really only contains its object, without in any way including any attitude towards it. Although in the intentionality passage Brentano uses the terminology of containing with respect to all psychological acts, it must be observed that superposed acts contain their object in an improper sense, because the emphasis is put in their case on the judicative or affective attitude towards the object, and not on its presence in consciousness. In addition, the intentional relation of nominal presentation is not one of containing in the most proper sense, because the name does not contain its signification, understood as an immanent object, but rather points to it.

Looking at things from another perspective, it could be said that, of all the mental phenomena, sensation is the phenomenon whose character as an act, i.e., as an intentional relation, is the least developed, reducing it to the simple presence of a sensory quality in consciousness. On the other hand, in the case of superposed acts and, to a lesser extent, in the case of nominal presentation, the intentional relation acquires a more appropriate form, irreducible to the simple presence of an object in consciousness.

Establishing these fundamental meanings of the expression 'relation to a content' or relation of intentional containing is important for the current discussion of intentionality because it allows us to avoid the lack of precision of Brentanian terminology.<sup>25</sup> This lack comes precisely

thesis in this debate see Husserl's statements according to which there are many more kinds of intentional relations than distinguished by Brentano (*Logical Investigations*, II, pp. 96-97).

<sup>25</sup> Broadly speaking, the specialist literature can be characterized as follows: (i) it focuses on the intentional relation of presentation; (ii) it tacitly acknowledges the uniqueness of the intentional relation of presentation; (iii) it considers nominal presentation as the paradigmatic case of the intentionality of presentation, and (iv.a) it is either concerned with the problem of intending non-existent objects (R.M. CHISHOLM, 'Brentano on Descriptive Psychology'; G. SEGAL, 'Intentionality', in: F. JACKSON and M. SMITH (Eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Philosophy*, Oxford, Oxford UP, 2005, pp. 283-284), or with elaborating a theory of the immanent object in Brentano (A. CHRUDZIMSKI, 'Brentano and Aristotle on the Ontology of Intentionality', in: D. FISSETTE and

from the fact that in the intentionality passage Brentano characterizes all mental acts through their generic difference, namely through the fact that they have a relation to the content or that they contain their object. However, the generality of this expression complicates the analysis of his conception of intentionality because, as we have just seen, behind it there are different sorts of intentional relations.

Furthermore the distinction between the relation of bare intentional containing of sensation and the relation of signification of nominal presentation sheds new light on certain aspects of Brentano's psychology. If we take into account, for instance, Brentano's reistic turn after 1900,<sup>26</sup> then we may notice that the intentional relation considered in making this turn is not the intentional relation of sensation, but first of all the relation of signification of nominal presentation which refers to abstract names like virtue or redness or to thought-of things like

G. FRÉCHETTE (Eds.), *Themes from Brentano*, pp. 121-139); (iv.b) or it is concerned with clarifying the traditional sources of Brentano's concept of intentionality. In this last respect there can be distinguished two moments: (iv.b1) the debate over the Aristotelian-Thomist origin (H. SPIEGELBERG, "Intention" and "Intentionality"; A. MARRAS, 'Scholastic Roots'), or the Aristotelian-conceptualist origin of the problem mentioned above (see in this respect the groundbreaking studies of K. Hedwig, who convincingly argued that Brentano's theory of intentionality relies on the interpretation of Aristotelian thinking through the conceptualist theses taken from the Neo-Scholastic literature of his time (K. HEDWIG, 'Der scholastische Kontext des Intentionalen bei Brentano', in: R.M. CHISHOLM and R. HALLER (Eds.), *Die Philosophie Franz Brentanos*. Beiträge zur Brentano-Konferenz Graz, 4-8 September 1977, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1978, pp. 73-74; HEDWIG, 'Über die moderne Rezeption', pp. 218-223); (iv.b2) the pioneering studies of W. Sauer and M. Antonelli interpreting Brentano's intentionality through the distinction intentional correlate (the content immanent to the act) – intentional object. The latter is conceived as modified distinctional part of the act (W. SAUER, 'Die Einheit der Intentionalitätskonzeption', pp. 12-14), or as Antonelli puts it "the object, which is an extra-mental reality, is a *modified* distinctional part of the mental act and of its intentional correlate". (M. ANTONELLI, 'Franz Brentano's Intentionality Thesis', p. 132, see also p. 121, pp. 123-125.) In order to support this distinction, the authors argue following the Aristotelian-Thomistic path, but they still have to make clear the relation between their path and the conceptualist context of Brentano's intentionality, and also the relation between their own distinction intentional correlate – intentional object and the distinction intentional content – intentional object of presentation in Husserl.

<sup>26</sup> According to Brentano's late reistic position nothing other than things exist and can be represented. On this problem see especially F. BRENTANO, *Die Abkehr*, as well as the editor's introduction to this work; see also R. KAMITZ, 'Franz Brentano. Wahrheit und Evidenz', in: J. SPECK (Ed.), *Grundprobleme der großen Philosophen. Philosophie der Neuzeit III*, Göttingen, Ruprecht, 1983, pp. 175-185; M. ANTONELLI, *Seiendes, Bewußtsein, Intentionalität im Frühwerk von Franz Brentano*, Freiburg/München, Karl Alber, 2001, pp. 265-267; A. CHRUDZIMSKI and B. SMITH, 'Brentano's Ontology. From Conceptualism to Reism', in: D. JAQUETTE (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Brentano*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2004, pp. 197-220.

centaurs.<sup>27</sup> According to the standpoint maintained until 1900, such nominal presentations refer to their objects through the relation to the immanent content described above based on the logic lecture. At the V<sup>th</sup> International Psychological Congress in Rome in 1905, Alois Höfler refuted Brentano's thesis that the object the mental act bears a relation to is immanent to the act. Höfler argued that in adopting this thesis Brentano confounds the content (the immanent object) of the act with the intentional object, i.e., the object presented through it.<sup>28</sup>

In the same year, Brentano answered Höfler's allegation in a letter to Anton Marty. According to this letter, for him the immanent object never was the object of presentation.<sup>29</sup> His answer makes an important point within a process of increasing criticism of his previous idea that abstract names like redness or virtue are meaningful expressions, i.e., have a signification as their immanent object through which they refer to certain proprieties of things. In his dissertation Brentano already sustains this position by saying that universals as such are not in things, but only in thought: the redness as redness is not in things, but only in the understanding.<sup>30</sup> However, the red of an individual thing is a physical part or accidental form of it that falls under the concept of redness.<sup>31</sup> In an earlier letter to Marty from 1901 Brentano revised his previous position and held that there are not such physical parts of things as the Aristotelian forms.<sup>32</sup> Abstract names, and this will be

<sup>27</sup> F. BRENTANO, *True and Evident*, p. 52.

<sup>28</sup> A. HÖFLER, 'Sind wir Psychologen?', in: S. DE SANCTIS (Ed.), *Atti del V congresso internazionale di psicologia*, Roma, Tipografi del Senato, 1905, p. 327. In his own logic, written with Meinong's participation, Höfler makes the distinction between the two objects. (A. HÖFLER, *Logik*. Unter Mitwirkung von A. MEINONG, Wien, F. Tempsky, 1890, pp. 6-7.) Four years later, Twardowski took up this distinction, and applied it to objectless presentations: the presentations of the negation of any object, for instance the presentation of *nothing*, the impossible presentations, for instance the *round square* presentation, or the imaginary presentations, for instance the presentation of *Jupiter* or of a *golden mountain*. (K. TWARDOWSKI, *On the Content*, pp. 18-19.)

<sup>29</sup> F. BRENTANO, *True and Evident*, pp. 52-53.

<sup>30</sup> ID., *On the Several Senses*, p. 26; p. 76; p. 135; p. 159; see too EL 80. 13.024; 13.025.

<sup>31</sup> ID., *On the Several Senses*, pp. 91-92; see to ID., *True and Evident*, p. 121; ID., *Die Abkehr*, p. 355; pp. 362-363.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43; ID., 'EL. 66. Sprechen und Denken. (16. VIII. 1905)', in: J. SRZEDNICKI, *Franz Brentano's Analysis of Truth*, Den Hague, Nijhoff, 1965, pp. 118-119; PES, pp. 322-323. This letter to Marty is considered by O. Kraus as the starting point of Brentano's criticism of his early position on universals as immanent objects of thought. (F. BRENTANO, *True and Evident*, p. 110.)

Brentano's position till the end of his life, are not autosemantic, but synsemantic, i.e., they have no signification or immanent object in their own right, but they become significant only when used in connection with other expressions.<sup>33</sup> As a consequence there is no immanent object or signification associated with them and through which they call something real. What we usually consider as an immanent object is actually a meaningless linguistic expression with no corresponding immanent object.<sup>34</sup> All that is thought and presented in using such expressions are only real individual things.<sup>35</sup> In his late period Brentano's strategy regarding abstract expressions and in general the names of thought-of things consists of reducing these expressions to expressions that refer to individual things: when someone thinks about redness he actually thinks about something red and when someone thinks about virtue he actually thinks about a virtuous person.<sup>36</sup>

The above shows that kind of the presentation playing the main part in Brentano's changing to his late reism was not sensory presentation, but nominal presentation. The recent publication of the EL80 manuscript makes it possible to distinguish clearly between the intentional relations of these presentations. This distinction is still lacking both in Brentano and in the contemporary exegesis on the matter.<sup>37</sup>

KEYWORDS: intentionality, sensation, nominal presentation, empirical psychology, Franz Brentano.

#### SUMMARY

In this paper, I argue that Brentano's analysis of the mental act of presentation faces a major difficulty. Specifically, Brentano provides a description of the intentional

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 45-48; ID., 'EL. 66', pp. 116-117.

<sup>34</sup> ID., *True and Evident*, pp. 56-57; ID., *Die Abkehr*, pp. 101-102.

<sup>35</sup> ID., *True and Evident*, pp. 46-47; p. 49; PSE, pp. 300-301, pp. 321-322.

<sup>36</sup> ID., p. 46; p. 48; ID., 'EL. 67. Wahrheit ist eine Art von Übereinstimmung. (1907)', in: J. SRZEDNICKI, *Franz Brentano's*, pp. 124-125.

<sup>37</sup> I would like to thank Susan Gabriel for her linguistic corrections.

relation of presentation that neglects an important difference between sensory presentation and nominal presentation. I also maintain that there are four kinds of intentional relations in Brentano's empirical psychology: 1) intentional relation as a genus, 2) the relation of bare intentional containing of sensory presentation, 3) the relation of signification proper to nominal presentation, and 4) the direction towards an object as it occurs in judgments and emotional phenomena.

