

FROM TRANSCENDENT EXISTENCE, INTENTIONAL EXISTENCE TO REAL EXISTENCE

THE PROBLEM OF F. BRENTANO'S "INTENTIONALITY"

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Abstract

It is accepted that the theme of "intentionality" highlighted in modern philosophy originated from F. Brentano who distinguished physical phenomena from mental phenomena on the basis of "intentional inexistence". Be that as it may, he failed to thematize and terminologize "intentional" which, as a result, is replaceable by "objective". From an empirical standpoint, set by Brentano, mental phenomena have real existence as well as "intentional inexistence", whereas physical phenomena merely have intentional existence, and commonsense phenomena have transcendent existence. Of the three kinds of phenomena, only the mental one can be given evident judgment. The conversion of theme from "intentional" to "intentionality" in phenomenology and analytic philosophy shows

later scholars' misunderstanding and recreation of Brentano's relevant thought.

Key words: intentional inexistence, intentionality, Brentano, phenomenology, analytic philosophy.

Od transcendentne eksistence, intencionalne eksistence do realne eksistence. Problem »intencionalnosti« pri F. Brentanu

Povzetek

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Sprejeto je mnenje, da téma »intencionalnosti«, kakor jo je osvetlila moderna filozofija, izvira od F. Brentana, ki je fizične fenomene razlikoval od mentalnih fenomenov na osnovi »intencionalne ineksistence«. Toda ni uspel tematizirati in terminološko opredeliti »intencionalnega«, kar je pripeljalo do posledice, da ga je mogoče zamenjati z besedo »objektivno«. Z empiričnega stališča, kakršnega zastopa Brentano, mentalne fenomene zaznamuje realna eksistenca in »intencionalna ineksistenca«, medtem ko posedujejo fizični fenomeni zgolj intencionalno eksistenco in zdravorazumski fenomeni transcendentno eksistenco. Izmed treh vrst je samo o mentalnih fenomenih mogoče razsojati z evidenco. Sprememba tematskega poudarka od »intencionalnega« do »intencionalnosti« znotraj fenomenologije in analitične filozofije kaže na nerazumevanje in predruženje pomena pri kasnejših preučevalcih Brentanove misli.

Ključne besede: intencionalna ineksistenca, intencionalnost, Brentano, fenomenologija, analitična filozofija.

It is accepted that the theme of “intentionality” highlighted in modern philosophy, notably phenomenology, originated from F. Brentano. Nonetheless, “intentionality” remains to be thematized in Brentano’s thought. I will argue that the “intentional” in Brentano’s philosophy is replaceable by “objective”, and that the conversion of theme from “intentional” to “intentionality” both in phenomenology and in analytic philosophy shows later scholars’ misunderstanding and recreation of Brentano’s relevant thought. As a matter of fact, more than differentiating mental and physical phenomena as is generally thought by people, Brentano introduced “intentional inexistence” into modern philosophy for the sake of, all the more, differentiating “transcendent existence”, “intentional existence” and “real existence”.

I. “Intentional” and “objective”

Not a few scholars note that Brentano has never employed “intentionality” (*Intentionalität*), not even the noun form, i.e., “intention” (*Intention*). That which is used by him is the adjective form, namely “intentional” (*intentionale*), say, “intentional inexistence of an object” (*intentionale Inexistenz eines Gegenstandes*), “intentional existence” (*intentionale Existenz*), “intentional relationship”, or the like. Even the adjective “intentional” is seldom seen in his published writings.¹ In the first edition of his masterpiece, to wit., *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*,² he even failed to make any particular elucidation with regard to “intentional”. On the one hand, “intentional” emerges in the phrases constituted by “inexistence”, “existence”, etc., around which successive elucidations are primarily performed, e.g., the “intentional inexistence of an object” is elucidated as “a reference to a content”, or “a direction toward an object”, “immanent objectivity”, or something; on the other hand, in phrases having “intentional” as a constituent, Brentano usually offers similar expressions to it. For instance, in “the intentional inexistence of an object”, he replaces “intentional” with “mental”; in “intentional existence”, he parallels

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1 Cf. Spiegelberg 1976, 119; Margolis 2002, 131–134; Ni 2002, 346.

2 All the relevant citations are obtained from *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (Brentano 1995; I use PES-E for short in the article). As to the key German words, I took *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt* (Brentano 1924) as a reference.

“phenomenal” with “intentional”. This indicates that in the period when Brentano wrote *Psychology*, the meaning of “intentional” remained to be fixed, namely, it had different meanings in different contexts. In the meanwhile, as was factually shown, it was mentioned in passing more than being discussed qua a topic.

1911 witnessed the republication of Brentano’s *Psychology* entitled *The Classification of Mental Phenomena*. The difference was merely that some appendices and footnotes were added. That which is rather conspicuous is that a long note was added to “intentional” which, as a note made in his late years, can be seen as his verdict on “intentional”. He thus said:

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This expression had been misunderstood in that some people thought it had to do with intention and the pursuit of a goal. In view of this, I might have done better to avoid it altogether. Instead of the term “intentional” the Scholastics very frequently used the expression “objective.” This has to do with the fact that something is an object for the mentally active subject, and, as such, is present in some manner in his consciousness, whether it is merely thought of or also desired, shunned, etc. I preferred the expression “intentional” because I thought there would be an even greater danger of being misunderstood if I had described the object of thought as “objectively existing,” for modern-day thinkers use this expression to refer to what really exists as opposed to “mere subjective appearances.” (Brentano PES-E, 180)

Apparently, until his late years, Brentano still considered that the expression of “intentional” could be completely evaded, which is to say that it failed at last to obtain a nomenclature identity. That which replaced it best was “objective”. On this account, our theme will be promoted to the analysis of “objective”.

“Objective” is the adjective derivative of the noun form, “object”. In Brentano, the meaning of *object* is virtually the same as that of *Gegenstand*. *Gegenstand* is compounded by two words, i.e., *Gegen-* means “toward, opposed to, versus”, and *-stand* means “stand, be on one’s feet”, and the compound meaning is “to stand opposed to”. In common sense, “object” means that one thing stands opposed to another thing, both of which are factually existent. In the era of

Brentano, common philosophical ideas already approached common senses, and that is why he said, “Modern-day thinkers use this expression [‘objectively existing’—the author] to refer to what really exists as opposed to ‘mere subjective appearances.’” The factually existent object deposited by the common idea as such belongs, by Brentano’s standpoint, in “transcendent existence”.³ It is destined that scientific and philosophical views different from that of common sense, namely, albeit all that is seen in these three views can be said “empirical” (*Empirischen*), they are *de facto* drastically different “experiences”.

Brentano labeled his “psychology” as “from an empirical standpoint” wherein “experience” (*Erfahrung*) may be understood as that in commonsense, e.g., “life experience” or “historical experience” in daily usage, but also as the strict one in scientific-philosophical sense. The latter can be further classified into two states: one is the experiential object, say, the red (thing) that is seen; the other is the experiencing act, say, the act of “looking” itself, and here the “experience” is a verb. It is primarily at verbal level that Brentano employed “experience” which can be further classified into that of “observation” (*Beobachtung*) and of “inner perception” (*innere Wahrnehmung*), there being an interval between the former and the object of experience whereas the latter is not the case. The “interval” is of nothing but two sorts: spatial and temporal. When one experiences via external sensation, there is a spatial interval between the object and him; when one reflects on the act of sensation, there is a temporal interval between the act of reflection and the reflected act of sensation. For instance, when I see a red (thing),⁴ there is a spatial interval between the object and me; when I reflect on the act of my “looking” just now, there is a temporal interval between my act of “reflection” and that of “looking”. Both situations of interval belong to the experiences of observation or reflection the materials obtained via which are taken by each specific science as the basis. There is no spatial interval between the experience of inner perception and the object of

3 Here “transcendent” corresponds to “immanent”, but also to “empirical” in the strict sense of the word.

4 Brentano’s thought experienced great changes around 1905. He said: “One of the most important innovations is that I am no longer of the opinion that mental relation can have something other than a thing [*Reales*] as its object.” (Brentano PES-E, xxvi). This change however will not exert essential influences on the theme here.

experience, in fact, they are simultaneous. For instance, at the same time when I look at something, I perceive that I am looking, or at the same time when I lose my temper, I perceive that I am losing my temper. Brentano called this experience of inner perception “inner consciousness” (*inneren Bewusstsein*) having “immediate, infallible self-evidence [*Evidenz*]” (Brentano PES-E, 91).

Another great difference between the experience of inner perception and that of observation rests in their objects. The object of the experience of inner perception is “mental phenomena” whereas that of the experience of observation is “physical phenomena”, the former including the acts of presentation, judgment, and love-or-hate, the latter the colors, shapes seen, the sound heard, and the warmth and smell felt, or the like. A question may arise therefrom: should the primary mental phenomena as the object of reflection or introspection belong to mental or physical phenomena? Take the aforementioned reflections with respect to the acts of “looking” and “losing temper” as the example. To be sure, the acts of looking and losing temper belong to mental phenomena; when they are reflected on, nevertheless, the looking and losing temper will experience the change of their qualities of act. The change as such of mental phenomena occurs via the act of reflection, whereas the act itself becomes the mental phenomenon. In this connection, there is a temporal interval between the primary mental phenomenon as the object of reflection, on the one hand, and the act of reflection, on the other, the latter being a mental phenomenon whereas the former a physical one. A transition from mental to physical phenomena occurs here: the “looking” or “losing temper” as the act itself belongs to mental phenomena, which as the objects of reflection belong to physical phenomena. The fundamental difference lies in the fact that mental phenomena run at present, whereas the physical phenomena become the object in the interval.

In Brentano’s view, a mental phenomenon itself can be presented into its own object without any modification. This is because it embraces in itself an “inner consciousness” or “inner perception” which accompanies the mental act to the end. It can have an immediate originary perception of mental act on the one hand, and, on the other hand, it will not bring about any extra gains or losses to the mental act. For instance, when looking, I can perceive that I am looking, and when losing temper I can perceive that I am losing temper. When

I do not reflect on these acts intentionally, my perception of looking and losing temper will not influence the running acts of them. “Inner consciousness” or “inner perception” is the ultimate form of perception in mental acts, which is to say that it cannot—and there is no necessity for this, either—be perceived by the successive consciousness. The consciousness or perception without interval with its object, as such, is called by Brentano “immanent objective”, which is also the due meaning of mental phenomena. Brentano thus said:

Every mental phenomenon is characterized by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object, and what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously, reference to a content, direction toward an object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a reality [*Realität*]) or immanent objectivity. (Brentano PES-E, 88)

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Thus, there emerge three sorts of “objectivity”: the “transcendent objectivity” between the subject and the object in the common sense; the “external objectivity” constructed by mental phenomena and the physical phenomena upon which they are directed; and the “immanent objectivity” constructed by the inner consciousness of mental act and mental act itself. In rigorous philosophical analyses, the objectivity in the common sense can be suspended tentatively. Every mental act, however, embraces external and immanent objectivities. To this connection, when Brentano said “Every mental phenomenon includes something as the object within itself”, the “object” includes immanent as well as external ones. Take “looking” as an example, its external object is the color (thing) that is seen, and its immanent object is the act of looking itself. Here the “external object” is fundamentally identical to a “physical phenomenon”. Brentano also called external object “primary object” (*primärem Objekt*), and immanent object “secondary object” (*sekundärem Objekt*). Hence: there is also a transition between primary and secondary objects. Brentano retained this idea till his late years. He thus wrote: “All memories and expectations that refer to our own mental experiences have these experiences as their primary objects, and have themselves only as their secondary objects or a part thereof.” (Brentano PES-E, 278; cf. also Brentano

1981, 57) Generally speaking, in terms of genetic procedures, primary object is the basis, namely, the sound is prior to the hearing. This is not necessarily the case, though. Say, at dark night, or in a situation so silent that there is no sound whatsoever, albeit no external object (primary object) is seen or heard, the act of looking or listening (secondary object) can still exist; we can still reflect on the looking or listening without any external object. This is to say that it can again transfer to primary object. The case is similar also with “mood”. The mood of “vacuity” or the fear of “nothing” may have no primary object, or they would not be genuine; vacuity or fear *qua* a secondary object, however, have objectivity, or we would not sense our own mood of vacuity or fear. Of course, by saying so, I do not mean sensing in reflections, but that in the immediate inner consciousness or inner perception accompanying vacuity or fear.

II. Transcendent existence, intentional existence and real existence

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Essentially speaking, Brentano’s differentiation between external and immanent objects, viz., between primary and secondary objects is aimed to distinguish real existence from the intentional one. He said:

We said that mental phenomena are those phenomena which alone can be perceived in the strict sense of the word. We could just as well say that they are those phenomena which alone possess real existence [*wirkliche Existenz*] as well as intentional existence. Knowledge, joy and desire really exist. Color, sound and warmth have only a phenomenal and intentional existence. (Brentano PES-E, 92)

The “in the strict sense of” “perception” means that the word “perception” originally bears the meaning of “real”. In German, the first half of the word “*Wahrnehmung*” is “true” (*wahr*). Brentano’s “inner perception” is *de facto* “perception”. Strictly speaking, “external perception” is not perception in the true sense of the word in that it lacks direct evidence and, “as we have seen, the phenomena of the so-called external perception cannot be proved true and real even by means of indirect demonstration.” (Brentano PES-E, 91)

According to the aforementioned reminder of Brentano as regards to the replacing of “intentional” with “objective”, we can see that “intentional existence” of physical phenomena means that the phenomena of color, sound, warmth, etc., belong to “objective existence”, namely, color is the object of seeing, sound of hearing, and warmth of touching. The “object” here refers to the external object of a mental act, to wit., primary object. On the other hand, mental phenomena such as knowledge, joy, and desire, etc., are immanent objects, and hence they also first and foremost belong to intentional existence. Different from physical phenomena, they further own a “real existence” in addition to the intentional one. Where does the “real” come from? Brentano thus said:

We went on to define mental phenomena as the exclusive object of inner perception; they alone, therefore, are perceived with immediate evidence. Indeed, in the strict sense of the word, they alone are perceived. On this basis we proceeded to define them as the only phenomena which possess actual existence [*wirkliche Existenz*] in addition to intentional existence. (Brentano PES-E, 97)

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Plainly, mental phenomena own real or actual existence due to nothing but the fact that they “are perceived with immediate evidence”. This opens up a brand new path promoting our cognition to “existence”.

In Brentano’s thought, the theme of “existence” is founded in the area of the act of judgment. Judgment means to affirm whether or not an object exists. The object of the affirmation may be either internal (mental) or external (physical), even transcendent (commonsense). “Judgment” in Brentano’s terminology is by no means that which is upheld by predecessors, namely, assorting accidentence to a subject like “I am looking”, “The table is yellow”, or the like. Brentano called traditional proposition “categorical proposition”, contending that to probe into the true or false of a judgment, one must convert all categorical propositions into “existential propositions”. The previous two propositions can thus be converted into “I am the looking I”, “There is a yellow table”. Seen from the perspective of traditional logic, there are the following four sorts of categorical propositions: particular affirmative proposition, universal negative proposition, universal

affirmative proposition, and particular negative proposition. In Brentano's view, all four sorts of propositions can be converted into existential propositions without changing their meanings. In each sort of proposition, Brentano gave an example for the sake of specific display: categorical proposition "A man is sick" means the same as the existential proposition "A sick man exists," or "There is a sick man." The categorical proposition "No stone is alive" means the same as the existential proposition "A living stone does not exist," or "There is no living stone." The categorical proposition "All men are mortal" means the same as the existential proposition "An immortal man does not exist," or "There is no immortal man." The categorical proposition "A man is not learned" means the same as existential proposition "An unlearned man exists," or "There is an unlearned man." (cf. Brentano PES-E, 213). Apparently, the objects of judgment in Brentano's examples are all transcendent in the common sense. This also indicates that conversion of categorical propositions into existential ones is nothing but that on the syntactical structure, and as to whether the judgment is true or false, and whether its object is unobvious or evident, they can be tentatively suspended during the process of the conversion as such.

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How, after a categorical proposition is converted into an existential one, can we affirm the trueness or falseness of the latter? Brentano finds: "A judgment is true if it attributes to a thing something which, in reality, is combined with it, or if it denies of a thing something which, in reality, is not combined with it."⁵ It can thus be inferred: if a judgment affirms that an object exists which however does not, then the judgment is false; if a judgment affirms that an object does not exist which however does, then the judgment is also false. Apparently, whether the result of the judgment is true or false, it must be traced back to whether or not the affirmed object is existent. On the contrary, we can also infer the existence of the judged thing from a true affirmative judgment: "To say that an affirmative judgment is true is to say no more nor less than that its object is existent." (Brentano 1969, 74) The truth of the judgment is thus interconnected with the existence of the judged object, and Brentano called the "truth" as such

5 Quoted according to Parsons 2002, 183. This reminds us of Alfred Tarski's famous definition: "'Snow is white' is true, if snow is white." Genealogically, Tarski can be said to be the disciple's disciple of Brentano.

“a true in the sense of a being” (ibid., 73). Of course, “existence” here can be transcendent, intentional, and even real. Correspondingly, this is true also of different meanings and standards at different levels.

In this line, as to the various types of existential objects of judgment, in what sense are the existence and the truth guaranteed? As was mentioned before, seen from the strict empirical standpoint, the objects of judgment are of nothing else than three types, namely: “transcendent object”, “external object”, and “immanent object”. The transcendent object belongs in sphere of common sense which determines its existence. The true or false of the judgment of this object is also made in the common sense. The “true” as such belongs, in strict sense, to the sphere of opinion. Seen from Brentano’s stance, the external object is a physical phenomenon, and is merely of intentional existence, but of no real existence. That is to say, physical phenomena do not have immediate evidence, and the judgment about their existence originates from a belief in existence. As to this sort of judgment having no evidence and being determined merely by belief, Brentano called it blind judgment. Correspondingly, the true or false concluded via blind judgment is merely that in the sense of belief. Contrariwise, the immanent object as a mental phenomenon possesses real existence, namely, mental phenomena have immediate evidence. Strictly speaking, the real existence of mental phenomena takes its immediate evidence as premise. The judgment with mental phenomena as its objects is evident judgment. The object of “real existence” is completely identical to that of the true evident affirmative judgment, say, if “I am looking” is a true evident affirmative judgment, that means the looking I really exists. The truth of the judgment as such is the “true” in the strict sense of the word, namely, it means a real existence.

Albeit Brentano weakened Aristotle’s differentiation of various meanings between the substance and the accident of “existence”, at the level of the existence of commonsense, physical, and mental phenomena, he made the rigorous heterogeneous differentiation between transcend, intentional, and real existences. That which corresponds to this is the differentiation between blind commonsense, the “true” of belief and the “true” of evidence. Brentano’s outstanding explorations indicate that “ontology” and “epistemology” are originally one and the same albeit they are separated by force. The differentiation

between transcendent, intentional, and real existences is supposed to be traced back to that between common sense, correct belief, and immediate evidence at the level of the cognitive mode. Correspondingly, there are three drastically different perspectives viewing the world: common sense, natural sciences, and rigorous philosophy.

III. From “intentional” to “intentionality”

After Brentano, both the sphere of continental philosophy and that of Anglo-American philosophy developed, without previous agreement, their respective theories of “intentionality”. Due to the limitation of the theme and length of this article, I can only briefly discuss the approaches of these two theories from the standpoint of Brentano.

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In Brentano, “intentional” is non-thematized and completely avoidable. His disciple, Husserl, however, “adopted the term [intentionality—the author] as an inclusive title for a number of pervasive phenomenological structures.” (Husserl 1931, 242) When introducing “intentional”, Brentano originally intended to differentiate, in essence, the physical from the mental phenomena, contending that the former merely had intentional existence whereas the latter had real existence. The “real existence” here refers to the judgment made by evidence of inner perception regarding mental phenomena. Husserl, plainly, did not intend to differentiate between physical and mental phenomena. Early in *Logical Investigations*, he has performed modifications as regards to this fundamental differentiation of Brentano:

I may doubt whether an outer object exists, and so whether a percept relating to such objects is correct, but I cannot doubt the now experienced sensuous content of my experience, whenever, that is, I reflect on the latter, and simply intuit it as being what it is. There are, therefore, evident percepts of “physical” contents, as well as of “psychical”. (Husserl 1970, 865)

Plainly, albeit Husserl summarily misunderstood Brentano's "physical phenomena" as his own "outer object";⁶ this "outer object" is nothing but the "transcendent object" suspended by Brentano. Brentano's "physical phenomena" presented via perceptions, however, were converted by Husserl into the "sensuous content of my experience", really (*reell*) experienced in his view. In Husserl's view, mental phenomena in Brentano's terminology are also really experienced. On this account, there is no longer strict differentiation between mental and physical phenomena, and hence the essential distinction as to evident and non-evident judgments between intentional and real existences can be easily omitted. Since the really experienced content will not be evidently intuited unless after being "reflected", and the case is the same with both mental and physical phenomena, "there are, evident percepts of 'physical' contents, as well as of 'psychical'". Hence, in Husserl, the present evidence in inner perception is converted into intuitive evidence in reflection. The predicament that Brentano once tried to overcome arises again: how can the intermittent reflections guarantee that mental phenomena do not lose their truth? Presumably, what concerns Husserl is not the flowing mental phenomena themselves, but the understanding and reconstruction of the various phenomena in reflective intuition. This, therefore, needs a steady structure as the basis of analysis, and the "intention(ality)" connecting consciousness and objects is exactly qualified for this ideal frame. As a consequence, in Husserl, the meaning of "intention(ality)" extended from "being directed

6 Husserl contends: "[...] he [Brentano—the author] consequently gives the name of 'physical phenomena', not merely to outer objects, but also to these contents [present as real parts in perception—the author]." (Husserl 1970, 864) Husserl, however, failed to give support to this affirmation. According to Oskar Kraus, an authoritative expert on Brentano: "In citing examples of physical phenomena, Brentano intends to bring in first of all examples of 'physical phenomena' which are given directly in perception. Thus he enumerates: colors, shapes, musical chords, warmth, cold, odors. In each of these cases we are concerned with objects of our sensations, what is sensed. Now 'a landscape, which I see' has slipped in among these examples. But it was obvious for Brentano that I cannot see a landscape, only something colored, extended, bounded in some way. [...] Thus Husserl accuses Brentano of having confused 'sense contents' with 'external objects' that appear to us and of holding that physical phenomena 'exist only phenomenally or intentionally.' But this accusation is shown to be wrong." (Brentano PES-E,79)

upon” to “hitting upon”, and then to “construction”. Each extension meant the sublimation of “intentionality” in Husserl’s system of thought, so much so, that it, at last, became “a concept which at the threshold of phenomenology is quite indispensable as a starting-point and basis.” (Husserl 1931, 245) After Husserl’s thought was transferred to transcendental phenomenology, the theme of “intentionality” was carried out via the analyses as regards to “*noesis*” and “*noema*”, and what was thought, *qua* the essence, presented in reflections again constituted the formal and material ontological theme. Brentano employed “intentional” for the sake of differentiating and being evidently engaged in the present mental act existing in real fashion, Husserl, however, extended and fixed it as “intentionality” and constructed therefrom another “*eidetic*” world. In this vein, Husserl suspended the “transcendent” object and further invented a “transcendental” one. It is thus not hard to see why Brentano criticized his disciple for the latter’s being indulged in theoretical reflections but ignoring ethical practices (cf. Spiegelberg 1981, 132)

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Obviously, Scheler’s concept of “intention” originated from Husserl rather than Brentano. When he says, “this feeling therefore has the same relation to its value-correlate as ‘representing’ has to its ‘object’, namely, an intentional relation” (Scheler 1973, 258), his “object” is nothing but Husserl’s “*noema*”, *qua* the “essence”, only that in him, the correlate of the act of feeling is value *qua* the “essence”. In Brentano’s view, whether it is the object or the value as essence, it does not have immediate evidence, and hence is not qualified for a “real existence”.

Heidegger’s early thought intended to offer guidance through devoting attention towards practical life, and hence he mercilessly criticized his supervisor’s phenomenology inclining to theorization, and, simultaneously, he believed that intentionality on which Husserl relied was nothing other than an expression of his inclination to theorization. That is to say, rather than being an originary phenomenon, intentionality is one needing founding. During the period of *Being and Time*, Heidegger believed that intentionality should be founded upon the transcendence of *Dasein* and upon the ecstatic temporality (cf. Heidegger 1993, 49 and 363). At the level of evidence, the difference between “transcendence” as such of *Dasein*, on the one hand, and “transcendent being” in the common sense, suspended from the very beginning by Brentano

and Husserl, on the other, is hard to make, and it is due to the lack of rigor and evidence that “transcendent existence” was suspended. Of course, the two parties laid emphasis on different points: Heidegger aimed to grasp the fundamental structure and meaning of existence, whereas Brentano tried to be correctly engaged in various mental acts in the presence of evidence. Be that as it may, the trace of the “really existent” “mental act” can still be seen in the “actual *Dasein*” of *Being and Time*.

In the English world of philosophy, Roderick M. Chisholm can be said to be the most influential in introducing and developing Brentano’s thought. It is also in him that Brentano’s thought relevant to “intention” suffered intentional or unintentional distortion. He once said:

The phenomena most clearly illustrating the concept of “intentional inexistence” are what are sometimes called psychological attitudes; for example, desiring, hoping, wishing, seeking, believing, and assuming. When Brentano said that these attitudes “intentionally contain an object in themselves”, he was referring to the fact that they can be truly said to “have objects” even though the objects which they can be said to have do not in fact exist. Diogenes could have looked for an honest man even if there hadn’t been any honest men [...] but physical—or non-psychological—phenomena, according to Brentano’s thesis, cannot thus “intentionally contain an object in themselves”. In order for Diogenes to sit in his tub, for example, there must be a tub for him to sit in. (Chisholm 1976, 141–142)

Comparing this interpretation of Chisholm with Brentano’s relevant thought, we will see that the former’s “physical phenomena” is the “transcendent object” in the latter’s view, and the real existence of the former’s “mental phenomena” means that the subject can really have some mental attitude albeit toward some objects that may “exist” or “not exist” in transcendent or the common sense. This is already quite different from Brentano’s thought that “[p]hysical phenomena possess only a phenomenal and intentional existence, whereas psychical phenomena alone possess real existence as well as intentional existence.” Chisholm did not directly equate the “real existence”

of mental phenomena with “transcendent existence”, yet he understood the former by virtue of the latter; in the meanwhile, he failed at last to resist the temptation and equated physical phenomena or “intentional existence” with “transcendent existence”—the tub with a physical phenomenon. This is the origin from which the later intermingled situations in the discussions of intentionality in the English world of philosophy originated.

It is not hard to see from the above citation that Chisholm confused from the very beginning “mental phenomena” with “mental attitudes”, to which was exactly what Brentano objected. Brentano intended to replace “intentional” with “objective” primarily because “some people thought it [intentional—the author] had to do with intention and the pursuit of a goal.” Of course, Chisholm’s misinterpretation of “mental phenomena” from the stance of linguistic analytic philosophy also opened the way for the communication—albeit on the basis of misunderstanding—between Brentano’s thought and analytic philosophy. Once applied to the propositions of utterance, “mental attitude” will immediately transform into “propositional attitude” which, exactly, is the primary position where linguistic philosophy discusses about “intentionality”.

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Language-oriented is the dominant inclination of linguistic analytic philosophy, which is severely criticized by Searle who belongs to the same camp. He says: “We cannot explain the intentionality of the mind by appealing to the intentionality of language, because the intentionality of language already depends on the intentionality of the mind.” (Searle 1999, 85) Seen in this aspect, compared with Chisholm, Searle’s “intentionality” is nearer to Brentano’s “intention”. Nevertheless, the meaning of “intentionality” in Searle’s view is: “[Intentionality] is the general term for all the various forms by which the mind can be directed at, or be about, or of, objects and states of affairs in the world.” (ibid., 90) Seen in this line, Searle’s understanding of “intentionality” remains at the level of the common sense.⁷ What he considers via intentionality remains “transcendent existence”; he has missed “intentional existence”, let

7 Dennet also had similar comments in this regard. Cf. Dennett 1993, 193–205.

alone “real existence”. Even when he starts from “the first person”,⁸ the case remains unchanged.

90 years ago, when Heidegger was editing Husserl’s *Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins* (*Lectures on the Consciousness of Internal Time*), he seized the opportunity to say: “*Auch heute noch ist dieser Ausdruck kein Lösungswort, sondern der Titel eines zentralen Problems*. [Even today, this expression of intentionality is not a password, but the title of a central problem.]” (Husserl 1966, xxv) If Brentano would reawaken 100 years after he had left the world, he would have accepted this assertion with pleasure.

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