

Belief-that and Belief-in: Which Reductive Analysis?

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Abstract. Let propositionalism be the thesis that all mental attitudes are propositional. Anti-propositionalists typically point at apparently non-propositional attitudes, such as fearing a dog and loving a spouse, and play defense against attempts at propositional analysis of such attitudes. Here I explore the anti-propositionalist's prospects for going on the offensive, trying to show that some apparently propositional attitudes, notably belief and judgment, can be given non-propositional analysis. Although the notion that belief is a non-propositional attitude may seem ludicrous at first, it is admirably defended by Franz Brentano, whose analysis I propose to expound, update, and deepen here. The basic strategy can be thought of as follows. First, although the grammar of belief-that reports clearly suggests a propositional attitude, the grammar of belief-*in* reports suggests instead an 'objectual' attitude. Second, with some ingenuity all belief-that reports can be paraphrased into belief-in reports. Third, given certain general considerations, this paraphraseability recommends the view that the psychological reality of belief states is objectual rather than propositional. Nonetheless, I will argue, there are **two** very real costs associated with this non-propositional analysis of belief.

Introduction

On the face of it, some of our psychological attitudes are propositional and some are objectual. Judging that the weather is nice is propositional, liking ice cream is objectual.¹ Some philosophers have claimed that this is an illusion, and in fact *all* attitudes are propositional. Thus, John Perry writes:

The phenomenon of intentionality suggests that attitudes are essentially relational in nature: they involve relations to the propositions at which they are directed... An attitude

seems to be individuated by the agent, the type of attitude (belief, desire, etc.), and the proposition at which it is directed. (Perry 1994: 387-8)

Other philosophers have insisted that not all attitudes are propositional – some are objectual. Here is Michelle Montague:

Simply put, objectual attitudes resist a propositionalist analysis. Mary loves Nancy. She seeks the fountain of youth. She has you in mind. She contemplates the sky. She wants Nancy's car. These intentional attitudes appear to be relations that hold simply between thinkers and non-propositional objects, rather than between thinkers and propositions. (Montague 2007: 507)

Very few philosophers have held that in fact *no* attitudes are propositional – that *all* are objectual. Perhaps Hume held this view. One philosopher who certainly did is Franz Brentano. Brentano explicitly writes that 'All mental references refer to things' (Brentano 1911: 291), where a 'thing' is an individual object or concrete particular. His argument for this cannot be appreciated without a detailed account of his entire philosophy of mind. Short on space, here I will restrict myself to his case for the thesis that *judgment* is an objectual attitude. This thesis would already be of first importance, since judgment and belief are customarily taken to be the paradigmatic propositional attitudes. This seems antecedently very plausible: you can love Jane, but you cannot judge Jane (in the relevant sense), or judge that Jane. And yet, I will argue, Brentano's case for an objectualist account of judgment is surprisingly compelling. Although the case has some local holes in it, I will argue that they can be filled reasonably satisfactorily.

I start, in §1, with some background on Brentano's notion of judgment, as it emerges from his classification of mental states. In §2, I offer an initial exposition of his objectualist account of judgment for analytic philosophers. In §3, I reconstruct and tighten Brentano's case for the objectualist account. In §4, I consider some key objections.

1. Judgment in Brentano's Taxonomy of Mental States

The task of Chap. 5-8 of Book II of Brentano's *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (Brentano 1874) is to identify the 'fundamental classes' of mental states. His assumption is that the mental domain is structured by genus/species relations, so that some kinds of mental state are species of others. For example, color experience is a species of visual experience, which in turn is a species of perceptual experience. The highest genus is simply *mental state*. What Brentano calls the 'fundamental classes' are the classes or kinds of mental state which are species of only one higher genus. That is, they are species only of the genus *mental state*. (Compare color experience, which is a species of the genus *mental state* as well, but also of other genera, such as visual experience and perceptual experience.) What Brentano seeks in his 'fundamental classification,' then, are the highest mental genera save the highest one, i.e. the second-to-highest mental genera.

According to Brentano, there are three such classes: presentation or apprehension (*Vorstellung*), judgment (*Urteil*), and 'interest' (*Interesse*) or 'emotion' (*Gemütsbewegungen*) (Brentano 1874: 198). He also claims that judgment and interest are 'grounded in' presentations (1874: 80, 198),² but appears to also allow a presentation to occur without grounding other states. Unlike presentation, judgment and interest are each divided into two opposing kinds: judgment into acceptance (*Anerkennung*) and rejection (*Verwerfung*), interest into love (*Liebe*) and hate (*Hasse*).³ Let us consider each class in turn.⁴

The fundamental class Brentano calls judgment covers any mental state that in the first instance presents what it does as true or false (veridical or falsidical, accurate or inaccurate, and so on):⁵

By 'judgment' we mean, in accordance with common philosophical usage, acceptance (as true) or rejection (as false). (Brentano 1874: 198)

Importantly, this includes not only the products of conceptual thought, such as belief and judgment in the more familiar sense, but also perceptual experience. A visual experience of a yellow lemon has veridicality conditions in the same sense belief has

truth conditions. Both are in the business of *getting things right*. Accordingly, Brentano writes that ‘all perceptions are judgments, whether they are instances of knowledge or just mistaken affirmations’ (Brentano 1874: 209). What characterizes judgment is this kind of *truth-directedness*. Note well: this is an idiosyncratic use of the term ‘judgment,’ but it does not undermine the significance of the thesis that all judgments are objectual attitudes. As a universal thesis, it applies also to judgments in the more familiar sense, that of a product of conceptual thought canonically reported with the use of ‘that’-clauses. In other words, judgments in the familiar sense form a subset of judgments in Brentano’s sense; so Brentano’s objectual account of the latter is *eo ipso* an objectual account of the former.

Brentano’s second fundamental class covers a large group of phenomena, including emotion, affect, the will, and algedonic experiences of pleasure and pain. Brentano laments the absence of a satisfactory name for this class, and calls it alternately ‘interest,’ ‘emotion,’ or (often) ‘phenomena of love and hate’ (Brentano 1874: 199). What unifies the phenomena in this category is that they present what they do as good or bad. The deep nature of this category thus contrasts with the *truth-directedness* of judgment and is characterized by *goodness-directedness*:

Just as every judgment takes an object to be true or false, in an analogous way every phenomenon which belongs to this class takes an object to be good or bad. (Brentano 1874: 199; see also 1874: 239)

Wanting a beer presents beer as good, but so does taking pleasure in the beer, wishing for beer, liking beer, deciding on beer, and so on. In truth, the modern technical notions of ‘pro attitude’ and ‘con attitude’ are perfect terms for Brentano’s positive (‘love’) and negative (‘hate’) kinds of interest state.

Brentano’s other fundamental class is presentation or apprehension.⁶ This is supposed to be an intentional state that in itself presents what it does neither as true or false nor as good or bad, but in an entirely neutral manner. Its most general characterization is thus this: ‘We speak of a presentation whenever something appears to us’ (Brentano 1874: 198). This is the sense in which presentation

grounds judgment and interest: every state of judgment or interest is also a presentation, but not every presentation is either a judgment or an interest. For to present something as true or good you must present it at all, but you can present something without presenting it as true or good. Paradigmatic examples of this are acts of merely entertaining or contemplating something – when you contemplate something, it appears to you neither as true/false nor as good/bad; it just appears to you. Importantly, however, any mental state that encodes commitment neither to the truth/falsity nor to goodness/badness of what it presents (e.g., supposition) will qualify as a mere presentation in Brentano's classification.⁷

The notion of presentational *mode* is crucial to Brentano's classification. The idea is that different kinds of mental state present what they do *in different ways*. The difference between them is not in *what* they present but in *how* they present. Importantly, Brentano's presentational modes are not Frege's – they are not aspect of a state's (fine-grained) *content*, but of its *attitude*. When you judge that $2+2=4$, you are mentally committing to the truth of $2+2=4$. But this commitment is built into the attitude you are taking toward $2+2=4$, it does not show up in the content of your judgment. We might put this by saying that the judgment that $2+2=4$ does not present $2+2=4$ as true, but rather *presents-as-true* $2+2=4$. Presenting-as-true is a mode or modification of the presenting. Similarly for the other presentational modes. When you deny that $2+2=5$, you are mentally committing to the falsity of $2+2=5$, but the commitment is built into the attitude of your denial: your denial does not present $2+2=5$ as false, but rather *presents-as-false* $2+2=5$. Likewise, your love of ice cream *presents-as-good* ice cream (rather than presenting ice cream as good) and your disapproval of jingoism *presents-as-bad* jingoism (rather than presenting jingoism as bad).

Brentano's notion of judgment, then, is the notion of a mental state employing the presentational mode of either presenting-as-true or presenting-as-false. This includes mental states that we do not normally count as judgments, such as perceptual experiences, but in addition it includes what we do normally count as

judgments – conceptual thoughts committed to the veracity of their contents. All those states, according to Brentano, are objectual attitudes.

2. The Belief-In Theory of Judgment

The core of Brentano's theory of judgment can be represented as the conjunction of two theses. The first is that *all judgments are existential*, the second that the existence-commitment involved in existential judgments is an *attitudinal property* of theirs. That is:

EXISTENTIAL :: For any judgment J, J is an existential judgment.

ATTITUDINAL :: For any existential Judgment E, E's existence-commitment is an attitudinal property of E.

In this section, I offer a preliminary explanation and motivation of the two theses. The remainder of the chapter will consider the case for them in more detail.

According to EXISTENTIAL, every judgment is in the business of affirming or denying the existence of something. Thus the judgments that there are marine mammals and that there are no flying dogs are paradigmatic. We are accustomed to think that not all judgments are like this – some are in the business of doing more than just affirming or denying the existence of something. Many, it is natural to think, involve an element of *predication*: rather than commenting on what there is, they make a claim about what something is *like*, what *properties* it has. Thus, the judgment that all dogs are cute predicates cuteness of dogs, thereby 'claiming' that dogs have a certain property, not (just) that they exist. Brentano, however, insists that predication is an accident of language that does not reflect the psychological reality of judgments. (More on that in §4.) In reality, judging that all dogs are cute is just judging that *there is no non-cute dog*. It thus comments on what there is after all.

To show that this generalizes, Brentano systematically goes over the four types of categorical statement in Aristotle's square of opposition (A, E, I, and O) and

shows that they are all reducible or 'traceable back' (*rückführbar*) to existential statements (Brentano 1874: 213-4, 1956: 121):

(A) <All dogs are cute> is traceable to <There is not a non-cute dog>.

(E) <No dogs are cute> is traceable to <There is not a cute dog>.

(I) <Some dogs are cute> is traceable to <There is a cute dog>.

(O) <Some dogs are not cute> is traceable to <There is a non-cute dog>.

Brentano's talk of statements 'being traceable back' to other statements suggests he has something like *paraphrase* in mind: 'All dogs are cute' is paraphraseable into 'There is not a non-cute dog.' Such statements can *express* judgments, or they can be embedded into corresponding statements that *report* judgments: 'S judges that all dogs are cute' is paraphraseable into 'S judges that there is no non-cute dog.'⁸

Once all categorical statements are shown to paraphrase into existential ones, it is easy to show that hypotheticals follow suit (Brentano 1874: 218).⁹ For example:

(H) <If some dog is three-legged, then it is cute> is reducible to <There is not a non-cute three-legged dog>.

Conclusion:

The reducibility/traceability (*Rückführbarkeit*) of categorical statements (Sätze), indeed the reducibility of all statements which express a judgment, to existential judgments is therefore indubitable. (Brentano 1874: 218)

More cautiously, all statements of *Aristotelian logic* turn out to be disguised existentials. We will have to consider other types of statement in §3.

According to EXISTENTIAL, then, all acts of judging are forms of mentally committing to something's existence or nonexistence. According to ATTITUDINAL, now, the existence-commitment which existential judgments carry is an aspect of their *attitude* rather than *content*. On this view, mental commitment to the existence of *x* is not an aspect of *what* the judgment presents but of *how* it does the presenting.

In other words: an existential judgment's commitment to the existence of x is not a matter of presenting x as existent, but a matter of presenting-as-existent x . Thus, to judge that some dogs are cute is to perform a mental act that presents-as-existent cute dogs, that is, presents cute dogs in an existence-affirming *manner*.¹⁰

The attitudinal account of mental existence-commitment is unsurprising given that, for Brentano, what characterizes judgment in the first instance is the attitudinal property of presenting-as-true. If all positive judgments present-as-true and all truth is existential, it stands to reason that positive judgments should turn out to be characterized by presenting-as-*existent*.

More generally, if the commitment to something's existence or nonexistence does not show up in judgments' content, then the content is exhausted by the individual object whose existence is affirmed or denied. If a judgment that a three-legged dog exists simply presents-as-existent a three-legged dog, then what is presented (in that mode) is exhausted by a certain kind of individual object: a three-legged dog. On this view, then, judgment turns out to be an *objectual* rather than *propositional* attitude. To that extent, Brentano's theory of judgment casts it as continuous with such states as loving Jane and fearing a dog. Judgments are always directed at some sort of individual object, but present-as-existent/nonexistent that object. The object at which one's judgment is directed can be quite complicated – a cute dog, a cute flying dog, a three-legged non-cute flying dog, etc. – but in any case what is presented by the judgment is always some kind of individual object. It is never any entity of a different ontological category, such as a proposition or a state of affairs (Brentano 1930: 108). Accordingly, for Brentano the truthmakers of existentials are not states of affairs consisting in things' existence, but the things themselves. He writes:

... the being of A need not be produced in order for the judgment 'A is' to be... correct; all that is needed is A. (Brentano 1930: 85)

In a slogan: the truthmakers of (positive) existentials are not existences but existents.¹¹ The reason this is possible is that the content of judgments is exhausted by individuals, not individuals' *existence*.

It might seem odd to posit a *cognitive* attitude directed at objects and not propositions or states of affairs. Typical objectual attitudes such as love and fear are *emotional* attitudes, and the suspicion may arise that the objectual structure is special to such attitudes. But in fact, we do speak not only of belief-that but also of belief-*in* – as in 'Jimmy believes in Santa Claus.' Belief-*in* is clearly a *cognitive objectual attitude*: the content of Jimmy's state is exhausted by some individual object, Santa Claus, the commitment to whose existence comes in at the level of attitude, through the attitude of believing-*in*.¹² So essentially, Brentano's theory of judgment can be summarized thus:

BIT :: All positive judgments are *occurrent acts of believing-in*; all negative judgments are *occurrent acts of disbelieving-in*.¹³

Judging that some dogs are cute is just performing a mental act that presents-as-existent a cute dog, that is, occurrently believing in a cute dog; judging that no dogs can fly is just performing a mental act that presents-as-nonexistent a flying dog, that is, occurrently disbelieving in a flying dog.

To be sure, because of a long philosophical tradition of treating propositional attitudes as fundamental in cognition, it is natural for us today to think of 'S believes in *x*' as shorthand for 'S believes that *x* exists.'¹⁴ For Brentano, this gets the order of analysis exactly wrong. The more fundamental notion is belief-*in*, precisely because it captures correctly the psychological structure of judgments, in particular the locus of existence-commitment in the attitude rather than content. Accordingly, Brentano would propose to take 'S believes in *x*' as fundamental and consider 'S believes that *x* exists' a cumbersome and misleading way of saying the same thing. This allows us to paraphrase the reports of Aristotelian categorical and hypothetical judgments more straightforwardly:

- (A*) 'S judges that every dog is cute' \Leftrightarrow 'S disbelieves in a non-cute dog'
- (E*) 'S judges that no dog is cute' \Leftrightarrow 'S disbelieves in a cute dog'
- (I*) 'S judges that some dog is cute' \Leftrightarrow 'S believes in a cute dog'
- (O*) 'S judges that some dog is not cute' \Leftrightarrow 'S believes in a non-cute dog'
- (H*) 'S judges that if a dog is three-legged then he is cute' \Leftrightarrow 'S disbelieves in a three-legged non-cute dog'

Here, ' \Leftrightarrow ' just means 'can be paraphrased into.' The arrow is bidirectional because paraphraseability is a symmetric relation: if ' p ' is a good paraphrase of ' q ,' then ' q ' is an equally good paraphrase of ' p .' It is the philosophical *substance* of Brentano's theory of judgment that in each case it is the right-hand-side report that captures correctly the structure of judgment, even though it is the left-hand-side report that is more common in everyday speak.

I call Brentano's theory of judgment the *Belief-In Theory*, or BIT for short.¹⁵ According to BIT, all judgments are conscious acts of (dis)believing in something (some kind of individual object). Brentano's terminology is different, of course. He calls the cognitive objectual attitude that embodies mental commitment to something's existence 'acceptance' or 'acknowledgement' (*Anerkennung*) and the cognitive objectual attitude embodying commitment to nonexistence 'rejection' or 'denial' (*Verwerfung*). However, the associated verbs ('accepting,' 'acknowledging,' 'rejecting,' 'denying') can perfectly grammatically take propositional complements. 'Believing in' and 'disbelieving in' have this advantage, that they can only take objectual complements. They are thus better for expressing Brentano's theory.¹⁶

Whatever the terminology, a crucial aspect of BIT is that judgment is an objectual attitude:

OBJECTUAL :: All judgments are objectual attitudes.

OBJECTUAL follows from EXISTENTIAL and ATTITUDINAL given that (dis)belief-in is an objectual attitude. We may formulate the master argument as follows:

- 1) All token beliefs are existential (EXISTENTIAL);

- 2) All existential beliefs are beliefs-in (ATTITUDINAL);
- 3) All beliefs-in are objectual attitudes; therefore,
- 4) All token beliefs are objectual attitudes (OBJECTUAL).

On the emerging view, the sole business of cognition is to manage one's belief in some objects and disbelief in others. Obviously, this is an extremely heterodox view of cognition, which would require a very good argument indeed. I now turn to consider the case for it.

3. The Case for the Belief-In Theory

In the *Psychology*, Brentano spends considerable time and effort arguing that judgment is not essentially predicative. For example, he argues that since perception is a kind of judgment, and perception is not essentially predicative (sometimes we just perceive *a thing*), judgment need not be predicative (Brentano 1874: 209). However, these arguments establish, at most, that *some* judgments are not predicative (and therefore potentially non-propositional). They cannot establish that *all* judgments are objectual rather than propositional attitudes, as OBJECTUAL requires. As far as I can tell, there is no direct argument for OBJECTUAL in the *Psychology*. Nonetheless, in some of Brentano's (posthumously published) letters, dictations, and lecture notes, one can identify a case for EXISTENTIAL and ATTITUDINAL, hence for OBJECTUAL.

The starting point of Brentano's argument is a simple dispensability consideration. In a 1906 letter to his student Anton Marty, he writes:

... every assertion affirming your *entia rationis* [notably, propositions] has its equivalent in an assertion having only *realia* [i.e., concrete individual objects] as objects... Not only are your judgments equivalent to judgments about concrete objects (*reale Gegenstände*), the latter are always available [for paraphrasing the former]. Hence the *entia rationis* are entirely unnecessary/superfluous (*unnütz*) and contrary to the economy of nature. (Brentano 1930: 84; see also Brentano 1956 §17)

The argument proceeds in two steps. First: every indicative statement that expresses a judgment can be paraphrased into an existential, meaning that indicatives ostensibly expressing beliefs-that can be paraphrased into ones ostensibly expressing beliefs-in. Second: the ontological commitments associated with a belief-in are always more economical than those associated with its corresponding belief-that; for propositions and the like *entia rationis* are more ontologically extravagant than concrete objects and the like *entia realia*. Accordingly, positing beliefs-in to the exclusion of beliefs-that is both feasible and commendable: feasible in virtue of the availability of paraphrase, commendable in virtue of ontological parsimony. The upshot can be summarized thus: the conjunction of EXISTENTIAL and ATTITUDINAL delivers significant ontological economies, and should be adopted on that basis. In what follows, I consider first the feasibility claim (§3.1), then the commendability claim (§3.2).

3.1. Dispensing with Beliefs-that is Feasible

In Brentano, the first step of the argument relies on producing the paraphrases for categorical and hypothetical statements in Aristotelian logic (as seen in §2). One may wonder whether paraphrases will be available when we move to modern logic. I now turn to consider two particularly important cases: singular statements and ‘molecular’ or ‘compound’ statements. I will argue that all admit of reasonably plausible existential paraphrases, with the potential exception of certain molecular statements.

Start with such singular statements as ‘Beyoncé is famous.’ These have the form ‘*a* is *F*,’ which does not immediately fit into any of A, E, I, or O. Leibniz, who also rejected the separation of subject and predicate (Leibniz 1686 §8), construed singulars as having the A form. So, ‘Beyoncé is famous’ amounts is analyzed as ‘All Beyoncsés are famous,’ which is Brentano’s hands amounts to ‘There is not a non-famous Beyoncé.’ Sometimes Brentano sounds like a Leibnizian on this, but on other occasions he seems to treat singulars rather as having the I form.¹⁷ This analyzes

'Beyoncé is famous' as 'Some Beyoncé is famous,' and ultimately as 'There is a famous Beyoncé.' In this second approach, unlike the Leibnizian one, '*a* is F' commits to the *existence* of something rather than to the *nonexistence* of something. If we follow Russell (1905) in taking the existence of *a* to be a precondition for the truth of '*a* is F,' the Brentanian tack should appeal to us more than the Leibnizian.

But what does 'There is a famous Beyoncé' exactly mean? A traditional descriptivist about names would take 'Beyoncé' to pick out whichever individual satisfies a description that lists certain central properties of Beyoncé's. Call an individual that instantiates all the relevant properties *Beyoncé-esque*.¹⁸ Within the descriptivist framework, then, 'There is a famous Beyoncé' means 'There is a famous Beyoncé-esque individual.'

It is less clear how this would work within a direct-reference approach to names. According to the latter, 'Beyoncé' does not refer by courtesy of any description. Rather, it picks out whatever object is appropriately related to it (where it is the burden of the theory to tell us exactly what the relevant relation is).¹⁹ Within this framework, it is harder to see how an existential paraphrase might work.²⁰ On the other hand, a direct-reference theorist might simply paraphrase 'Beyoncé is famous' into 'There is famous-Beyoncé,' where 'famous-Beyoncé' is used as a name. Statements of the form 'There is N' (where 'N' ranges over proper names) are awkward, but ultimately they mean the same as 'N exists,' which is not awkward.' So the idea is essentially to paraphrase 'Beyoncé is famous' into 'Famous-Beyoncé exists.' There is still an open question as to what the apparent name 'Famous-Beyoncé' refers to, but let us bracket this issue here (see Kriegel 2015 for a detailed discussion).²¹ Once we accept 'There is famous-Beyoncé' as awkward-but-grammatical, there is every reason to think that it paraphrases faithfully 'Beyoncé is famous.'

I conclude that singulars are amenable to existential paraphrase, pending trouble in ultimately understanding what such names as 'Famous-Beyoncé' refer to. The more complicated case is presented by compound or molecular statements. We

can simplify the task somewhat by focusing on how to handle conjunction and negation, since every binary truth-function is definable in terms of those two.

In separation, they are quite easy to handle. When it comes to straightforward conjunctions of the form $p \ \& \ q$, such as ‘Some cat is white and some dog is brown,’ at least two options are open. One paraphrases them into atomic existentials about mereological sums, such as ‘There is a sum of a white cat and a brown dog.’ The judgment expressed here is a belief in the relevant sum. The other option is to treat conjunctions as expressing a plurality of simultaneous (atomic) judgments. On this approach, in truth we do not make *one* judgment expressed by ‘Some cat is white and some dog is brown.’ Instead, we simultaneously perform *two* judgments – an occurrent belief in a white cat and an occurrent belief in a brown dog – and we use conjunctive statements to express such multiplicity of judgments. In a way, the first option appeals to belief in a mereological sum, the second to a mereological sum of beliefs-in.

As for simple negation, in the Aristotelian system there are two separate cases: the E form (‘No dogs are cute’) and the O form (‘Some dogs are not cute’). The former Brentano handles through the attitude of disbelief, which he takes to be a sui generis attitude irreducible to belief. It is common today to take ‘S disbelieves in cute dogs’ to be just a flowery way of saying ‘S believes that there are no cute dogs,’ but as we have seen, Brentano adopts a nonreductive account of disbelief that runs the other way, considering ‘S believes that no dogs are cute’ to be a misleading report that would be better put as ‘S disbelieves in a cute dog.’ As for such negations as ‘Some dogs are not cute,’ we have seen that Brentano construes them as expressing a special kind of positive judgment, in our case a belief in an uncute dog.²²



Things get more complicated when we combine conjunction and negation operators in a single statement. Consider first statements of the form $p \ \& \ \sim q$, such as ‘Some cat is cute and no dog can fly.’ Here there is no mereological sum whose existence could be taken to be asserted – at least on the assumption that there is no such thing as

the sum of a cute cat and an absence of a flying dog (indeed of cats and absences in general!). Accordingly, the only live option is to take 'Some cat is cute and no dog can fly' to express a sum of two distinct judgments, the belief in a cute cat and the disbelief in a flying dog.

Unfortunately, the opposite happens with statements of the form $\sim(p \ \& \ q)$, such as 'It is not the case that some cat is cute and some dog can fly.' Here there is only one judgment that can be said to be expressed. That judgment is a disbelief in the mereological sum of a cute cat and a flying dog. The unpalatable result here is that Brentano has no unified account of $p \ \& \ \sim q$ and $\sim(p \ \& \ q)$. He must trot out different treatments for different combinations of conjunction and negation. That is something of an embarrassment.

Worse, neither account can handle a statement of the form $\sim(p \ \& \ \sim q)$, such as 'It is not the case that there are flying dogs but no cute cats.' On the one hand, it would be implausible to take such a statement to express a disbelief in the mereological sum of (a) a flying dog and (b) the absence of a cute cat. For then its negation would have to be taken to express a *belief* in that sum, and hence in an absence (which would commit the believer to the reality of absences). On the other hand, nor does 'It is not the case that there are flying dogs but no cute cats' seem to express a disbelief in the co-occurrence of two separate judgments, a belief in a cute cat and a disbelief in a flying dog. For what the subject rejects are not beliefs themselves. (For all she knows the beliefs may well exist!) To that extent, statements of the form $\sim(p \ \& \ \sim q)$ can be handled neither by the '(dis)belief in sums' strategy nor by the 'sum of (dis)beliefs' strategy.

Brentano's approach to this problem is to treat such statements as rejections not just of co-occurring judgments but of co-occurring *true* or *correct* (*richtig*) judgments. On this view, 'It is not the case that there are flying dogs but no cute cats' is to be paraphrased into 'There is no sum of a correct belief in flying dogs and a correct disbelief in cute cats.' The judgment expressed here is the disbelief in such a sum of correct judgments. The idea is that no one could correctly both believe in a

flying dog and disbelieve in a cute cat – and this is what a statement of the form $\sim(p \& \sim q)$ really expresses. What is expressed here is in reality a *second-order judgment* – which is not that surprising given that we are trying to account for *second-order negation*.

One might reasonably complain that we are left here with a distressingly balkanized treatment of negation: we have seen different devices for handling $\sim p$, $p \& \sim q$, $\sim(p \& q)$, and $\sim(p \& \sim q)$. These devices are: a sui generis attitude of disbelief, single statements expressing sums of different judgments, single judgments about mereological sums of objects, and second-order judgments about correct first-order judgments. This level of disunity looks like a major cost of Brentano's theory of judgment, the complaint might be.

However, it would seem that once we have introduced the device of second-order judgment about correct first-order judgment, it can be applied retrospectively to handle uniformly all four cases: $\sim p$ can be understood as expressing a disbelief in a correct judgment that p , $p \& \sim q$ can be understood as expressing a judgment that p and a disbelief in a correct judgment that q , and $\sim(p \& q)$ can be understood as a disbelief in a sum of correct judgments that p and that q .

There is, however, another objection to which Brentano's account of negation *is* susceptible. Recall that Brentano's paraphrases are not intended as technical moves facilitating the regimentation of a formal language. They are intended to capture the deep psychological reality of our cognitive life. Arguably, however, it is psychologically unrealistic to think that 'No dogs are purple' actually expresses the second-order judgment that there is no correct belief in a purple dog. For harboring such a second-order judgment would seem to require the possession of such concepts as BELIEF and CORRECTNESS, yet a child may well believe that no dogs are purple without possessing those concepts. Furthermore, certain beliefs that appear simple enough that a child could have them are cast as extraordinarily complex in Brentano's theory, again making the theory psychologically unrealistic.

A good example is disjunctive judgments, such as would be expressed by 'Some cat is white or some dog is brown.' Chisholm (1976: 92) suggested on Brentano's behalf that we posit *disjunctiva*, in this case the individual which is either a white cat or a brown dog, and say that 'Some cat is white or some dog is brown' expresses an occurrent belief in this disjunctivum. However, Brentano himself would likely frown on *disjunctiva* just as much as on absences ('negativa,' as he called them). Instead, he exploits the definability of disjunction in terms of negation and conjunction:

... anyone who says 'There is an A or there is a B or there is a C' expresses the following: in contemplating that A is not and B is not and C is not, he considers such a combination of thoughts incorrect. (Brentano 1930: 70)

We know that ' $p \vee q$ ' is equivalent to ' $\sim(\sim p \ \& \ \sim q)$.' So we can paraphrase 'Some cat is white or some dog is brown' into 'It is not the case that no cat is white and no dog is brown,' and then into 'There is no mereological sum of a correct disbelief in a white cat and a correct disbelief in a brown dog.'²³ However, it is quite plausible that a child could grasp the notion that some cat is white or some dog is brown well before she has the cognitive resources to grasp the idea of a mereological sum of correct disbeliefs.



In conclusion, although Brentano himself rests his case for the paraphraseability of all statements into existentials mainly on consideration of categorical and hypothetical statements, he has some options for existential paraphrases of singular and compound statements as well. The paraphrases may not always be elegant, and sometimes entrain real costs, notably the contrast between the relative simplicity of believing (e.g.) that some baby or some dog is cute and the evident complexity of disbelieving in a mereological sum of a correct disbelief in a cute baby and a correct disbelief in a cute dog. Still, it is already remarkable that an existential paraphrase is always *available*. It would therefore not be unreasonable to indulge Brentano and grant him the first step of his argument: dispensing with belief-that is *feasible*.

3.2. Dispensing with Beliefs-that is Commendable

Paraphraseability is a symmetric relation: if 'blah' paraphrases into 'bleh,' then equally 'bleh' paraphrases into 'blah.' Accordingly, in showing that all predicative statements paraphrase into existential ones, we would also be showing that all the relevant existentials paraphrase into predicatives. So the paraphrase by itself does not demonstrate that all seemingly predicative judgments are in fact existential. It could be equally well taken to suggest that the relevant seemingly existential judgments are in fact predicative.

Someone might respond, on Brentano's behalf, that interpreting the paraphraseability as showing that all judgments are existential brings with it increased theoretical unity; the opposite interpretation does not. In one version, the claim would be that although all predicatives paraphrase into existentials, there are also some extra existentials for which no predicative paraphrase is available. In another version, the claim might be that existentials as a class are simply more homogeneous than predicatives. However, both claims are suspect. On the one hand, it is doubtful that there are existentials that cannot be put in predicative form, given the availability of such first-order predicates as 'exists,' 'is existent,' and 'is real.' As for the claim that existentials are inherently more homogeneous than predicatives, it is hard to evaluate such claims in the absence of explicit measures of the relevant homogeneity. At the very least, the envisaged argument would require supplementation in the form of (i) providing a measure of class homogeneity for statements and (ii) showing that, as a class, existentials score higher on this measure than predicatives.

Brentano's own argument, in the quoted 1906 letter to Marty, is not from unity but parsimony ('the economy of nature'). The idea seems to be that if some judgments are predicative, then their contents are propositional, which would require us to embrace propositions in our ontology, and their truthmakers are states of affairs, which we would have to embrace as well in our ontology. In

contrast, Brentano seems to claim, existential judgments do not require a propositional content, and their truthmakers can be individual objects.

The notion that judgments may not require propositions as content is potentially greatly advantageous, given the force of worries about the ‘unity of the proposition’ prominent in recent philosophy of mind and language (King 2007). But the parsimony Brentano pursues most vigorously concerns truthmakers. The truthmaker of a belief that some dogs are cute, it is natural to say, is the *fact* (or the *obtaining state of affairs*) that some dogs are cute. In contrast, the truthmakers of the belief *in* cute dogs are simply the cute dogs. Each and every cute dog out there makes true the belief *in* cute dogs.²⁴ Thus the truthmakers of beliefs-in are individual objects rather than facts or states of affairs. Other things being equal, then, the thesis that *all* beliefs are beliefs-in paves the way to a nominalist ontology that dispenses with facts and states of affairs. This too is greatly advantageous, given worries about so-called Bradley’s regress attending a state-of-affairs ontology.²⁵

I develop this nominalistic side of Brentano’s proposal more fully in Kriegel 2015; what I want to stress here is that the 1906 letter to Marty suggests that that nominalist ontology is the *motivation* for the BIT theory of judgment.

The key to delivering nominalism is the notion that beliefs-in are made true by individual objects, not by *existential states of affairs* (of which such objects are constituents). It might be objected that the belief in dogs is made true not by each dog, but rather by each dog’s *existence* – where a dog’s existence is a state of affairs (the fact that the dog exists). But Brentano explicitly rejects this in the same letter to Marty:

[T]he being of A need not be produced in order for the judgment “A is” to be ... correct; all that is needed is A. (Brentano 1930: 85)

It is the object, and not (the fact of) the object’s existence, that makes true the relevant existential. In a slogan: the truthmakers of existentials are not existences but existents.

What is the reason to take the object itself, rather than its existence, to make true the existential judgment? One reason is parsimony of course. But Brentano also adduces a separate argument. It is an argument from infinite regress, presented in that letter to Marty (Brentano 1930: 85-6) and a subsequent letter to Hugo Bergman (Bergmann 1946: 84), as well as in a 1914 dictation (Brentano 1930: 108). Suppose for reductio that belief in my dog Julius is made true not by Julius, but by Julius' existence. Then in addition to Julius, we must add to our ontology the state of affairs of Julius existing. In adding this state of affairs to our ontology, now, we are clearly committing ourselves to its existence. And committing to the existence of the state of affairs of Julius existing is a matter of believing *in* that state of affairs. The question arises then of what makes this new belief true. One view is that it is made true by the state of affairs of Julius existing itself. The other view is that it is made true by not by the state of affairs of Julius existing, but by *the existence of* that state of affairs (that is, by the state of affairs of the state of affairs of Julius existing existing!). If we take the former view, then we allow beliefs in certain items to be made true by those items themselves, rather than by their existences; so we might as well allow already the belief in Julius to be made true by Julius himself, rather than by Julius' existence. If, however, we take the belief in the state of affairs of Julius existing to be made true by *the existence of* that state of affairs, then we are including in our ontology a new, second-order state of affairs, namely, that of Julius' existence existing. This ontological commitment of ours requires us to *believe in* that second-order state of affairs – and off we are on a vicious regress. The only *non-arbitrary* way to avoid the regress is to recognize dogs themselves as the truthmakers of first-order beliefs in dogs.

In summary, the BIT theory of judgment has the advantage of dispensing with states of affairs as the kind of entities our judgments are answerable to. More precisely, what we have here is a dispensability argument to the effect that the conjunction of EXISTENTIAL and ATTITUDINAL results in a doubly parsimony-enabling theory of judgment: there is (i) no need to posit propositions to account for the

structure of judgments, and (ii) no need to posit facts and/or states of affairs to account for the truth of (true) judgments.



The argument is that we should adopt the conjunction of ATTITUDINAL and EXISTENTIAL because doing so will provide downstream benefits. The argument is powerful, but has two limitations. First, it offers no motivation for either ATTITUDINAL or EXISTENTIAL in separation from the other, and second, it present no upstream considerations offering independent support for either ATTITUDINAL or EXISTENTIAL. Now, in the entire Brentano corpus I do not believe there is any independent argument of the sort for EXISTENTIAL. But for ATTITUDINAL there are at least two.

The more explicit argument appears, to my knowledge, only in Brentano's lecture notes from his logic courses in Vienna at 1878-9 and 1884-5 (Brentano 1956 §15). Those who maintain that an existential judgment's existence-commitment is an aspect of content, Brentano reasons, have the following picture in mind. When you judge that the Pope is wise, you put together the concept of Pope and the concept of wisdom. Likewise, when you judge that there is a pope, or that the Pope exists, you put together the concept of Pope and the concept of existence. But note, says Brentano, that you cannot judge that the Pope is wise without acknowledging (*anerkennen*) the Pope, that is, presenting-as-existent the Pope. By the same token, you cannot judge that the Pope *exists* without acknowledging the Pope. But once one has acknowledged the Pope, there is no point in *additionally* judging that the Pope exists – there is nothing in the latter not already in the former. Since the commitment to the Pope's existence is already built into the acknowledging, that commitment is merely replicated in the act's content.

One objection might be that acknowledgement is not built into judgment the way Brentano claims. For example, one may judge that Alyosha Karamazov is emotionally wise without acknowledging Alyosha in the relevant sense (the sense of presenting-as-existent). However, for Brentano such statements as 'Alyosha

Karamazov is emotionally wise' are elliptical for the hypothetical 'If there were an Alyosha Karamazov, he would be emotionally wise' (see Brentano 1911: 273). As we saw in §2, this in turn expresses only a negative judgment, namely, that there is not a non-emotionally-wise Alyosha. Such negative judgments are orthogonal to the argument, since negative existentials do not commit to anything's existence (obviously: they rather involve commitment to nonexistence).

Another objection might be that acknowledgement only *appears* to be a distinctive attitude. In truth, to acknowledge something amounts to judging that the thing has the property of existing. In other words, just as Brentano claims that belief-that reports should be paraphrased into belief-in reports, the present objector claims we should do the inverse. What this objection shows, I think, is that deeper (nonlinguistic) considerations are called for to show that existence-commitment is an attitudinal rather than content property.

Brentano's *main* argument for this is implicit in the *Psychology*.²⁶ The basic point is that acts of judging and acts of contemplating or entertaining can have the same content (Brentano 1874: 205). Yet the judging commits the subject to the reality of what is judged, while the contemplating fails to commit to the existence of the contemplated. Therefore, the existence-commitment cannot come from the content, which is shared. It must come from some other difference between judging and contemplating. The best candidate, says Brentano (1874: 221-2), is an attitudinal difference: the judging presents the judged in a way that the contemplating does not present the contemplated, and that *way of presenting* encodes (if you please) commitment to the relevant object's existence.

Consider an episode in which I am told that some starveling is immasked. First, I am unsure what was said. Then I reason that by the sound of it, 'starveling' must be a word for someone who starves and 'immasked' a word for someone who is wearing a mask. What happens next is that I apprehend or contemplate the notion that some starving person is wearing a mask. At this point I am committed neither to the existence nor to the nonexistence of such a person. After some thinking,

however, I realize that there are so many hungry people around the world that it is rather probable at least one of them is wearing a mask right now. I then come to accept the existence of an immasked starveling. In this stretch of inner life, the change that happens when I no longer merely *contemplate* but also *believe in* an immasked starveling is not a change in what is presented to me, but in *how* it is presented. What is presented throughout is a starving person wearing a mask. But first he is presented in a way that does not commit to his existence and then in a way that does. The existence-commitment is thus an aspect of the way the presenting is done – what I have called an attitudinal property.

To my mind, this more implicit argument of Brentano's is cogent, and demonstrates that existence-commitment is indeed not a content property, but likely an attitudinal property.²⁷ It is worth mentioning, though, that there is another argument for ATTITUDINAL close to the surface in the *Psychology*. Consider the Kantian claim that 'existence is not a property,' which Brentano cites approvingly:

In his critique of the ontological argument for the existence of God, Kant made the pertinent remark that in an existential statement, i.e. in a statement of the form 'A exists,' existence 'is not a real predicate, i.e. a concept of something that can be superposed (*hinzukommen*) on the concept of a thing.' 'It is,' he said, 'only the positing of a thing or of certain determinations [read: properties], as existing in themselves.' (Brentano 1874: 211)

If there is no such thing as a property of existence, any attribution of existence to something would be attribution of a property that nothing has. Accordingly, any existential belief that attributed existence to something would perforce be *misattributing* and therefore mistaken. But in fact not all existential beliefs are mistaken: it is correct, for example, to believe in ducks. So (correct) commitment to something's existence cannot involve attribution of a property of existence. If commitment to Fs' existence is not a matter of attributing existence to Fs, it must instead be built into the very nature of the attitude taken *toward* Fs. This is the attitude of *believing-in*, an attitude whose very *nature* is to present-as-existent.

I conclude that the case for both EXISTENTIAL and ATTITUDINAL is stronger than one might initially suspect. As noted, together they entail OBJECTUAL. And all three theses together constitute BIT, Brentano's Belief-In Theory of judgment. The theory is very unusual, but apparently more defensible than may initially appear. Its greatest cost, it seems to me, is the gap between the apparent simplicity of certain (notably compound) judgments and the evident complexity Brentano's theory attributes to them.

4. Objections and Replies

Given how unusual Brentano's view is, it is surprising that the case for it should be as solid as it is. Nonetheless, a number of objections suggest themselves. Let us consider the more pressing.

Clearly, Brentano's theory goes against our intuitions as twenty-first-century philosophers 'brought up' on a certain conception of the structure of judgment and belief: as having a subject-predicate structure akin to the structure of the sentences used to express them. But just as clearly, Brentano would reply that these intuitions of ours lie *downstream* of theorizing and therefore cannot be used to *support* the theory. We philosophers have the intuition because we have accepted the theory, not the other way round. We should reject the intuition along with the theory. The objector may insist, however, that the intuition does not come *only* from philosophical theory, but also from the structure of language, as used well before exposure to any theory. It is the subject-predicate structure of indicatives that suggests a similar psychological structure in the judgments they express.

This is a reasonable claim, to which Brentano responds by trying to explain why linguistic expressions of judgments have the structure they do (despite judgments having a completely different structure).²⁸ Ultimately, the explanation is that language and judgment have different *functions*: the primary, original function of language, he claims, is to facilitate communication (Brentano 1956: 25-6),

whereas the primary function of thought and reasoning is the acquisition and management of knowledge. Insofar as structures derive over time from functions, there is no reason to expect the latter to converge where the former diverge.

The objector may press that certain systematicity phenomena could not be explained within the Brentanian framework. If the structure of language and thought mirror each other, we can understand why no person is in a position to judge that Mary loves John without being in a position to judge that John loves Mary (Fodor 1975). Brentano, in contrast, has no resources to explain this – he must treat as miraculous the simultaneous emergence of the capacities to make both judgments. For the belief in a Mary-loving John and the belief in a John-loving Mary have strictly *nothing* in common in their contents.²⁹

This is indeed a very serious problem for Brentano, but perhaps he could respond as follows. As we have already seen, the fact that an intentional state is non-propositional does not mean that it does not mobilize concepts. Thus, even though fear is an objectual attitude, what a subject can fear depends on the concepts in the subject's possession: if S_1 possesses the concept of a Rottweiler while S_2 only possesses the coarser-grained concept of a big dog, their fears of the same object might be type-different intentional states. This is because S_1 will apply the concept of a Rottweiler to the object he fears while S_2 will apply the concept of a big dog. Now, we can imagine a subject who possesses both concepts, but in whom the two are disconnected in such a way that the subject is unaware that Rottweilers are dogs. In most subjects who possess both concepts, however, the two are linked in such a way that it is impossible for the subject to fear a Rottweiler without *ipso facto* fearing a dog. The Brentanian might hope to produce a similar explanation of why every normal human subject in a position to contemplate a Mary-loving John is also in a position to contemplate a John-loving Mary. It is far from clear how the explanation would go, but it is not inconceivable that some story could be devised. Still, as long as no actual story is proffered, it remains an outstanding theoretical debt of BIT to show that it can recover the phenomena of systematicity.

A completely different objection is that BIT is *pragmatically* problematic, perhaps because its acceptance would complicate the conduct of inquiry. More specifically, it might be claimed that predicate logic has worked very well for us to formalize large tracts of science, but with BIT, predicate logic would have to be renounced wholesale. This objection is important, but all it shows is that Brentano owes us a predicate-free formal logic to go along with his predication-free theory of judgment. As it happens, Brentano did start on this project (Brentano 1956), which was further developed by his student Franz Hillebrand (Hillebrand 1891). Suppose a subject judges both that (i) there is a party and that (ii) if there is a party then there is booze, which leads her to judge that (iii) there is booze. The validity of her reasoning is captured in traditional *modus ponens*. Within the Brentanian framework, the reasoning is recast as follows: the subject both believes in a party and disbelieves in a boozeless party, which leads her to believe in booze. The task, then, is to reformulate the familiar laws of logic, in this case *modus ponens*, so that this reasoning is ratified as valid. What has been proposed by various logicians is to replace the traditional

$$\frac{p \rightarrow q \quad p}{q}$$

with

$$\frac{Na\bar{b} \quad Ea}{Eb}$$

This reads: *a* is not without *b* (there is not a boozeless party); *a* is (there is a party); therefore, *b* is (there is booze). With this law in place, we can readily explain why the subject's reasoning to the conclusion that there is booze is valid. Similarly for other logical laws. Now, while I have no competence to affirm that Hillebrand's system works, I have all the competence needed to report that Peter Simons thinks it does (see Simons 1984, 1987).

Conclusion

I personally think that Brentano's theory of judgment is a masterpiece of philosophical creativity. Against the overwhelmingly common philosophical treatment of judgment and belief as propositional attitudes with an internal structure mimicking that of sentences, out of the blue comes Brentano and argues that these are rather objectual attitudes whose only function is to acknowledge or deny existence, or more accurately, present-as-existent or present-as-nonexistent some individual object. Given its considerable originality, I find the case for Brentano's theory surprisingly solid. Real liabilities loom around the issues of systematicity and the complexity of compound judgments. Still, the ontological benefits accruing to this kind of theory – in particular, the dismissal of propositions and non-concrete truthmakers – will surely appeal to many philosophers.³⁰

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¹ To my knowledge, the expression 'objectual attitude' comes from Forbes 2000; and the expression 'propositional attitude' from Russell 1904. But the concepts far predate the expressions.

² It is not immediately clear that in claiming that judgment and interest are grounded in presentation, or have presentation as their grounds/foundations (*Grundlage*), Brentano has in mind the notion of grounding currently widely discussed. One similarity is that Brentanian grounding is a matter of *ontological asymmetric dependence*, or what Brentano calls 'unilateral separability': a mental state

can be a presentation without being a judgment, but it cannot be a judgment without also being a presentation.

³ See Brentano 1874 II Chapters 6-8, including: 'my three classes are not the same as those which are usually proposed. In the absence of more appropriate expressions we designate the first by the term "presentation," the second by the term "judgment," and the third by the terms "emotion," "interest," or "love".' (Brentano 1874: 198) A clearer presentation of the view is this: 'It is clear that all modes of relation to an object fall into three classes: presentation, judgment, and emotion [interest]. The second and third modes always presuppose the first, and in both we find a contrast, in that a judgment is either a belief or a denial, and an emotion is either a form of love or hate.' (Brentano 1928: 42)

⁴ Although Brentano considers presentation the most basic of the three, since the other two are grounded in it, my exposition will proceed in a different order. Moreover, my exposition will be a 'dogmatic' one, in that I will not present Brentano's *argument* for the classification, only the classification itself. For reconstruction and discussion of his argument for it, see Kriegel forthcoming.

⁵ I say 'in the first instance' because as we will see later, ultimately Brentano's view is that a judgment present what it does as existent or nonexistent rather than as true or false.

⁶ Brentano's '*Vorstellung*' is variously translated as presentation, representation, apprehension, idea, thought, and contemplation. Here I go mostly with 'presentation.'

⁷ When one supposes that *p*, one is not thereby committed to the truth of *p*. There is a sense in which in supposing that *p*, one presents *p* to oneself under the guise of truth, but for Brentano, the lack of *commitment* to truth lands supposition in the category of presentation. His student Meinong argued that in fact suppositions, or assumptions (*Annahmen*), share one essential characteristic with presentations and another with judgments, and so constituted a sui generis category (Meinong 1902). Brentano argues against this in several places, for example Brentano 1911: 284-6.

⁸ This is, at least, Brentano's treatment of Aristotle's four types of statements *for most of his career*. In the final decade of his life, he seems to have complicated the account considerably, adopting his so-called double-judgment theory (see especially Appendix IX of the *Psychology*, as well as Brentano 1956 §30). Here I will ignore this later complication, well motivated though it may be.

⁹ Brentano writes: "The proposition, "If a man behaves badly, he harms himself," is a hypothetical proposition. As far as its meaning is concerned, it is the same as the categorical proposition, "All men who behave badly harm themselves." And this, in turn, has no other meaning than that of the existential proposition, "A man who behaves badly and does not harm himself does not exist," or to use a more felicitous expression, "There is no such thing as a man who behaves badly and does not harm himself".' (Brentano 1874: 218)

¹⁰ Brentano nowhere states the attitudinal account of existence-commitment as explicitly as one might wish. But he comes close at various points. For example: "The most natural expression is "A is," not "A is existent," where "existent" appears as a predicate.... [But such an existential statement] means rather "If anyone should think of A in a positive way, his thought is fitting (*entsprechend*)".' (Brentano 1930: 69) The commitment to A's existence is an aspect of the *way* (or mode) in which the thinking is done.

¹¹ There is a question of how to handle the truthmaking of negative existentials. This is something Brentano had nothing to say about. Perhaps this is because for him the issue is not really one of truthmaking, but of the ontological commitment that positive existentials involve. Since negative existentials involve no ontological commitment, the same issue does not arise for them.

¹² There are uses of ‘belief in’ that may denote non-cognitive attitude, as in ‘believe in yourself!’ or ‘we believe in the future’ (which seem to denote emotional attitudes such as confidence and hope). But there is also the cognitive usage highlighted in the main text.

¹³ To endorse this formulation, one has to accept that there is such a thing as occurrent believing-in. If one takes believing-in to be always dispositional, then Brentano's view would have to be formulated more clumsily: all judgments are occurrent manifestations of believings-in. For the sake of smooth exposition more than anything else, I am here treating belief-in as a state that *can* be occurrent.

¹⁴ Two exceptions are Szabó (2003) and Textor (2007), who reject the analysis of ‘S believes in *x*’ in terms of ‘S believes that *x* exists,’ though on grounds other from Brentano's.

¹⁵ The name is suboptimal, insofar as belief-in captures only one half of the span of judgments – disbelief-in captures the other half. But BIT has the advantage of being cute, and I trust the reader to keep in mind the relevance of disbelief-in.

¹⁶ It might be objected, to my interpretation of Brentano's *Anerkennung* as belief-in, that Brentano was adamant that there are no degrees of acceptance, whereas one belief-in may very well vary in confidence (constituting a kind of objectual credence). However, it is possible to account for the degree of confidence associated with a belief-in not as an aspect of the belief-in itself, but as a kind of second-order state directed at the likely truth of the first-order belief-in. In itself, then, the belief-in would be absolute in its existence-commitment.

¹⁷ One place where Brentano sounds non-Leibnizian is in his discussion of mereological relations among colored spots in Brentano 1982 Chap. 2. One place in which he mentions the Leibnizian paraphrase in a sympathetic tone of voice is in his discussion of Kant's classification of utterances in Brentano 1956 §28.

¹⁸ What happens if there is more than one individual with those properties? Several avenues are open to descriptivists – divided reference, reference failure, and more – but the issues surrounding this possibility have nothing specifically to do with Brentano's project, so I will set them aside here.

¹⁹ In Kripke's (1972) causal theory of reference, for example, there is a relation of nondeviant causal chain between a current use of the name and a baptismal event in which the name is introduced in the presence of the named.

²⁰ One option, of course, is to deny the direct reference theory of names. For example, it is possible to hold that the insights associated with causal theory of reference can be recovered through a kind of causal descriptivism (Kroon 1987), according to which a name refers to whatever objects satisfies the token-reflexive description ‘the object suitably causally linked to this very use of the name.’ On this view, ‘Beyoncé is famous’ means the same as ‘The object suitably causally linked to this very use of “Beyoncé” is famous.’ This would allow for the standard Brentanian paraphrase.

²¹ The short answer is that for Brentano Beyoncé and Famous-Beyoncé are two numerically distinct but spatiotemporally coinciding objects.

²² Later in his career Brentano adopts the more complicated double-judgment theory to handle such cases (see esp. Brentano 1956 §30). There are good reasons for this, but as noted here I am going to ignore the double-judgment theory here. (Addressing it in brief is not really possible.)

²³ A similar strategy can be extended to material conditionals, since $p \Rightarrow q$ is equivalent to $\sim p \vee q$, hence to $\sim(p \ \& \ \sim q)$. It might be objected that disbelief in sums of correct judgments is too weak to capture the content of disjunctive and conditional judgments. The claim is not just that nobody has *in*

fact made the relevant correct judgments. It is rather that if anyone did make those judgments, they could not do so correctly. This latter claim has a modal depth to it entirely missing from the simple rejection of two correct judgments co-occurring. This objection smells right to me, but it just invites discussion of Brentano's treatment of modality, on which Brentano had some very interesting thing to say, but which would take us too far afield.

²⁴ There might be something odd about talk of truthmakers for beliefs *in*. Perhaps it might be thought ungrammatical to say that the belief in ducks is true; it is certainly more natural to say that such a belief is *correct*. In that case, we should speak rather of the worldly correctnessmakers of beliefs-in. I am sympathetic to all this, but will stick with the word 'truthmaker' for simplicity. On this, see Textor 2007: 78-9.

²⁵ In the present context, by 'state-of-affairs ontology' I mean any ontology that admits such entities as states of affairs. Any such ontology faces Bradley's regress (Bradley 1893). The problem is how to understand the 'metaphysical glue' that joins an individual and a property when together they compose a state of affairs. The fact (obtaining state of affairs) that Alec the electron is negatively charged is more than just the sum of the two facts that (i) Alec exists and (ii) being negatively-charged is instantiated. It involves also some kind of 'metaphysical glue' that 'brings together' Alec and being negatively-charged. If we try to understand this 'glue' in terms of a *relation* between Alec and being negatively-charged – 'exemplification' or 'instantiation,' say – then we would require something to glue Alec, being negatively-charged, and that relation. Appealing to a second-order metaphysical glue would only launch us on a regress – Bradley's regress.

²⁶ More specifically, it is implicit in Brentano's discussion of the difference between judgment and presentation in Chapter 7 of *Psychology II*.

²⁷ I write 'likely' because other candidate explanations of the difference between contemplating and judging have to be ruled out (other than the content candidate) before we can more confidently assert that the difference is attitudinal. Much of the issue overlaps with the question of the irreducibility of presentation to judgment, discussed in the previous chapter.

²⁸ In general, Brentano takes the structure of language to be a poor guide to the structure of our mental life. This is stated unequivocally in a short 1905 fragment titled 'Language' (Brentano 1930: 71) and can be found in various places in the aforementioned logic courses (e.g., Brentano 1956 §12).

²⁹ Thanks to Marie Guillot for pressing on me this objection.

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