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**How to Divide a(n Individual) Mind:
Ontological Complexity Instead of Mental Monism**

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Abstract

In this paper, I address the issue of how to best account from a philosophical point of view for the diversity of our (synchronic) mental activities. The discussion starts with Mark Textor's mental monism, defended in his book *Brentano's Mind*. According to mental monism, our mental life is constituted by just one simple mental act, in which different sub-acts – e.g. seeing, hearing, and self-consciousness – can be conceptually distinguished. Textor grounds this view in the work of the early Brentano and contrasts it with the theory of the later Brentano, who introduces a mental substance into his philosophy of mind. According to Textor, Brentano needs a substance because he is unable to explain how mental monism can account for the separability of our mental activities, for example, the fact that I can stop hearing F while still seeing blue. Textor argues, however, that mental monism can solve this problem. I address two issues regarding Textor's view. First, I challenge his interpretation of the early Brentano by arguing that Brentano imports not conceptual, but *ontological* complexity into our mental life; I defend Brentano's view against possible criticisms, and I address some objections to mental monism. Second, I oppose Textor's narrative about Brentano's adoption of mental substance. I argue that Brentano needs a substance not to

explain separability, but rather to individuate our mental acts. I still argue, however, that Brentano's earlier view (understood in my sense) is better than the substance account for dividing the mind.

1. Introduction

Mark Textor's *Brentano's Mind* (2017a) is an exciting attempt to construct a philosophy of mind on the basis of Brentano's work. As Textor emphasises at the beginning of his book, his aim is not to give a historical presentation of Brentano's thought, but to do philosophy in a Brentanian manner. He wants to 'bring out something true and philosophically illuminating in Brentano's thinking about the mind, in a historically informed way', hoping to 'preserve the spirit and often enough the letter of Brentano's work' (2017a, 6–7). A fascinating result of this approach is how much of the contemporary theoretical debate Textor is able to address and how many issues in this debate he is equipped to solve with the help of Brentano. It connects the work of Brentano with current debates in a way that has rarely been achieved, and contributes to show the continued relevance of Brentanian philosophy.

Textor's book explores two problems: 'the nature of the mind' and 'the structure of consciousness' (2017a, 6). With respect to the first problem, Textor carefully goes through Brentano's account, and ultimately rejects it in favour of Husserl's: the 'mark of the mental' is not, as Brentano famously defended, intentionality, that is, a specific directedness of our mental acts towards objects, but the fact that the mental is never given via modes of presentation. I will not address this point much further, but will focus on the other problem that Textor discusses, that of the structure of consciousness, with regard to which he aims to develop a genuinely Brentanian position. Textor defends what he calls 'mental monism', that is, the thesis that all our (simultaneously occurring) mental acts, including self-consciousness, or 'awareness' as he calls it, are one and the same entity – that is, they are *ontologically*

identical – but can be *conceptually* distinguished when considered in relation to their different objects. Textor attributes this account to the early Brentano, and defends it against Brentano’s own later theory, in which a substance is introduced into the picture, and our mental acts are considered to be distinct entities, or more precisely, distinct accidents, which are nonetheless unified by the fact that they share one and the same bearer. According to Textor, this change of mind was due to the fact that Brentano took mental monism to be unable to account for the separability of our mental activities, for example, the fact that I can stop hearing F while still seeing blue. Textor, by contrast, thinks that mental monism is able to do so, and rejects the substance view.

I will challenge Textor on two points. First, I will question Textor’s interpretation of the early Brentano. I will argue that mental acts in Brentano are unitary items made up of a series of so-called ‘divisives’, which are ontologically distinct, though not discrete parts of the act; I will also defend Brentano’s view against possible criticism, and will address some objections to Textor’s mental monism. Second, in a somewhat shorter section, I will argue against Textor’s narrative about Brentano’s adoption of mental substance. I will show that the reason why Brentano needs a substance is in order to individuate our mental acts. However, I will also argue that Brentano’s former position, that without such a substance, is a philosophically better option for dividing the mind.

2. Divisions of the Mind

a. Brentano and Textor, Ontological Complexity and Mental Monism

The early Brentano developed a ‘psychology without a soul’ (1924, 16). Our awareness of our mental life does not reveal to us the existence of a mental substance. Certainly, the existence of such a substance could be inferred. Brentano, however, adopts an ‘empirical standpoint’ in psychology: he wants to renounce the positing of inferred objects, as this would make

psychology a speculative science. Accordingly, as long as the soul can be avoided in giving an analysis of our mental life, it is better not to posit it. (On this strategy with respect to the soul, see Textor 2017a, 22–6 and 2017b, as well as Dainton 2017, 62.) What is given to us in our inner experience is nothing more than a series of mental acts. Famously, the mark of the mental is, for Brentano, intentionality: that is, mental acts have a specific directedness towards objects, or more precisely (for the early Brentano), ‘intentional objects’, which are mind-dependent entities with a *sui generis* mode of being, namely, ‘intentional existence’.

Despite his anti-substantialism, Brentano was also hostile to bundle theories of mental life, à la Hume, according to which our mental acts – such as my seeing blue, my hearing F, and my awareness of them (to take Textor’s examples) – come in groups of discrete entities. Why was Brentano hostile to such theories? One argument against the view, the ‘epistemic argument’, found in Brentano and reconstructed by Textor, runs as follows: Our self-consciousness, or awareness, is evident, and hence infallible. This means that awareness necessarily entails the existence of the mental act it is about, for example, a mental act of seeing. Now, if our awareness and our other mental act were discrete entities, the only way to explain how the latter could relate to the former would be by a causal relation, on the model of perception; however, in a causal relation, the effect could always be produced by a cause different from the current one, and so awareness would not be infallible (Brentano 1924, 196–9 and 248–9, and Textor 2017a, 254–61, among others).

Another argument mentioned by Textor, and also found in Brentano, is the ‘duplication argument’. It forces the bundle advocate to admit that when we perceive something, we present it twice, which is obviously contrary to experience. If, for example, our seeing and our awareness of seeing were two distinct acts, our seeing would present us with blue a first time, and our awareness would present it a second time. This is due to the fact that seeing is a relative entity, which cannot be presented without presenting its correlative, which

in the present case is a seen-blue (just as thinking of a slave requires one to think of a master); thus, when awareness is directed towards seeing, it should also be directed towards seen-blue, and hence blue would be presented twice (1924, 176–80 and 2017a, 93–114, among others).¹

The alternative to the bundle theory in Brentano, according to Textor, is mental monism. My seeing, my hearing, and my awareness of my seeing and hearing are not discrete entities, but are *identical*: these acts, which are apparently three different things, are in fact all one and the same entity. This solves both of the problems above: the necessity that seeing and awareness coexist is established by the fact that they are *identical*; and there is no duplication of objects, since seeing and awareness are just *one* presentation which presents both blue and itself.

The obvious question that arises, however, is how one can explain the complexity of one's mental life, that is, the fact that my seeing, my hearing, and my awareness seem to be *different* entities. Textor's answer is: via conceptual distinctions. In other words, one and the same act is a hearing, a seeing, and an awareness of them, provided that we *conceptually* distinguish these aspects of the act. And in order to distinguish a hearing, a seeing, and an awareness in one and the same act, we have to relate that single act to several different objects that appear to the act. Thus, one and the same act, faced with the colour blue and the sound F, is a seeing when conceptually related to the colour, a hearing when conceptually related to the sound, and an awareness when conceptually related to itself. As Textor says:

Mental acts are metaphysically simple. They don't contain themselves as detachable parts, but can be brought under different concepts with respect to different objects to which they are related. (Textor 2017a, 133)

¹ For a third argument, which Textor labels the 'argument from comparison', see Brentano 1924, 226–228; for a criticism of this argument, see Textor 2017a, 253.

Is this conceptualist account Brentano's own position? There is some textual evidence against this reading.² While Textor treats mental acts as ontologically unitary and simple, importing only conceptual complexity in them, Brentano can be found to say that mental acts are unitary *but not simple*. For Brentano, our seeing and hearing, as well as our awareness of them, are real parts, or 'divisives', of one unitary mental act. Divisives seem to bring in *ontological* complexity. They are not self-standing, existentially autonomous entities – that is, they are not discrete items, which would lead to the bundle view – but they are nonetheless ontologically distinct. Brentano seems to make this claim in the following passage:

The perception of hearing is not identical with the feeling we have toward hearing. They are divisives of the same reality, but this does not make them really identical with it and thus with one another. [...] a divisive, which I *distinguish* as a part in a real thing, cannot be called identical with this thing and hence with the other divisives which can be distinguished in it. A divisive never stands in a relation of real identity with another which has been distinguished from it, for if it did it would not be another divisive but the same one. But they do both belong to *one* real entity. And it is this common membership in *one* real thing which constitutes the unity about which we are speaking. (Brentano 1924, 228–9; trans. Rancurello, Terrell, & McAlister).

Brentano's repeated motto about the structure of consciousness is 'unity is not simplicity' (see 1924, 223, 234 and 237), and this seems to be an *ontological* claim. His divisives thus apparently correspond to ontological distinctions, and not to merely conceptual ones. In fact, for Brentano, complex items made up of divisives form an ontological middle way between simple entities and what he calls 'collectives', that is, groups of discrete entities (1924, 222–

² On this I follow Marchesi 2019, who makes a similar point, but against Kriegel 2018b; see also Fisette 2015, who rejects the identity reading.

3). To be sure, there are passages where Brentano says that one and the same mental act can be ‘conceptually’ partitioned by being related to different objects (1924, 179, quoted in Textor 2017a, 258, among others), but this is when the parts are treated as discrete entities, that is, as self-standing items (see also Marchesi 2019, 133). This conceptual partitioning into self-standing items is in turn possible because the act itself is made up of divisives – as Dennett would say, the partitioning carves the mind at its joints.

Textor knows the text quoted above, which is a famous passage in Brentano’s corpus. Strikingly, he himself used it in earlier works to defend a variant of the ontological reading of Brentano, the ‘constituency thesis’, which was directed precisely against the identity interpretation of mental acts and their awareness in Brentano. According to the constituency thesis, a mental act of seeing, for example, is a constituent of the act of awareness of the seeing; there is thus a mereo-ontological distinction between the two acts (see 2006, esp. 423; Textor’s evolution is pointed out in Marchesi 2019, 135). Now, in Textor’s considered view, the constituency thesis is a bad philosophical position. Why? He addresses a series of objections to it, based on the ‘epistemic argument’ and the ‘duplication argument’. According to Textor, the constituency theory would be unable to solve the problems resulting from these arguments, and thus proves to be a bad option.

First, according to Textor, saying that seeing is a part of the awareness of seeing does not establish their coexistence, since ‘there are wholes that may have different parts than the ones they actually have. The same orchestra is composed at different times of different musicians.’ Second, ‘if awareness of hearing F *contains* hearing F and a distinct representation of hearing F, then [...] the note F is still presented twice’ (2017a, 126–7; see also the reference to Textor 2006 in Textor 2017b, 153n11; the claim that divisives lead to duplication is also found in Marchesi 2019, 137).

At this point, however, the reader will be tempted to ask: Wasn't Brentano in fact importing ontological complexity into his account of the mind? If he was not, what are we to do with texts such as the one quoted above, where he seems to state that divisives are not really identical? By contrast, if Brentano was a defender of the constituency thesis or of some other kind of ontological division of the mind, wouldn't it be more 'Brentanian' to defend his ontological account rather than going for mental monism?

Let me then try to defend the constituency variant of Brentano's ontological division of the mind, that is, the thesis that awareness of hearing F is a whole which has hearing F as a (real) part (or divisive). Regarding the epistemic argument, it seems to me that the necessary coexistence of hearing and awareness of hearing is warranted by Brentano's mereological framing itself, that is, simply by the fact that hearing is a part of awareness of hearing. Indeed, Brentano apparently thinks that a whole is identical to its parts. This is known as the 'composition as identity' principle, which states that a whole just *is* its components (see Cotnoir 2014, 4). Brentano seems to defend this principle in at least two passages (for the ascription of this thesis to Brentano, see Kriegel 2018a, 34, where the two texts are quoted):

To be sure, it would be a strange kind of arithmetic if one were to add to the two entities (*Wesen*) which are individual oxen the one which is two oxen and then to speak of three entities. (Brentano 1933, 50; trans. Chisholm & Guterman, modified).

If there are such things as atoms, then each particular atom is a thing and, according to what we have said, any three atoms taken together can also be called a thing; but the latter may not now be called a fourth thing, for it consists of nothing more than the three atoms and with the

positing of each of them in particular it was already given together with the third part (*zum dritten Teil*) (Brentano 1933, 5; trans. Chisholm & Guterman, modified).³

Applied to Brentano's account of self-consciousness, the principle entails that the whole "awareness of hearing" would not be the same whole if its part "hearing" were not there. Thus, necessarily without hearing there is no awareness of hearing.⁴

Textor resists this, and holds that wholes can lose their parts while remaining the same. His example, mentioned above, is that of an orchestra: you can replace one musician and still have the same orchestra. Now, I think that counterexamples such as this are based on an entanglement of wholes that equivocally bear the same name; once you disentangle them, the 'composition as identity' principle can still hold. In the example, there is a distinction to be made between the orchestra as an instrumental setting and the orchestra as a group of musicians: obviously, you don't change the instrumental-orchestra if you replace one musician, although you do change the musicians-orchestra; the replacement of one musician is not relevant for the whole that is the instrumental-orchestra, and thus there is indeed no change in this orchestra; but the reason is that no musician is a part of the instrumental-orchestra. However, musician-orchestras clearly also exist: when one says that the Berlin Philharmonic is a good orchestra, what one means are the musicians, not the instrumental setting (exactly the same setting could exist elsewhere).

³ Since both texts are from Brentano's *Kategorienlehre*, edited by Alfred Kastil, who is not a reliable editor, I have compared the texts with the original manuscripts, and they differ only on formal details; see respectively M35, n. 30365, and M71, n. 30845.

⁴ The 'composition as identity' principle is by no means unanimously accepted. Indeed, it has been attacked from various sides since its appearance in contemporary discussion on mereology in the works of Donald Baxter and David Lewis; one of the objections made against it is that some of its variants seem to violate the principle of indiscernibles (for a presentation of these issues, and for recent attempts to defend the thesis, see Cotnoir and Baxter 2014). Further work on Brentano would be needed to see which precise variant of the thesis he adopts and how he combines it with his endorsement of the principle of indiscernibles (on this endorsement, see below). I am grateful to Mark Textor for our exchanges about the 'composition as identity' principle.

Regarding the duplication problem, it also seems to me that Brentano's account is immune to it. To be sure, awareness of seeing blue needs to represent both seeing and seen-blue, whereas seeing represents blue. But the constituency theory allows us to avoid duplication. Indeed, since awareness of seeing blue has seeing blue as a part, its presentation of blue is provided to it by that part. What awareness adds to blue (as presented to itself by its "seeing" part) is the relation of being-seen. In other words, there is a 'division of intentional labour': the "seeing" part in the awareness of seeing blue is responsible for presenting blue, while the awareness presents seeing plus being-seen, the latter relation being added to blue by awareness, which treats it as a correlate of seeing. Although this complex framing is not stated explicitly in Brentano, I think that it is reasonable to attribute it to him. A passage by Brentano himself, and one by his most faithful student Marty, both quoted by Textor (2017a, 103), seem to allude to this:

[...] the presentation of the tone is connected with the presentation of the presentation of the tone in such a peculiarly intimate way that, if it obtains, its being contributes inwardly to the being of the other (Brentano 1924, 179; trans. Rancurello, Terrell, & McAlister, modified by Textor).

[...] the presentation of the tone and the presentation of the presentation of the tone are not two, but one act. The first presentation coalesces in the second and is so intimately connected with it that it contributes to its being (Marty 2011, 28; trans. Textor).

According to Brentano then, seeing 'contributes to the being' of awareness of seeing. What does this mean? In my opinion, it confirms the 'division of intentional labour' interpretation. Indeed, how better to contribute to the being of a mental act – that is, of something which is essentially intentional – than by providing it with part of its intentional directedness? Thus, it

seems to me that Brentano's ontological division of the mind is immune to Textor's arguments.

b. Some Objections to Mental Monism

Independently of exegetical issues about Brentano, however, one might like to ask whether Textor's position, mental monism, is defensible in itself. A position such as his, in contrast to the divisives account, treats our mental life as an unshaped material from a strictly ontological point of view (see also Dewalque 2017). But then the conceptual distinctions that one can draw in a given mental act might seem arbitrary. Indeed, if there is nothing *ontological* in my act that is responsible for its being divided into seeing blue and hearing F, why couldn't one say that my current act is in fact just a case of seeing blue, or perhaps an act of seeing blue and simultaneously tasting bitterness? What would rule out tracing conceptual distinctions in the act other than those of seeing blue and hearing F?

Textor's answer, obviously, is that the constraints on the kinds of conceptual distinction that one can make depend on the sorts of object to which a mental act is related.⁵ These are supposed to bring objective (i.e. non-arbitrary) complexity into the picture. According to Textor, a mental act has a 'plural reference', like the demonstrative 'these' (2017a, 116–8): it can refer to blue, to F, and to itself. It is also a 'multi-grade relation', that is, the number of its *relata* can vary: it could refer just to blue and to itself (2017a, 262). Arguably, this brings in no ontological complexity at the level of the act: my act can be described as a seeing, a hearing, and an awareness simply via this one relation which relates it to blue, to F, and to itself. It does, however, bring in ontological complexity elsewhere, namely, at the level of the *relata*: three *relata*, hence three sub-acts. (See the interesting

⁵ For an alternative solution, see Kriegel 2018a and b, where mental acts in Brentano are said to have various structures which allow different descriptions of them.

comparison with the identification of actions in 2017a, 267–70.) Now, one obvious difference between the plural reference of a demonstrative such as ‘these’ and a mental act is that a mental act refers to several objects *in several ways*: hearing, seeing, etc. How does Textor account for this? The answer is again: by the objects. He writes: ‘The act is an awareness of a colour, hence it is a seeing; the act is an awareness of a sound, hence it is a hearing’ (2017a, 251–2). One might also want to ask as well: What about cases in which the objects do not exist, as in hallucinations? Textor’s answer seems to be: In these cases, it is intentional objects that do the job (Textor 2017a, 269–70).

I have two worries here. First, the explanation about the diversification of our mental life seem to me to be in tension with another claim of Textor’s, namely, his rejection of intentionality as the mark of the mental, in other words, his opposition to Brentano’s thesis that all mental acts are object-directed. Although Textor does not provide a general classification of mental acts, nor a list of which are intentional and which non-intentional, he criticises the idea that propositional attitudes are object-directed (see 2017a, 80–4). Now, it is not easy to see how Textor’s explanation about the diversification of our mental life is to be combined with his rejection of intentionality as the mark of the mental. For if the various aspects of our mental life are to be distinguished by their relation to different objects, yet some of our mental acts are *not* object-directed, how then are *these latter mental acts* to be identified? Here it seems to me that either the conceptual distinctions we draw become arbitrary, or Textor has to provide some candidate other than objects to establish objectivity. If I am right, more information would be needed both about those acts which Textor takes to be intentional and about his way of picking out those which are not intentional, for which objects are therefore of no help. Brentano – or at least my Brentano – with his account of divisives, does not face any problem here (not to mention the fact that he adopts intentionality as the mark of the mental).

My second worry is that it is not clear how mental acts whose objects do not exist are to be identified using intentional objects. In fact, despite the strategic role that intentional objects play in mental monism, the account of them in Textor's book is not developed in full detail. In my view, a more precise explanation about the nature and mode of being of these objects would be needed. To be sure, according to Textor (2017a, 54 and 73), Brentano is a primitivist about intentionality, and this also holds for his account of intentional objects: they do not explain intentionality, but their mention there is simply to point out the specific kind of experience Brentano wants us to attend to, namely, *intentionality*. Textor also asserts, however, that this does not stop the inquiry, since it is still legitimate to ask what ontological framework applies to intentionality. Now, as Textor says, he does not want to 'pursue the question', and suggests that he might even go for adverbialism (2017a, 77), which does not posit intentional objects. In the final analysis, then, it is not clear whether Textor takes intentional objects to exist (as affirmed in passing at 2017a, 75) or whether they are merely a way of speaking. But if they are merely a way of speaking, where then should we find an objective criterion to distinguish the various aspects of our mental acts about non-existent objects? What could justify the various conceptual distinctions that we draw other than ontological complexity at the level of the *relata*? Again, for (my) Brentano, a mental act has real parts, and so there is no problem in distinguishing our different thoughts about non-existent objects.

3. The Individuation of Mental Acts

Why did Brentano include a mental substance, namely, the 'soul', in his philosophy of mind? According to Textor (2017a, 246–72), he was led to adopt the notion of a soul by the 'separability challenge'; in order for this problem to arise, however, one must start with a Brentano taken as a mental monist. The idea is this: if my seeing blue and my hearing F are

identical, how could I continue to see blue while no longer hearing F? Seeing blue should not survive the disappearance of hearing F (or hearing F should still be there). According to Textor, the mental monist can in fact give a solution to this problem, by appealing to objects: my act fits the description of seeing blue and hearing F if I can relate it to blue and to F; if it were related to only one of those objects, it would fit only one of the two descriptions.

But what about the alternative Brentano, the one who seems to introduce ontological complexity – that is, divisives – into the act? Strikingly, the early Brentano explicitly mentions his theory of divisives as an answer to the separability challenge. The idea is that a mental act can lose some of its parts without being destroyed. In other words, there are different kinds of ontological dependency between a mental act's divisives: some divisives can be separated from the others without destroying them, while some other divisives cannot be separated without the others being destroyed, and no divisive can survive alone (in contrast to discrete entities, which are existentially autonomous, and thus survive being separated from a collective). Brentano does not give much explanation about the way this works, but he provides a parallel case of such relations: take an atom, consider its two halves, which are two divisives, and add another divisive, namely its movement. Now, the atom could lose one of the divisives, namely movement – which could not stand alone, by the way – and still exist, but it could not lose one of its halves. The same holds for seeing blue, hearing F, and being aware of them: the act could lose either of the two first parts, but not the third, while none of these parts could survive alone (see Brentano 1924, 230–1 and 235; for a defence of this view, see Dainton 2017 and Giustina 2017).⁶

⁶ Note that Brentano stresses that he does not want to commit himself to the existence of atoms, and presents this scenario merely as an illustration of his point. One might be unhappy with the claim that the two halves of an atom are ontologically distinct, since one might argue that these two portions *as portions* do not exist in reality, but only in thought. Yet although the example is perhaps not well chosen, it is still clear that divisives are ontologically distinct for Brentano, as the movement part of the atom shows. Another Brentanian example of divisives, which resembles that of the two halves of the atom, since it is about two mutually dependent parts, is that of colour and extension: neither of

Later, however, as Textor emphasises, Brentano modified his view on the structure of consciousness, borrowing an Aristotelian ontological framework. On Brentano's later view, my seeing blue and my hearing F are two accidents of one and the same mental substance; that is, they are ontologically distinct entities but share the substance as one of their parts and thus have 'substantial identity' (as Textor says, 2017a, 265). The mental substance, that is, the soul, can exist without these accidents, and each of these accidents can exist without the other, but none of them can exist without the mental substance (see Brentano LS1b).⁷

Did Brentano introduce the soul in order to solve the separability challenge? This may be so, but I must confess that I would need a bit more development from Textor in order to be convinced of this. Specifically, I would need a discussion of the text mentioned above about divisives, one that would show me either that Brentano defended the identity view in this text, or that he did not but that the sort of ontological complexity presented there was unable to meet the separability challenge.

But if it was not meant to meet the separability challenge, for what purpose did Brentano introduce the soul into his philosophy? Clearly, I owe the reader an alternative explanation. One answer might be that he wanted to transpose his system of ontological dependencies into a more familiar theoretical framework, in order to cancel the impression of an *ad hoc* move (Brentano LS1b; see also the reframing of his account in Brentano 1982, 12).

Another explanation, which seems more plausible to me, is that Brentano introduced the soul in order to individuate mental acts. It is clear at any rate that he uses mental substance as an individuator (see also Textor 2017b). As he states:

them can exist alone, though they are obviously not really identical (see, e.g., 1982, 14–20). This hopefully confirms that divisives are not just conceptually distinct in Brentano.

⁷ I thank Guillaume Fréchette for sending me a transcription of this manuscript.

Specifically similar acts are individually distinct when they are mine or someone else's. The individualiser is the subject. (Brentano 1993, 33)

The idea is that when you and I have an act that is the same *in specie* – a belief, for example – something additional is needed to account for the fact that your act and mine are distinct particulars. For Brentano, this something is the soul: every individual mental substance has its own qualitative distinction, which thus is a part of each mental act and individuates it (see Brentano 1993, as well as LS1b). Why this move? It seems to me that Brentano has no other solution to account for the individuation of mental acts. Let me try to sketch out the idea enough to show that it is at least plausible.⁸

Brentano seems to reject the thesis that a mental act is individuated by its object, be it an external object or an intentional one. Or at any rate, the claim that the object cannot individuate the act is found in a text published under Brentano's name, on the basis of his manuscripts, by Alfred Kastil, one of his most orthodox students. The claim is simply that you and I could both have a mental act directed towards the same object, and that these acts would thus *not* be individuated by the object (Brentano 1954, 217–8). Individuation by an intentional object, on the other hand, seems to reverse the order of explanation: for Brentano (1982, 21), intentional objects appear and disappear not by themselves, but concomitantly with the acts of which they are the correlates, and so they seem to owe their individuation to the acts, not the acts to them.

Would Brentano accept something like spatiotemporal individuation of mental acts? This seems to be ruled out by his mind-body dualism: mental acts, in contrast to bodies, are not spatialised (on the mind-body problem and dualism, see Brentano 1954). Supposing that mental acts are not spatialised, couldn't they be individuated by temporality alone? This too

⁸ I discuss these issues in more detail in my paper 'Brentano on the Individuation of Mental Acts'.

seems difficult: you and I could have the same mental act about the same object at the same time (see also Textor 2017b, 149). But couldn't mental acts be spatialized thanks to the body with which they are connected? In the Brentanian framework, mental acts are related to their underlying bodies by a causal relation (see Marty 2011, 33). But then, couldn't the causal relation to my body serve to spatialise my act and thus allow for spatiotemporal individuation? Perhaps, but Brentano believes in the immortality of our mental life, and thus in its persistence after the destruction of our body; and I presume that he wants our mental acts still to be individuated in the afterlife, hence his reluctance to explain any kind of individuation via the body. (On Brentano's philosophy of religion, see again the texts in 1954.)

What about primitive individuation? According to such a view, your mental acts and mine are individuated in themselves, and this fact does not require any further explanation. This is an option for the individuation of tropes in contemporary philosophy (see Maurin 2018); couldn't it be used to individuate mental acts? In fact, primitive individuation is usually taken to violate the principle of indiscernibles (in its ontological version), since it allows two qualitatively identical items to differ numerically (Maurin 2002, 83–7). However, Brentano defends (the ontological version of) the principle of indiscernibles (1992–1993, 261). I therefore tend to think that he would be opposed to primitive individuation.

Given all these constraints, Brentano chooses to individuate mental acts via their bearers. This would thus be at least one major reason, if not *the* reason, for the introduction of a mental substance into his philosophy of mind; and it provides an alternative to the 'separability challenge' narrative.⁹

⁹ The options for individuation listed here are not meant to be exhaustive, but bearer individuation, spatiotemporal individuation, and primitive individuation are three standard ways of individuating tropes in contemporary philosophy, as stated in Maurin 2018.

But which account is better: the account with divisives or the substance account? In my opinion, the older view is better, for the substance account seems to be called into question both by the epistemic and the duplication arguments, as Textor claims (2017a, 266). It was important, in Brentano's earlier account, that the awareness of a mental act have this act as a part: first, because it connected the act to its awareness necessarily, thus establishing the infallibility of awareness; and second, because it allowed the act to take on some of the 'intentional labour' of awareness, thus avoiding a situation in which awareness presents the object of the act a second time. Now, in the substance account, although it is not clear to me whether awareness is a part of the mental substance or whether it is an additional accident which contains the substance as a part (as Textor 2017a, 266 argues), what is clear is that the awareness of a mental act does not have this act as a part. In other words, as it stands, the substance view is weaker in the face of the epistemic and duplication arguments. Brentano's earlier account, which is better prepared to defend itself against them, is therefore to be preferred. As well, I would say that not much would be lost from a philosophical point of view, since one might happily renounce the afterlife in favour of individuating one's mental acts via the body.

In sum, in this paper I have challenged Textor's mental monism, which is at the core of his fascinating Brentanian-minded contribution to contemporary philosophy of mind. I have argued first that the early Brentano defends another position, which imports ontological complexity into the mind, and which is immune to Textor's objections to similar views. Second, I have argued that it is not due to problems deriving from mental monism that Brentano later introduces a mental substance in his theory; rather, it is due to problems deriving from individuation. I nevertheless argue, as Textor does, that Brentano's earlier view (understood in my sense) is better than his later account.

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