

STUMPF ON ABSTRACTION

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Abstract. From the point of view of Husserl's critique of empiricist theories of abstraction in the *Logical Investigations*, it seems that Brentano and most of his students would have endorsed the presupposition of Locke's theory of abstraction, which Husserl labels as the 'psychological hypostatization of the general'. For Husserl himself, but also for most of his followers, the motivation behind this critique is that the descriptive psychology of the School of Brentano leads to psychologism if one doesn't accept Platonic ideal objects.

In the following article, I argue that Husserl's critique doesn't do justice to the accounts of abstraction developed in the school of Brentano. I take here the particular case of Carl Stumpf, showing that not only does Husserl's accusation miss its target, but also that it attribute indirectly to Stumpf a position that he didn't defend. I suggest that even before the *Logical Investigations*, Stumpf formulated the basis of an account of abstraction in terms of generalization, an account which will later turn out to be in many ways compatible with Husserl's theory of *Spezies* in the *Logical Investigations*, and which provide a viable alternative both to Platonism and to Empiricism, thereby calling for a reassessment of the positions on abstraction in the School of Brentano.

0 Abstraction in the School of Brentano

It has often been stated that the account of perception developed in the school of Brentano owes much to the British Empiricist tradition, and in particular to Locke. According to Brentano's account (and to the accounts of many of his students), what the mind perceives are not external objects but so-called contents, which are caused by external objects. With the exception of the term 'content', to which he prefers 'idea', Locke would agree with this description. In addition, from very early on Brentano agreed with Hume to the effect that inseparable parts of a visual perception, like the form and the colour of a perceived object, may be distinguishable through exercise and practice, but that these parts are inseparable in the real act of perception. Distinguishing between them is then nothing other than a *distinctio ra-*

tionis – which is the work of abstraction understood as a psychological function.

In this context, it is not surprising to see that Brentano and his school tackled the problem of abstraction along similar lines to the British Empiricists. Like the British Empiricists, Brentano and his school were concerned with the possibility of abstraction as a mental faculty, and correlatively, with the possibility of the existence of such abstract entities. In his published writings at least, Brentano himself didn't take great pains to debate the metaphysical aspect of the problem of abstraction – namely the question of whether there are abstract objects, or universals. Throughout his career, he regarded Platonic realism as a mistake in which being is attributed to universals, and thus he considered the position indefensible: universals in the Platonic sense never were part of his ontology.¹ In his view, the problem of abstraction is primarily of an epistemological or psychological nature: do abstract presentations constitute a specific category of mental activities, distinct from concrete presentations, or do they belong to the same category? In the latter case, how are they to be distinguished from concrete presentations? Is abstraction a well-defined mental operation distinct from the mere perception of intuitive presentations and their contents?

Considering only his published works, it might seem that Brentano never really settled these questions. Over the course of his career, he and his students developed different accounts of abstraction. Without clearly arguing for a core position, Brentano was originally inclined to favour the view that abstract and intuitive presentations are simply two varieties of one single intentional mode – namely, presenting. As two varieties of presenting, distinct in virtue of, among other things, their respective degrees of intensity, abstract and intuitive presentations basically belong to the same class of mental acts on this view. This position has been widely discussed among Brentano's students,

¹ It is therefore surprising to read in Rosen (2012), that 'the common theme [between Frege, Bolzano, and Brentano and his pupils] is the felt need in semantics and psychology as well as in mathematics for a class of objective (i.e., non-mental) supersensible entities'. Although this may apply to the first two philosophers mentioned, it is definitely not the case for Brentano. See, for example, the early Brentano in his 1867 lectures on metaphysics: 'all arguments, on which is based the supposition of ideas outside the individual, are void' ('Alle Argumente, worauf die Annahme der Ideen ausser den Einzeldingen ruht, sind nichtig') (M96, B 17311). On the mistake of Plato's realism, see also Brentano (1925, 276); (1925a, 136); (1976, 200); (1986, 76).

and he himself called it, in his Vienna lectures on logic, a ‘monistic’ or ‘noetic-monistic’ position. This was generally opposed to the so-called ‘dualistic’ or ‘noetic-dualistic’ view, according to which intuition and abstraction consist of two different modes of intentional relation.²

In discussion and correspondence with Marty and Stumpf between the 1870s and the end of the 1890s, Brentano later came to refine his views on the relation between intuition and abstraction, moving from a ‘monistic’ account to a weak ‘noetic-dualistic’ view. Since they exchanged extensively on these issues, since Brentano considered Stumpf his most promising student,³ and since the views developed by the master evolved constantly, a closer look at the conceptions developed mutually by Stumpf and Brentano might give us a privileged view on the debates surrounding the problem of abstraction in the school of Brentano. As a matter of fact, the evolution of their respective views on abstraction is rather peculiar: they both first advocated for a ‘monistic’ account in the early 1870s, then developed, between the mid-1880s and the mid-1890s, using different resources, a so-called ‘ennoetist’ account along the lines of the first account, according to which abstraction works in conjunction with attention, which is an act of interest. Finally, at the end of the 1890s, they both rejected the ennoetist-monistic view of abstraction for very different reasons: even if it makes sense to say that both Stumpf and Brentano came to endorse a weak version of dualism, this doesn’t do justice to the divergence in their respective positions. Where Stumpf started to argue for the necessity of a specific abstractive function called generalization, Brentano argued for a conception of abstraction as a higher-order presentation.

At first glance, getting a better look at the development of abstraction in the early school of Brentano might seem to be a mere philological exercise, in particular from the perspective of Husserl’s critique of empiricist theories of abstraction in the *Logical Investigations*:⁴ without mentioning Brentano as an advocate of such theories, Husserl thought that Twardowski’s largely Brentanian account of general

² See Brentano, EL72, 12333. Marty borrows this distinction from Brentano in his lectures on descriptive psychology from 1894/95. See Marty (2010, 115).

³ See Brentano’s letter to Stumpf of 1903, in this volume.

⁴ See especially the 5th Chapter of the second *Logical Investigation*, Husserl (1901, 184).

presentations suffered from the mistakes of Locke’s theory of abstraction, which he called the ‘psychological hypostatization of the general’ – a form of psychologism.⁵ Stumpf’s theory of abstraction in terms of selective attention to partial contents (Stumpf 1890) is also subject to Husserl’s criticisms given in different places of the second *Logical Investigation*.⁶ Finally, since Marty, in correspondence with Husserl about the second *Logical Investigation*, objected to Husserl’s criticisms and explicitly advocated for a ‘psychological hypostatization of the general’,⁷ it makes good sense, at least from Husserl’s perspective, to see the abstraction theories of Stumpf and Brentano and the psychologism in the theory of knowledge as two sides of the same coin.⁸

Still today, this narrative seems to be dominant when it comes to characterizing Husserl’s position in the *Logical Investigations* and his criticism of psychologism, which are seen against the background of his philosophical upbringing as a member of the School of Brentano.⁹ The idea behind this narrative, to put it crudely, is that the descriptive psychology of the School of Brentano leads to psychologism if one doesn’t accept Platonic ideal objects.¹⁰ However, there are good reasons to question this narrative, precisely when one considers the evolution of the accounts sketched above. If Husserl’s accusation that a ‘psychological hypostatization of the general’ might apply to some of Brentano and Stumpf’s early accounts of abstraction, this clearly doesn’t do justice to the accounts developed in the late 1890s, as I

⁵ Husserl 1901, 121ff.

⁶ See especially Husserl (1901, §§19 and 40).

⁷ See HUABW01, 75ff.

⁸ It seems that Husserl already held this view in 1897, when he writes to Natorp that his *Logical Investigations*, on which he was still working, were ‘directed against the subjectivist-psychologizing logic of our time (thus against the standpoint which I advocated earlier as a pupil of Brentano)’ (HUABW05, 43).

⁹ Husserl himself contributed decisively to the understanding of his phenomenology as fundamentally distinct from Brentano’s philosophy. See, for instance, the preface of the second edition of the *Logical Investigations* (Hua XVIII, 7), or his ‘Reminiscences of Brentano’: ‘I was an enthusiastic pupil [...] still, it was not to be that I should remain a member of his school’ (Husserl 1976, 53).

¹⁰ Huemer (2004, 203) formulates the idea very clearly: ‘Only after having accepted the realm of ideal objects, could Husserl give up Brentano’s empirical standpoint’. Others, like Willard (2002, 80), see the critique of psychologism as incompatible with the School of Brentano: ‘Husserl ceased to be in the School of Brentano at some point in the 1890s’.

want to show. In Stumpf's case in particular, not only does the accusation miss its target, but it also attributes to Stumpf a position that he didn't defend. In fact, as I will suggest, as early as 1896 – 5 years before the publication of the *Logical Investigations* – Stumpf formulated the basis of an account of abstraction in terms of generalization, an account which will later turn out, with some exception, to be in many ways compatible with Husserl's theory of *Spezies* in the *Logical Investigations*.

In what follows, I start with a reconstruction of the different accounts of abstraction in the school of Brentano, including Stumpf's, which led to the so-called weak dualist view defended by the school between 1891 and 1902 (sections 1 to 3). In the second part of the paper (sections 4 and 5), I show how Stumpf's later account of abstraction remained true to Brentano's rejection of Platonic ideal objects, while also offering an account of the 'products' or *Gebilde* of abstraction compatible with the objectivity of concepts and propositions – a demand which Brentanian descriptive psychology wouldn't be able to meet, at least according to Husserl and the narrative surrounding the development of his phenomenology. More generally, the reconstruction provided here aims to show that, contrary to what is supposed by the received view based on Husserl's critique of psychologism in the *Logical Investigations*, there is no 'standard psychologistic account' of abstraction defended by the School of Brentano, neither by Brentano himself, nor by Stumpf or Marty – who usually are considered to be the most representative members of the school.

1 The starting point: the 'monistic' account of abstraction

As is commonly known, Brentano held the view that judicative and emotional mental acts are based on more primitive ones, namely presentations. These in turn are also based on a variety of primitive presentations called sensations. When I judge that the Eiffel Tower exists, my judgment is an acceptance of the presented object: the Eiffel Tower. Now the Eiffel Tower is not an object of sensation: sensations have as objects sensory qualities like colours and tones and their properties, like intensity, constancy, luminosity, etc. This is the reason why Brentano suggests that the presentation of an object such as the Eiffel Tower is an 'abstract presentation' based on single simple presentations: sensations of colour, of different shapes in spatial organization, etc. In other words, I don't have 'the Eiffel Tower' as an object of

presentation in intuition when I present it. Rather, I am presented intuitively with single colours and shapes, which build the content of my sensation and which Brentano calls ‘physical phenomena’. For an ordinary object such as the Eiffel Tower to become the content of a presentation, multiple acts of sensation are necessary, as well as the functions of analysis and abstraction. This is why Brentano calls presentations of ordinary objects and of properties abstract presentations: they involve an operation (of abstraction) on single acts of sensation. Such an operation may or may not be involved in a mental act: for example, seeing a red patch doesn’t involve this operation, while seeing different patches of red organized in space in the shape of a ball, i.e., seeing *a red ball*, involves such a operation of abstraction.

In his published works, Brentano rarely discusses the nature and the role of abstraction – neither the psychological process nor the result of this process, namely abstract entities. However, his lectures and correspondence contain some useful precisions that make a reconstruction of his account of abstraction possible, and with it a reconstruction of some of the core issues regarding abstraction and abstract objects in his school. Taking these lectures as a starting point, we can roughly distinguish between four accounts of abstraction in Brentano’s works. The first account is developed as part of his theory of parts and wholes in the Würzburger metaphysics lectures of 1867, where, influenced by Aristotle (*Met.* 1034 b32), he proposes a distinction between three kinds of parts – thus formulating the problem of abstraction for the first time. Brentano distinguishes there between 1) physical parts, like single corns (parts) in a pile of corn (whole); 2) logical parts of an object, which are parts of the definition of its concept. For example, the property of being coloured is a logical part of the property of being red; and virtue is a logical part of courageousness. In his 1867 lectures, before turning to a non-propositional theory of judgment, Brentano used the locution ‘[...] is a logical part of’ interchangeably with ‘[...] can be predicated of _’. And 3) metaphysical parts, which are non-physical parts, and are the determinations of an object, or its categories: substance, location, space, time, thinking, accidents, etc. In contrast with physical parts, which are themselves physical, metaphysical parts are called *abstract parts* or *abstracta*:¹¹ an *abstractum* in this sense would be, for instance, the substance of

¹¹ See Brentano, (M96, B17193).

the telephone on my desk, taken in isolation from the other parts of the metaphysical whole in which the telephone inheres. Considered without its location, its spatial extension, its colour, etc., the telephone is nothing but an abstract object. The same holds for any other metaphysical part isolated from the whole.¹²

Following this account, taken from the *Metaphysics* lectures, Brentano goes on to say that an abstract presentation is obtained by taking in isolation a metaphysical part from the metaphysical whole, like the abstraction of [the substance of] Socrates without his accidents, or one of the accidents of ‘the great Socrates’ taken in abstraction from the metaphysical whole. Nothing is said here on the psychological operation of abstraction; Brentano is simply saying that abstract objects, like virtue, courageousness, or Socrates’s courageousness, are abstract in virtue of being isolated and non-autonomous parts of metaphysical wholes. However, these abstract objects are pure fictions. They are also called *Essenzen*, *Spezies*, *Praedicamente*, or *Divisiva*. In his view, these are simply *fictio cum fundamento in re. Abstracta*, or metaphysical parts, ‘are only determined as different things through a fiction of our understanding’.¹³ *Abstracta* are therefore *divisiva*: they are created by the mind ‘as entities’, but they are not genuine entities in Brentano’s early ontology.¹⁴

Stumpf endorsed this initial account in his book on spatial perception (Stumpf 1873). There, he argues that contents are generally presented ‘together’ (*zusammenvorgestellt*), but that this togetherness comes in two categories: autonomous contents (*selbständige Inhalte*) can be presented both together and separately, while partial contents (*Teilinhalte*) can’t be presented separately. Colour and extension, for instance, are *Teilinhalte* in this sense. This is where abstraction comes into play: in order to present extension separately from colour, I must make abstraction of it. Stumpf suggests an analogy between predication and the abstraction operated on partial contents, such that I can’t have a presentation of a property of an object without having a presentation of the object of which it is predicated. So in ‘copper is heavy’, heaviness is an *abstractum*, or a partial content, of the presentation of copper, since there is no heaviness without a body that has this quali-

¹² See M 96, MS 31985 and 31535; see also Baumgartner (2013, 23).

¹³ German original: ‘sind nur durch Fiktion des Verstandes wie verschiedene Dinge gesetzt’ (B17359).

¹⁴ See also Chrudzimski & Smith (2004), 204.

ty.¹⁵ Along the same lines as Brentano's conception of metaphysical parts, Stumpf suggests that we see predicative relations as metaphysical wholes in which the single parts (here copper, and heaviness) are thought as a unity (i.e. as a metaphysical whole). The point about the inseparability of space and quality, and the analogous case of inseparability concerning presented predicates and their subjects, supports Stumpf's view that space is a primitive element in presentations. To him space is as primitive as sensed qualities, e.g. colours, telling us that 'there is a visual space, i.e. a particular sensory content which is sensed directly, in the same way as colour qualities and as a consequence of optical nervous processing, and which possesses all the characteristics we attribute to space' (Stumpf 1873, 272).

In his discussion of differentiation and perception (Stumpf 1873, 130ff), Stumpf develops a psychological application of Brentano's theory of metaphysical (abstract) parts. When hearing a chord, both the inexperienced and the trained music listener perceive a unitary sensation, or a whole constituted by parts; while the trained music listener is able to distinguish the parts of the whole, the inexperienced music listener only has access to the unitary sensation. The differentiation of parts is conditioned by experience, training, and memory. It is indeed on this basis that a trained music listener will be able to distinguish between single tones in the hearing of a chord.

While it is true to say that, strictly speaking, when listening to a C chord, both listeners hear the *same* chord and have the same presentation content, this shouldn't be taken to mean that the single parts of the heard chord are equally *perceived* by both the inexperienced and the trained music listener. Presentation contents are by definition unitary contents, which may or may not be perceived distinctly.¹⁶ However, the distinctness of the perception doesn't change anything with regard to the unitary nature of the content. Even if the single tones C, E, and G are not *perceived* by the untrained music listener when she hears a C chord, she still is presented with the same content as the trained music listener hearing a C chord. As Stumpf puts it,

the [...] plurality in unity rests on an operative thinking (*hineindenken*). Every content [...] is in itself fully unitary, although a

¹⁵ Stumpf (1873, 113–114).

¹⁶ Compare Stumpf 1873, 133: 'we only distinguish what has been perceived separately'.

plurality of relations attaches immediately to it for us, in the way these are fixed by linguistic expressions. The decomposition of the content itself is therefore only *virtual*, although it is not *arbitrary*, but necessary, since every similarity and every distinction is imposed upon us by the content itself. We operate – to quote an expression of the Scholastics – a *distinctio cum fundamento in re*. (Stumpf 1873, p. 139)

The same kind of operative thinking is at play when it comes to general concepts: ‘we use to [...] to treat [general concepts] as qualities or entities, or generally as something which would inhere the things or at least the individual presentations. General concepts only designate something which understanding makes with the individual presentations, or more precisely, the possibility, from the side of the latter, to sustain this operation’ (137). This position is in line with Brentano’s in the metaphysics lectures, and shares its conceptualist orientation.

Abstract concepts, and *abstracta* in general, are therefore seen as the result of an operation realized on unitary contents. Since this operation is only virtual, the *abstracta* are merely conceptual. They are not ‘in’ things, yet they are nevertheless not purely linguistic entities, since they are grounded in things.

To which extent should this account be labelled a ‘monistic’ account? The basic reason for calling Stumpf’s account monistic is that it characterizes abstraction as belonging to the category of mental *operations* (operating here on the class of presentations as a whole), and not to the category of mental *acts* or *phenomena*. As a consequence, primitive sensations, but also imaginative presentations, memory presentations, and even symbolic presentations all belong to one single class of mental phenomena. This makes it a ‘monistic’ account of abstraction since presentations involving abstraction (like the presentation of a single tone in a chord) are not categorically distinct from presentations that don’t involve abstraction (like the indistinct presentation of the chord). In both cases, we face one and the same content, with its ‘necessary’ or intrinsic decomposition structure. Since the operation realized on the contents by abstraction is merely ‘virtual’, so-called ‘abstract presentations’ are not structurally different from intuitive presentations. This is the gist of the monistic account.

2 The Ennoetist Account

The second account of abstraction is first discussed in 1875 and seems to have been held, although with important variations, through differ-

ent periods and until around 1900 by Brentano, Stumpf, and Marty. By 1875, Brentano had developed the view according to which *abstracta*, considered as collectives, are so-called intentional entities or immanent objects.¹⁷ In correspondence with Stumpf in 1876, Brentano recalls a discussion they had in 1875 in Vienna, in which he exposed a ‘new hypothesis’ to Stumpf concerning abstraction.¹⁸ Following this new hypothesis, *abstracta* can only be represented distinctly as parts in *concreta*, but not as such outside of them. Brentano also refers to Berkeley for support for this view.¹⁹ More generally, he underlines that there is no authentic (or autonomous, ‘*im eigentlichen Sinn*’) abstract presenting.²⁰ Along these lines, he began to leave the conceptualist account given in his metaphysics lectures aside, instead adapting his theory of abstraction as a part of his descriptive psychology. It is precisely in this context that he developed his theory of ennoetism. Brentano says of ennoetism that it shares with nominalism the idea that there is only *one* kind of presenting activity for both concrete and abstract presentations – in this sense, ennoetism is a form of monistic position – but that this one activity is guided by a more or less important degree of interest, which can allow the subject to focus on parts of the presentation.²¹ Such an account shares aspects of Mill’s conception of abstraction, according to which:

we have, properly speaking [no general concepts]; we have only complex ideas of objects in the concrete: but we are able to attend exclusively to certain parts of the concrete idea; and by that exclusive attention, we enable those parts to determine exclusively the course of our thoughts. (Mill, 1979, 309)

Following Mills’ theory, but also Brentano’s in this respect, I can *form* the general concept of the colour red by focusing my attention on parts of a concrete presentation of a red object; but this doesn’t mean that I

¹⁷ See also EL72, 12342f. ‘[O]ur act of presentation, our whole self, as inner perception shows us, is a *unity*. The immanent object of the unitary complete presentation is a collective’.

¹⁸ See Baumgartner (ed.) (1992, 37).

¹⁹ See Berkeley (1734, §10): ‘[...] Extension, Figure, and Motion, abstracted from all other Qualities, are inconceivable’. The same passage was also discussed favorably against Kant’s understanding of space in Stumpf (1873, 24).

²⁰ See Baumgartner (ed.) (1992, 42).

²¹ See for instance Brentano (EL72, 12340).

have a general or abstract presentation of red (or that I am presenting red under a different mode) when I think about what is shared in general by red things.²² In his Vienna lectures on logic (EL 72), Brentano explains his theory in the following way:

[I]n relation with the question of universals, it appears that when I also have no other presentations than individual presentations, in a certain way, I do have them [i.e. universals] – namely as partial presentations circumscribed through a particular interest – and this way is sufficient to give to the general name not simply a plurality of equivocal individual meanings, as the nominalists wanted, but rather a unitary, truly general sense. (Brentano EL 72, 12349)

As such, there is a sense in which we can say that Fred and his friend both form the *same* general concept of red, provided that they focus their attention on the same features of the presented object. In this way, the abstract name ‘colour’ is not a simple fiction, as it was in Brentano’s first account of abstraction in the *Metaphysics* lectures, instead it has a ‘truly general sense’, without requiring the acceptance of abstract entities in one’s ontology.

This account introduces general presentations as having *abstracta* as intentional entities, isolated on the basis of an act of interest. These acts of interest are directed towards parts of presentation contents that are not intuitive as such. In other words, redness as an object of presentation is constituted by intuitive and non-intuitive parts: the intuitive parts are the visual content or individual presentations and its properties (hue, brightness, constancy, etc.), while the non-intuitive parts (the property of being a colour) are co-present in the presentation content, but are not accessible in presentations as such. Thanks to an act of interest in the relevant part of the presentational content, we can isolate the abstract presentation, which otherwise would simply be an indistinct part of the intuitive presentation of the red colour.

But how does this work? According to ennoetism, the partial presentations that are focused upon are the object of a particular interest. These partial presentations are concepts – and thereby act as mediator for further psychological activities – on the sole basis of the act of

²² Compare Brentano (EL72, 12005): ‘Ennoetism is satisfactory. Without assuming a multiple mode of presenting, ennoetism gives an account of the difference between intuition and concept and an account of conceptual abstraction and combination’.

interest directed towards them. Therefore, no parts of presentations are intrinsically conceptual; they are made conceptual by an act of interest:

[T]here is only one mode of presenting activity, [...] [but] through the detaching and unifying force of a particular interest, directed exclusively upon one or certain parts of the complete presentation, these parts of presentation can become mediator of nomination and presentational basis of judgments and emotional activities.²³

Following this account, when I see a red table, the presentation of the table is a partial presentation, which in itself is not intuitive: I see only patches of colour. But this partial presentation contributes to the individuation of the object of my presentation. This contribution is not effected on the basis of a new mental activity – it's just that this 'partial presenting' becomes the object of an act of attention. This attention is judgmental: I see the red table and I judge that 'this presenting shows a red table' or that 'this presenting of a red table exists'. The focus thus bestowed upon the partial presentation of the table 'elevates', so to speak, the partial presentation to the level of a mediator (*Vermittler*) or a sign. According to ennoetism, concepts are to be considered as modified intuitions: they are modified thanks to the focus bestowed upon them by specific judgments or acts of interest or attention.

As suggested *en passant* in the last quote, Brentano thinks that this interest, as the key element for abstractive thinking, also works with multiple partial presentations. Such an interest 'can be directed unitarily toward multiple particular parts of a presentation' (EL72, 12350). So, for example, I can hear and enjoy or take interest in a series of tones *unitarily* (*einheitlich*), and this enjoyment or interest is distinct from the enjoyment or interest taken in the tones individually, although at no point does it involve something like 'fusion' (*Verschmelzung*) of presentations: 'that which "fuses" is the particular unitary interest' (see EL72, 12350). I can also have a *unitary* interest in the multiple tones of a chord, which would make the presentation of the chord (or the melody) an abstract presentation. Finally, and more generally, the ennoetist theory can also account for compound con-

²³ See Brentano (EL72, 12340). Interestingly, we find in Marty (1894/2010, 125) the exact same sentence.

cepts, like disjunctive, reflexive, or contradictory concepts.²⁴ In this way, the unitary interest directed toward multiple parts of presentations serves as an *explanans* for the fact that abstract presentations are not obtained through the mere sum of single intuitive presentations, without introducing a second mode of presenting, and correlatively, without having to accept abstract objects – which would be the objects of such a mode of presenting.

In Halle, Stumpf partly integrated Brentano's ennoetism into his account of abstraction, which was being developed at around the same time. The account developed in his psychology lectures, but also in his *Tonpsychologie*, can be summarized in the following way: an abstract feature gets isolated from the whole, although it is not, as such, thought of more precisely (*vervollständig*). In some sense, one could say that the abstracted feature is an incomplete partial presentation. However, this isolating of the abstract feature doesn't involve any change in the presenting activity as such: abstracting the feature doesn't give me another presentation. Rather, it has what Stumpf calls a *judicative* difference: it is a *noticing* (*Bemerken*), a mode of perceiving belonging to the class of judgments (affirmations).

Stumpf's view of abstraction in the second volume of his *Tonpsychologie* (1890) bears many similarities to Brentano's ennoetist account, but there are two important differences. First, Stumpf considers abstraction to be a function of *judicative* (*bemerken*) acts. Isolating a part from the whole of my presentation is for Stumpf a *noticing* of this part; it is not as such an act of interest. Noticing involves analysis, which means a noticing of a plurality, and relations (*vergleichen*). It is the noticing itself (and not the 'noticed partial presentations') that is subject to the interest (Stumpf speaks here of pleasure, (*Lust*)) involved in an abstractive process. In Stumpf's view, while abstract parts of a presentation content are *noticed* thanks to the judicative act of noticing, this noticing can itself be conditioned by attention (*Aufmerksamkeit*), which Stumpf calls a 'pleasure in noticing' (*Lust am Bemerken*).²⁵ Stumpf's example is the hearing of the strokes of the clock: when suddenly the clock starts striking, I cannot but notice the strokes. The individual strokes are parts of my individual intuitive au-

²⁴ See Brentano (EL72, 12357).

²⁵ Stumpf doesn't affirm that every noticing is conditioned by attention. Extreme pain, for example, comes to perception without any need for attention. See Stumpf (1890, 282).

ditory presentation, which are noticed as individual strokes. What makes me perceive them as a series of strokes – what makes me *notice* the strokes – and eventually allows me to reproduce in auditory imagination the series of strokes (and eventually allows me to count them as a series of seven strokes in this reproduction), is the pleasure I take in noticing them. This pleasure in noticing is also characterized by Stumpf as a ‘will to notice a content (as part of a whole) or the will to notice something *in* a content (parts or relations thereof)’ (Stumpf 1890, 284). In other words, what ones notices in perception are parts of a whole or the relations between the parts of a whole. Noticing isolates the parts or the relations between them, and the pleasure taken in noticing allows one to identify parts or relations between parts that are not only extended in space, but also extended in time. In this way, Stumpf’s account paves the way for the perception of temporally extended *abstracta*, like melodies.

The second difference between Stumpf’s account of abstraction in *Tonpsychologie* and the Brentanian ennoetist account is correlated with the first. While in the Brentanian ennoetist framework it is the unitary act of interest that warrants the perception of complex wholes (like melodies or chords) as unitary objects of the same mode of presenting, rather than intuitive presentations – I hear melodies and chords in the exact same way as I hear single tones, according to the ennoetist view – the view advocated by Stumpf is based on fusion: it is an intrinsic property of some of the partial contents of a presentation that they have a more or less important degree of fusion (Stumpf 1890, 65f.). Eights, for instance, will have the highest degree of fusion in auditory perception, followed by fifths, fourths, etc.²⁶ I can single out some of the partial presentations of a general presentation by noticing them, but this singling out doesn’t necessarily depend on interest, and there is no unitary interest that binds the parts together.²⁷ Rather, according to Stumpf in the *Tonpsychologie*, at least for some sensory cases like hearing tones, a multiplicity can be perceived directly without the help of a unitary act of interest. On this basis, Stumpf rejects the thesis that interest is an essential part of the abstrac-

²⁶ There is an interesting debate in the correspondence between Brentano and Stumpf on fusion. See Brentano (1989). See also Martinelli (2013) for an account of this debate.

²⁷ See Stumpf (1890, 282): ‘not every noticing is an attending (*Beachten*), i.e. conditioned through and supported by attention’.

tive process, although it is obviously involved in cases of attention. By introducing the idea of fusion, Stumpf allows for cases where multiplicities are perceived as such, and not as a single intuitive content. In short, although interest plays a role in abstraction, it doesn't play the central role attributed to it by the Brentanian ennoetist account of abstraction.

It should be noted in passing that Stumpf's model of attention as pleasure taken in noticing the parts of a whole was also adopted by the early Husserl. In an early paper of 1893, Husserl clearly uses Stumpf's distinction between the pleasure taken in noticing parts of the whole and the whole itself.²⁸ Through distinguishing between the intuitive presence of an object in front of us – the intuition proper, e.g. the single tones heard – and the mere consideration of it in its absence – e.g. representing the tones (*Repräsentation*) as a melody –, Husserl suggests a similar account of the 'intending something absent' involved in the representation as that suggested by Stumpf in the case of noticing. Similarly to the act of noticing, in Husserl's account the representation is moved by a feeling of pleasure taken in noticing, a '*rein im Gegenstand aufgehende Lust am Bemerken*'.²⁹ The fulfilling of the representation is characterized as a 'liberation of tension', 'release of inhibition', or a 'discharge'.³⁰ In other words, the pleasure taken in noticing is realized thanks to the fulfilled intuition, in which the noticed parts are given.

While relying on Stumpf's view of attention as *Lust am Bemerken*, Husserl however rejected in his 1893 paper the view that noticing is a kind of judgment; although he interprets this noticing as being moved by the pleasure taken in it. If ennoetism is a monistic view, as Marty and Brentano contend – i.e., a view in which the intuitive and abstract presentations are only gradually, and not categorically distinguished – it seems that Husserl had already rejected ennoetism by 1893. Since the representation (or noticing) constitutes for Husserl a different mode of consciousness than the intuition (Hua XXII, 115–116), the isolating role of abstraction is not performed by a judicative form of noticing; rather, abstraction is a representative function.

²⁸ Husserl refers indeed to Stumpf (1890, 279ff.) in this paper.

²⁹ See Hua XXII, 293, 411.

³⁰ Husserl speaks of 'Lösung der Spannung' (Hua XXII, 407, 411), 'Befreiung', 'Erlösung der Hemmung' (Hua XXII, 296), and 'Entlastung' (HuaXXII, 415).

3 Abandonment of Ennoetism and Weak Dualism

Although Stumpf's account of attention as *Lust am Bemerken* bears important similarities to Brentano's ennoetist conception of abstraction, the account developed in the *Tonpsychologie* departs significantly from the ennoetist account championed by Brentano between the 1880s and the 1890s.

Brentano's abandonment of ennoetism is clearly exposed in 'Abstraction and Relation', written in 1899, where he rejects the ennoetist account of abstraction for a different reason: before even being the focus of attention, the partial presentations must somehow be structured in a way that allows attention to isolate the relevant parts.³¹ This structure is what Brentano calls a thought (*Gedanke*), which involves both intuitive and predicative elements:

If a being is presented, such that an object in the external world obtains, this external object is never presented exhaustively, but rather, as one says, in terms of certain features, but not in others.

As a consequence, every object in the external world can be an object of different presentations. One grasps it in terms of these features, [while] another [grasps it] in terms of other features, others either completely or partially. Or, what means the same, there are different presentations, the objects of which are identical with each other. Something white, for instance, can be something sweet. Presentations that differ in content have the same object. (The features that are taken up in the presentation are its content.) [...]. Then again, it can happen that a presentation becomes indeterminate by not taking up the object in all of its features. Such presentations are called general presentations, general concepts [...]. Such general presentations are not found among our intuitions, but rather only among our thoughts which are formed from intuitions by means of abstraction. (Here the expression "thought" is restricted to a class of presentations. Very often judgments are also included under this term.) [...] Thoughts are partly of intuitive, partly of predicative unity. The latter is given when the objects for presentations that differ in content are identified, and hereby a presentation of this identical [object] is formed. (Brentano 2013, 434)

It is likely that Stumpf also endorsed Brentano's motives for rejecting ennoetism. A few years after the publication of the *Tonpsychologie*,

³¹ A similar point is made in 1894/95 in Marty (2010, 125ff.) and is discussed at length in the correspondence between Brentano and Marty.

Stumpf makes an interesting remark in a letter to Brentano of the 17th March, 1896 – a few months before the Munich congress of psychology of 1896 – which indicates that he complemented his earlier view of attention as *Lust am Bemerken* with a view of abstraction or synthesis (*Zusammenfassen*) as a distinct kind of presenting:

Concerning the “synthetic function”, on which I announced [a lecture] (which I will most likely *not* deliver, since I will be given enough time to speak in the opening address), I mean the synthesis of contents into different groups, e.g. in tonal impressions, where we add in thought [*hineindenken*] different rhythms, or in points, which can be unified into a figure, but also in abstract characteristics. It seems to me that there is here a function, which, in a certain sense, constitutes the opposite of perception, although numerous misunderstandings attached to such a notion since Kant. I intend to discuss them briefly. I don’t know however if you will agree with me on this thesis.³²

Stumpf didn’t give the lecture announced in 1896 in Munich. But a similar lecture, if not the same lecture, was held in 1902 at the Academy of Sciences in Berlin. The lecture didn’t survive in a written form, but an abstract has been published in the protocols of the Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences:

On Abstraction and Generalisation. Abstraction is the distinction of parts which cannot be given in isolation. The production of general concepts rests on a different act, to which, in analogy with other classes of intellectual functions, are also assigned particular products (*Gebilde*).³³

Where Brentano, in *Abstraction and Relation*, speaks of abstraction as the product of thoughts (and not of presentations or judgments, as was the case in his account of ennoetism), which ‘are partly of intuitive, partly of predicative unity’, Stumpf suggests, rather (and at about the same time), that we introduce a function of synthesis, which would be a completely different act to the presentation or the judgment.

In his published works at least, Brentano didn’t develop this account much further. In his lectures on descriptive psychology of 1891, we can already find elements suggesting that he had abandoned

³² See Stumpf’s letter to Brentano, March 17th, 1896, in this volume.

³³ Stumpf (1902, 593).

ennoetism by that time. Indeed, in these lectures, the distinction between presentations, judgments, and acts of love and hate is given a marginal role; in fact, Brentano focuses there on the distinction between fundamental and superposed (*supraoniert*) acts: abstract presentations are said to be superposed on intuitive presentations in the same way as the judgment that the table exists is superposed on the presentation of the table.³⁴ Since superposition of y on x means that x is one-sidedly separable from y , this also means that Brentano rejected the monistic view of the relation between intuitive and abstract presentations as early as 1891.

In Marty's lectures on psychology from 1894/95, an alternative account to ennoetism is proposed, which follows Brentano's idea of a superposition relation between intuitive and abstract presentations:

We assume with Aristotle a double presenting, that is [we assume] an abstract presenting beside the intuitive presenting, but we don't [consider] the first in causal relation with the second, but rather in such an inner cohesion, that only one-sided separability subsists [...] In our case, we can also call conceptual thought a superposed presenting. Through the assumption of such a superposed presenting, the phenomena of analysis and abstraction are explained in their particularity. (Marty 2010, 132)

In Marty's account, intuitive and abstract presentations constitute two different modes of presenting, connected together by a relation of one-sided separability, as Brentano suggested in his lectures on descriptive psychology in 1891. However, Marty adds that abstract 'superposed' presentations are correlated with predicative judgments, thanks to which the elements of the former are 'thought together':

The key to our yet unsolved problem of conceptual synthesis lies in the particular phenomena of predicative judgements. [Predicative judgments] are namely nothing else than predicative synthesis, produced through reflection on those syntheses which are operated in judgment by the one who predicatively judges. The so-called synthesis in understanding is first and foremost a synthesis in judgment. (Marty 2010, p. 140f.)

³⁴ See Brentano (1982, 84).

Using Brentano's own terms as a starting point, I propose to call this view a weak dualism, since it acknowledges a categorical distinction between intuitive and abstract presentations (which ennoetism rejected), while providing abstract presentations with a status of ontological dependency. The account is weak not only for an ontological reason, but also due to the contribution of the activity of judging – although not *qua* act of interest, but *qua* predicative function – to the formation of abstract concepts.

4 Stumpf's late account of abstraction

Already in the second volume of the *Tonpsychologie*, Stumpf had parted ways with ennoetism for two main reasons: abstraction from sensory content doesn't necessarily involve an act of interest, but even when parts of a presentation are isolated and thereby noticed, it doesn't always follow that these parts are attended to (*beachtet*). Noticing is a judicative function that doesn't necessarily imply an act of interest.

By introducing the idea of a synthetic function in his letter to Brentano in 1896, Stumpf made the first clear step in the direction of a dualist account of abstraction. The lecture on abstraction in 1902 in Berlin most likely confirmed this orientation. However, it was not before 1906/07 that Stumpf's dualist account of abstraction was exposed in publications.³⁵

In his papers on phenomena and mental functions (Stumpf 1906, 1906a), Stumpf distinguishes between two abstracting processes: the first, which he calls abstraction in the normal sense, consists simply in the isolation of single parts from a whole. This process of abstraction has a psychological reality, but it concerns only the distinction between concrete and abstract. The distinction between individuality and generality is not obtained through this process of abstraction. It rather involves what Stumpf calls generalization, which we will discuss later.

While he shares with Brentano and Marty the basic idea behind weak dualism – according to which there is an abstract presenting superposed on intuitive presenting (Stumpf speaks of sensory contents, or sensations, as first-order phenomena and of abstract contents, or

³⁵ In the notes of his Logic lecture from 1903, he also distinguishes between abstraction as a feature of perception and generalisation of logical parts, which leads to general concepts. See Stumpf (1903, 94).

presentations (*Vorstellungen*) as second-order phenomena)³⁶ – he definitively abandons the idea, defended by Brentano and Marty and still present in his *Tonpsychologie*, that perceiving and noticing are forms of judgment. In Stumpf (1906) and afterwards, perceiving and noticing (which he uses synonymously) are considered to be primitive functions, which actually precede and ground judgment. In the 1906 article, Stumpf doesn't expand on the reasons that led him to change his mind about the nature of perception. However, parts of his motivations obviously lie in the fact that, even in the *Tonpsychologie*, noticing (considered then as distinct from an act of interest and as a judicative function) wasn't considered an essential component in abstractive processes – so that, for example, the single tones in the perception of a chord are given as fused and are therefore perceived as a unity, without any contribution from further mental functions like noticing or attention. Therefore, there is a perception of structured wholes that is not constituted by a judicative act. The abstraction at play in the perception of these structured wholes is described in 1906 as a second-order phenomenon, but the function to which it belongs is the same as the perception of first-order phenomena. Perception of first- and second-order phenomena is thus taken to be the most primitive mental function, upon which are based two further categories of functions: intellectual and emotional functions.

This conception of perception as non-judicative and as the most primitive mental function has further consequences on Stumpf's conception of abstraction, which also distances him further from Brentano's core position: if the most primitive forms of perception are non-judicative by nature, then what is given in these forms of perception is nothing over and above the phenomena themselves. Since judicative, or more generally intellectual functions are *based* on the primitive function of perception, predication (and with it the attribution of properties to a subject) is something that occurs only on an intellectual level. Therefore, on the primitive level of perception, we do not perceive any objects with their properties; we simply and strictly perceive phenomena.³⁷

Rejecting the Brentanian thesis of perception as being judicative thus brings Stumpf to the conclusion that our access to objects and our

³⁶ See Stumpf (1906, 16).

³⁷ On Stumpf's conception of object, see Stumpf (1906, 34).

access to phenomena are two different kinds of access to the world. We have access to phenomena by simply perceiving them, but our access to objects is mediated by a function distinct from perception, and thus of abstraction understood as a part of perception dealing with second-order phenomena. This function is what Stumpf calls generalization. Generalization is a synthetic function (*Zusammenfassen*) and aims at forming concepts, which are our way of accessing objects.

Zusammenfassung or generalization is a function that has different kinds of correlates, depending on which kind of generalization is involved. These correlates are called by Stumpf ‘*Gebilde*’ – a term that is not easily translated.³⁸ The most general correlate of generalization is the set (*Inbegriff*), or what Stumpf calls ‘the whole of what enters into consciousness as the specific result of a synthesis’ (1906, 29). More specifically, correlates are, for instance, concepts (as correlates of grasping or forming concepts), or gestalt-qualities, like melodies or geometrical figures (as correlates of grasping a form), but also states of affairs (as correlates of judgments and intellectual functions in general) and values (as correlates of emotional functions).

These *Gebilde*, or ‘products’ of generalizations, enjoy relative independence from actual thought: when I say ‘Vienna is the capital of Austria’, the state of affairs expressed by the sentence is independent of *my concrete judging* voiced by the sentence. ‘We can conceptually think a *Gebilde* without its being momentarily content of the corresponding function, e.g. a state of affairs, without momentarily having a judgment of which it constitutes the content’ (1906, 32). This is the case, according to Stumpf, when we understand the meaning of a that-clause in isolation from the propositional attitude (e.g. a belief or an affirmation). In this sense, believing that Vienna is the capital of Austria is certainly different from assuming that Vienna is the capital of Austria, but the that-clauses express something identical, which is the state of affairs.

However, this doesn’t make the *reality* of the *Gebilde* independent from my actual thought. In order for a *Gebilde* to be real, it must be the content of an actual thought. Moreover, the *Gebilde* is *logically* dependent upon the *function* of judging as such: I can have access to states of affairs only on the basis or with the help of an intellectual function of judging. Another way to spell out Stumpf’s point would be

³⁸ ‘Form’, ‘construct’, or ‘entity’ are possible translations.

to say that *Gebilde*, like states of affairs or concepts, are merely *virtual* entities which, in given cases, are realized thanks to concrete judgments or concept formations. In this sense, their *reality* is ontologically dependent upon concrete functions: ‘*Gebilde* are facts only insofar as they are contents of functions’ (1906, 32). However, *Gebilde* as such (as ‘virtual’ entities, as I suggest we call them) are independent of concrete or individual functions. Whoever thinks of a *Gebilde* in this way, as ‘virtual’ *Gebilde*, also necessarily thinks of the judging function (1906, 33). In other words, the concept of *Gebilde* has the concept of thinkability as one of its constituent parts.

The objectivity of *Gebilde* is thus inseparable from the way they are given to us. As a matter of fact, Stumpf rejects the view that *Gebilde* are immediately given: functions (like perception, but also intellectual and emotional functions) are immediately given – there are no unconscious perceptions – ; phenomena are given *together with* the functions (*neben ihnen*); but *Gebilde* are only mediately given. That is, ‘virtual’ *Gebilde* can only be thought together with the thought of the corresponding function, while real *Gebilde* are thought *through* the corresponding (concrete) function.

Therefore, *Gebilde* enjoy a particular status: (1) they remain invariable, or identical, despite variations in propositional attitudes or variations in their thinkers;³⁹ but at the same time, (2) their reality is ontologically dependent upon concrete functions, although (3) ‘virtual’ *Gebilde* are independent from concrete functions.

Thesis (2) clearly prevents us from understanding (1) as conceptual realism in the Platonic sense. But what, if not precisely a variety of the conceptual realism rejected by Stumpf, will ensure the truth of (1)? This is obviously the role played by thesis (3): *virtual Gebilde* are precisely those which remains invariable or identical despite variations in propositional attitudes, or despite variation in the thinkers of *Gebilde*.

Are such ‘virtual *Gebilde*’ really a way of avoiding conceptual realism or Plato’s theory of ideas? In Stumpf (1906a), he underlines that his account ‘doesn’t need us to go back to Plato’s doctrine of ideas, since objectuality (*Gegenständlichkeit*) is not the same thing as reality’ (Stumpf 1906a, 10). But a few pages later, when giving the name ‘eideology’ to the ‘science of *Gebilde*’ (Stumpf 1906a, 33), he adds

³⁹ See also Stumpf (1906, 30, 33); (1906a, 7); (1939, 88), where he speaks of (virtual) *Gebilde* as ‘invariants’.

that ‘the name could and should remember us to the Plato’s doctrine of Ideas. The investigations comply in fact with the ones that Plato conducted and had in mind, although not with their metaphysical consequences’ (*ibid.*). It seems, therefore, that what I called the virtuality of *Gebilde*, or their ‘objectuality’, as Stumpf puts it, offers a warrant for the objectivity of *Gebilde* without the metaphysical hypostatization involved in Plato’s doctrine of Ideas.

Many influences are at play here. First, the vocabulary of objectuality (*Gegenständlichkeit*) is obviously borrowed from Bolzano, whom Stumpf mentions as a forerunner of his idea of state of affairs (Stumpf 1906, 32). According to Bolzano, propositions of the form [A has b] are equivalent to propositions of the form [the idea of an A that has the property b, has objectuality]. By ‘objectuality’, Bolzano means the property, for an idea, of having an object. In this sense, Stumpf’s *virtual Gebilde*, like the Bolzanian subject-ideas of true propositions, have objectuality, which is here distinct from their reality. Second, since (virtual) *Gebilde* have the same status as Bolzanian ideas in themselves (*Vorstellungen an sich*), and since ideas in themselves are components of propositions in themselves, it makes good sense to see Stumpf’s ‘virtual Gebilde’ as bearing similarities to Leibniz’s ‘cogitatio possibilis’ – which was, according to Bolzano, the closest relative to his concept of propositions in themselves. That is, both the ‘cogitatio possibilis’ and the ‘virtual Gebilde’ have ‘thinkability’ (*Denkbarkeit*) as part of their intension.⁴⁰ Third, and more importantly, Lotze – who supervised both Stumpf’s PhD and Habilitation thesis – clearly influenced Stumpf’s conception of virtual *Gebilde* through his conception of generalization and, in particular, the conception of the kind of existence enjoyed by these functions. In his *Logik*, Lotze says that the particular mode of existence enjoyed by true propositions is ‘validity’ (*Geltung*), used in a similar sense to Stumpf’s term ‘objectuality’.⁴¹ We also find in Lotze the idea that the realm of propositions is a ‘world of thinkables’ (*Welt des Denkbaren*).⁴² As a matter of fact, Stumpf explicitly acknowledges the influence of this idea of Lotze in his conception of *Gebilde*.⁴³ This in-

⁴⁰ See Leibniz (1765, 524ff). See also Bolzano (1837 I, 92, 121) and Stumpf (1906, 33).

⁴¹ See e.g. Lotze (1874, 511).

⁴² Lotze (1874, 16; 18; 19; 504).

⁴³ See Stumpf (1939, 89).

fluence was long-lasting, since Stumpf's dissertation from 1869, written under Lotze's supervision, deals precisely with Plato's conception of Ideas – Stumpf tried to show, obviously under the influence of Lotze, that Plato was committed to a metaphysical hypostatization of ideas, although his theory didn't constrained him to such a position.⁴⁴

Thanks to the distinction between *realized Gebilde*, which are ontologically dependent upon concrete functions, and *virtual Gebilde*, which are ontologically independent from concrete functions but remain logically inseparable from the concept of a function, Stumpf offers an account of abstraction that isn't based on a metaphysical or psychological hypostatization of the general. Insofar as they are realized, *Gebilde* are *products* of synthesis, or generalization, as a particular (intellectual) function of consciousness, which itself is distinct from the basic function of perception. In other words, in order for me to have access to the concept of a rectangle, I must have had at some point individual presentations of different rectangles, which I generalized into the concept of a rectangle. This generalization is an intellectual function, distinct in kind from the function of abstraction involved, for instance, in imagination (which, as we have seen, is considered by Stumpf to belong to the domain of phenomena).

Generalization gives me access to the concept of a rectangle in that it allows me to form the concept 'rectangle'. In this sense, 'a concept [or *Gebilde*] *C* has been formed' and 'a *Gebilde C* has been realized' are synonymous locutions. This conception of generalization doesn't lead to the Platonic hypostatization of ideas, since the 'objectuality', or 'virtuality', or 'validity' of *Gebilden* doesn't depend upon their formation or realization.

5 Stumpf vs Husserl

As suggested by the letter from Stumpf to Brentano from 1896 quoted earlier, Stumpf began to develop the idea, in a projected lecture on synthetic functions, of a specific function of synthesis for the formation of concepts – distinct from the abstraction involved in perceptive functions like sensing, presenting, or imagining. In this sense, he advocated a dualist conception of presentations and concepts. This project was then conducted in 1902 in a lecture entitled 'Abstraction and Generalization'. In the final preparations for this lecture, Stumpf

⁴⁴ See Stumpf (1869, 22; 54).

wrote to Husserl to ask him about a general overview of his position in the second *Logical Investigation*. Husserl's answer to this lost letter shows that the account presented by Stumpf in his 1902 lecture and his 1906 articles shares much with Husserl's own outline of his position, but also with many of his ideas in the second *Logical Investigation*. In the following quote from Husserl's outline of 1902, the central theses are numerated from [1] to [6]:

[1] I see red, I sense it and I don't mean (*meinen*) "this there", but rather the red *in specie*. And I don't simply mean it [...] rather, [2] I operate in an adequate way the consciousness of generality, red in general is given in itself, so that I now can say: [3] the idea of redness has validity, the being of the general, or, what is equivalent but not identical, [4] something red as such (*ein Rotes als solches*) is possible (an ideal possibility) [...] [5] [T]o the constitution of generality belongs therefore [...] a content, which is ideated, and an act, which ideates it, which grasps it specifically [...] [6] The content makes up the matter (*Stoff*), which is different from case to case, and, through the generalizing conception (*Auffassung*) from case to case, the intentional constitution of the different general objects. (HuaBW1, 170f.)⁴⁵

Many of the theses presented in this outline are also defended by Stumpf, but there remain a number of differences between Husserl and Stumpf's conceptions of generalization. Two differences seems particularly significant: First, Stumpf uses a similar distinction to Husserl's distinction in [1] between seeing (or sensing) 'this red' and *meaning* the red *in specie*. In the first case, Stumpf speaks of the perceptive function and of its phenomena, while in the second case, he speaks of generalization and *Gebilde*: "meaning the red in specie" would be, in Stumpian terms, generalizing or forming (*bilden*) a *Gebilde*.

Even if there is an evident structural similarity between both theories, there still is a difference in the description of the relation between the thinker and the ideal *Spezies*: where Husserl speaks of a 'consciousness of generality', Stumpf rather speaks of generalization as a process of forming *Gebilde*. While it make sense to say that Stumpf and Husserl would agree on the thesis that an individual red object *in-*

⁴⁵ In writing his letter, Husserl obviously paraphrased parts of a paragraph of the *Prolegomena*. Compare Husserl (1900, 128ff.), the paragraph beginning with "A red object stands before us...".

stantiates a species (or a *Gebilde*), it seems that Stumpf would rather say that in order for an individual object to instantiate a species, an operation of generalization is necessary. In other words, one is only *mediately given* with a *Gebilde*.⁴⁶ This is substantially different from Husserl's [2]: while operating a consciousness of generality, 'red in general is given in itself'. To put it simply, the relation of instantiation is *sui generis* according to Husserl, while it is necessarily correlated with an operation of generalization according to Stumpf. The idea that acts may grasp 'specifically' some contents, or that acts may grasp the ideal species, as formulated by Husserl in [5], is rejected by Stumpf.

Second, it is disputable whether Stumpf would also agree with Husserl that [3] and [4] are *only* equivalent theses. To be sure, Stumpf agrees with what I take to be the basic line of theses [3] and [4]: the validity (or 'objectuality') of the idea is equivalent to the (ideal) possibility of an instantiation of this idea. Stumpf explicitly argues for this thesis in Stumpf 1906.⁴⁷ However, if validity has thinkability as part of its intension, as Stumpf contends in our reconstruction, a valid 'virtual' *Gebilde* is nothing other than a *possibly realized* *Gebilde* – or, to put it in Husserlian terms, the possibility of something red as such is nothing other than the validity of the idea of redness. Therefore, in Stumpf's view, [3] and [4] would not *only* be equivalent, but also synonymous.

This nuance seems important for Stumpf's concerns about the Platonic hypostatization of ideas. Following Lotze and Leibniz, Stumpf wants to avoid the Platonic hypostatization of ideas and considers validity in terms of the possibility of *Gebilde*, and not in terms of ideal being. Curiously, Husserl seems to follow Bolzano in rejecting the idea that the possibility of a *Gebilde* is part of the definition of what validity, or objectuality, actually is.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Stumpf (1906, 32f.)

⁴⁷ See Stumpf (1906, 32): 'We understand the meaning of a that-clause, when it is pronounced for itself, although it doesn't express an affirmation, but only the content of a possible affirmation, true or false'.

⁴⁸ Compare for instance Bolzano (1837), I: 92 'We can think the concept of a proposition in itself without reminding ourselves that it has the property of being thinkable. This makes it sufficiently clear that the indication of this property does not belong in the definition of this concept' (see also pp. 99, 104 and 124 for similar assertions). Stumpf (1906), 33, opposes explicitly to this view: 'when we conceptually think a *Gebilde*, e.g. a state of affairs in the utterance of an isolated that-clause, the corresponding function, namely judging, *must necessarily* be thought along in its general

Despite these differences, Husserl's and Stumpf's accounts of abstraction share two essential features: 1) generalization or meaning (*meinen*) are considered by Stumpf and Husserl as functions that aren't operated at the level of sensory phenomena. They belong to the realm of intellectual functions (Stumpf), or what Husserl would call the realm of the intentional. 2) Correlatively, what is generalized is an invariant (Stumpf), or to put it in Husserlian terms, what is meant is a species.

One could still object that the account of generalization discussed here was developed after the publication of the *Logical Investigations*. Therefore, it couldn't really be used as an element supporting our thesis that Husserl's critique of empiricist theories of abstraction in the 2nd *Logical Investigation*, being directed against the theories of abstraction of the School of Brentano, was at least partly misguided.

However, the reconstruction of the different stages of Stumpf's (and Brentano's) theories of abstraction between the 1870s and the late 1890s, and the comparison between Husserl's species account of abstraction and Stumpf's concept of *Gebilde*, showed that this objection has, at most, only limited validity. Despite numerous modifications over the years, our reconstruction showed that there were two main accounts of abstraction developed in the early school of Brentano represented by Brentano, Marty, and Stumpf: 1) the monistic (or monistic-enoetist) account, according to which abstraction is a function of presentations, eventually obtained with the help of interest, attention, or more generally judgments, and 2) the weak-dualist account, according to which abstraction belongs to a higher-order (dependent) category of presentations (Brentano), or to a specific synthetic function leading to the production of *Gebilde* (Stumpf). Since the weak dualist account was defended by Brentano, Stumpf, and Marty already in the early and mid 1890s, it seems that Husserl missed his target when associating the empiricist conception of abstraction with the position held by the Brentanians.

concept'. Husserl's thesis [3] seems curious in this context, since he usually distinguishes his conception of propositions as species and Bolzano's conception of propositions in themselves, referring precisely to Lotze in order to support his own view. On this question, see Künne (2013), §2. It seems that Stumpf attributed to Husserl the Bolzanian view, at least in Stumpf (1939, 89): "in recent times, influenced by Lotze's *Logic*, Husserl underlined this true and highly meaningful core of the doctrine of Ideas. Whether he himself went too far into objectification, this may remain an open question here".

A further objection is still possible: even if Husserl didn't take into consideration the weak dualism defended by Brentano, Stumpf, and Marty in the 1890s, it is still questionable whether this position is able to avoid the psychological hypostatization of the general, that is, the position according to which universals are intentional (immanent) objects.

Here again, I think that our reconstruction gives an answer to the objection: In 1906, Stumpf considers the concept of *Gebilde* as including the concept of thinkability among its parts. In order for them to be species, they must be thought of as correlated with a function. This conception is, I suggested, not only a fundamental difference with Husserl's account of species, it is also coherent with a recurring idea in the different accounts of abstraction presented in our reconstruction, according to which abstract objects can only be represented *distinctly* as parts in *concreta* (see the ennoetist account, sect. 2). The same idea was expressed by the Millian thesis, endorsed in ennoetism and elsewhere, that we *form* concepts (either by focussing on or by generalizing parts).

In sum, the objection against Husserl's misguided reading of the allegedly empiricist Brentanian conception of abstraction holds only if one considers the correlation of *Gebilde* with functions as a commitment to the psychological hypostatization of the general. Coherently with some of the basic ideas of ennoetism and with the weak dualist account, Stumpf's account in 1906 showed that this wasn't the case.⁴⁹

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