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Brentano and Aesthetic Intentions

I. Introduction

Brentano's philosophy of art, contained primarily in his book, *Grundzüge der Ästhetik*, is the result of an original theory of intrinsic value that was derived from Brentano's philosophical psychology. In his aesthetics, Brentano endeavored to find an objective ground for the value of aesthetic contemplation through his theory of the intentional objects of emotions and desires.

The lack of attention Brentano's aesthetics has received is surprising, given that two of the many students Brentano influenced, Husserl (through the development of the phenomenological movement) and Ehrenfels (through the development of Gestalt psychology) have had an extraordinary influence on twentieth century perceptions of art.

In what follows, I will attempt to redress some of this neglect by outlining Brentano's analysis of aesthetic intentions and the relationship his aesthetics bears to his overall philosophical system.

II. Attributing Aesthetic Value

Perhaps the most straightforward way of beginning an investigation into Brentano's aesthetics is to start with the question, "What is involved, for Brentano, in attributing aesthetic value to an object?".

In the early stages of his philosophy, Brentano considered the aesthetic value of the object to be an essential or necessary property of the objects upon which we direct our aesthetic contemplation. Thus, attributing beauty or ugliness to an object would be an instance of objective reference involving ontologically a thinker as the subject; a property, which would be considered the content of thought; and an intentional relation between the subject and the content.

Intrinsic beauty and ugliness were, according to this objectivist view, properties possessed by and predicated of certain objects. Our aesthetic judgments were accurate to the extent that the attribution of value corresponded with the nature of the object.

By the final stages of his philosophy, however, Brentano had adopted a reistic ontology in which properties were eschewed as fictitious entities. "Beauty", according to this later view, was no longer considered a genuine term referring to an abstract entity. Rather, "beauty" was regarded by Brentano as a syncategorematic term meaning, "pleasure experienced as correct."¹ On this view, the beautiful object is that which is capable of arousing a certain type of pleasure in us, and the term "beautiful" denotes the degree of pleasure that is aroused. Thus, in speaking of the beauty of certain ideas, Brentano says,

We assign the appellation 'beautiful' to ideas that are of such very great value that we are justified in taking a particularly high degree of pleasure in them. It is not enough that they deserve to be found highly pleasing; in order to be beautiful, they must be presented to us in a way that actually arouses such pleasure.²

Despite the radical change in Brentano's ontology, however, he did not regard this metaphysical move as involving any practical difference for his aesthetic principles or for those things which he considered as having aesthetic value.

Nevertheless, while Brentano hoped to defend an objective theory of aesthetics, he may appear to have abandoned an objectivist aesthetics in favor of a subjectivist theory, according to which aesthetic value is determined solely on the basis of aesthetically enjoying an object. For his theory now may suggest to some that referring to something as 'beautiful' is merely the expression of an emotion – in this case pleasure – toward an object. If it is the subjective experience of pleasure that characterizes the aesthetic value of the object on this new view, one might wonder how it is possible for Brentano to maintain an objectivist theory of aesthetic value.

In fact it must be admitted that by rejecting all properties, including beauty-making properties of aesthetic objects, and by making the aesthetic observer's mental states primary in analyzing aesthetic value, Brentano does have something in common with those who propose subjectivist theories. There is one crucial and fundamental difference, however. While Brentano shares with the subjectivist the view that the aesthetic judgment, "X is beautiful" does not predicate a characteristic of an object or name a property, he would not agree

with the subjectivist thesis that such claims are incapable of being either correct or incorrect. For Brentano, genuine aesthetic disagreement is possible. Thus, while Brentano agrees that the aesthetic observer's attitude or emotion toward an object is a necessary constituent in determining its aesthetic value, he believes that the attitudes directed upon the objects will be either correct or incorrect. His rejection of abstract properties should not be taken, then, as an abandonment in the belief in the objectivity of aesthetic value.

III. Brentano's Concept of Correct and Incorrect Emotions

If there are no beauty-making properties, what does Brentano regard as the standard for correct aesthetic judgment? To understand Brentano's theory of aesthetic value, we might look at its analogue in his theory of ethical value. Attributions of beauty, like attributions of goodness are to be understood by reference to the third class of psychological phenomena—that of emotions. Hence, Brentano says,

One speaks sometimes of judgments of taste, but this can be approved of only in a metaphorical sense. Taste is no judgment, but a feeling, and of course a preference in the feeling (for the beautiful as opposed to the ugly and for the more beautiful as opposed to the less beautiful) or rather a disposition for such preference.³

In distinguishing between: (1) Ideas or presentations; (2) judgments; and (3) emotions, Brentano points out that judgments go beyond simple presentations or ideas in involving either affirmation or denial. Likewise, emotions are divided into love and hate, being pleased or displeased. Brentano draws a further analogy between judgments and emotions by saying that just as an affirmation or denial of some object may be correct or incorrect when I am judging, so too, my loving or hating may be correct or incorrect.

The analogy discontinues, however, with respect to the following: When we say of a judgment that it is incorrect to affirm that thing, we always imply that it is correct to deny that thing, since every judgment is either true or false. But to say of an emotion that it is not correct to love a thing does not imply that it is correct to hate that thing. Some things are such that they are neither correctly loved nor correctly hated; rather, they are indifferent.

On Brentano's earlier view, aesthetic judgments were correct if there was a correspondence between the assignment of aesthetic value and certain properties possessed by the aesthetic object. Brentano came to reject the traditional correspondence theory of value, however, because knowledge of the correspondence would require a comparison between a mental act and what Brentano regarded as a non-thing. Brentano's rejection of the traditional correspondence theory of value is made explicit in a letter attempting to persuade Oskar Kraus of its implausibility in the realm of ethics. Brentano writes to Kraus,

What you seek to gain here with your belief in the existence of goodness with which the emotions are found to correspond is incomprehensible to me. Do you really believe that ~~this existence of goodness is accessible to you via~~ perception just as mental acts of emotion and feeling are, and that you can recognize your emotion is correct by comparing what you perceive [i.e., the emotion] with what you perceived externally [i.e., the state of value]? I should think the mere formulation of such a question would suffice to make it apparent to anyone that it cannot be answered affirmatively.⁴

Thus, for Brentano, a judgment which is true can no longer be said to correspond with some externally existing state of affairs, and a correct emotion no longer corresponds with that upon which it is directed.

What are to serve as replacements for states of affairs and states of value that were once the standards of truth, goodness, and beauty? Brentano proposes a coherence theory according to which the standard for each of these becomes the evident judger. Brentano followed Aristotle in relating truth to judgment. And, just as the concept of truth can be derived from evident judgments which are experienced as correct, our concept of the good and the beautiful can be derived from emotions which are experienced as correct.⁵

These terms are further analogous in that their concepts originate from our concept of the evident which is experienced in inner perception. Within the class of judgments, according to Brentano, there are certain judgments which are directly and immediately known to be true. These directly evident judgments are divided into two categories. They are either judgments about our own intentional acts or judgments involving what Brentano terms "truths of reason".

If we ask how we know that our judgments in these cases are correct, the answer would be that they are "experienced as being correct". The correctness of certain judgments is a self-evident concept we acquire by reflection upon our own mental acts.

According to Brentano, immediately evident judgments are true in the strict sense and are considered the standard of truth for those judgments not experienced as correct. A judgment is true in the extended sense if it is not experienced as correct and yet agrees with an evident judgment's object, quality, and mode. Thus, in advocating a form of coherence theory of truth, Brentano would say that a judgment is true if it is in harmony with an evident judgment and it is false if it does not agree with an evident judgment.

IV. Aesthetic Experience and the External World

While the aesthetic experience, as an intentional act, will itself be directly evident, there appears to be a problem with Brentano's coherence theory when we consider the objects which are the cause of our aesthetic experiences. There are certain judgments, namely judgments about the external world, which we cannot judge with direct evidence; nor will they agree with anyone else's evident judgments. That is, I can know with certainty that I am taking pleasure in an object, or that I seem to hear a melody, but I can never know with certainty that the aesthetic object exists, that there is a melody being played, or a painting on the wall, if truth is defined in terms of this type of evidence. While my judgment to the effect that *I think that so-and-so causes* my aesthetic experience *is* evident, my judgment to the effect that *so-and-so causes* my aesthetic experience is not evident. In fact, judgments about the objects which cause our aesthetic experiences will not be evident to anyone. Such judgments, which rely on external perception, will never agree, nor will they disagree for that matter, with that of an evident judge. This should serve to remind us that Brentano's rejection of Kantian idealism was not as thoroughgoing as Brentano had hoped.

Is there a way for Brentano to admit the truth of certain judgments of external perception given his revised theory of truth and value? In addition to the aforementioned conception, Brentano had characterized truth in still another way. This second characterization may help us to see how Brentano deals with judgments about external objects. He said,

Truth pertains to the judgment of one who judges correctly - the one who judges about a thing in the way in which a person who judged with evidence would judge about it; it pertains to the judgment of one who asserts what the person who judges with evidence would assert.⁶

The only way to take this proposal in a way that would be consistent with Brentano's philosophy is to take it as suggesting an evident judger as the standard of truth for all truths which are not directly evident to individuals.

Any judgment which agrees with an evident judgment made by a being who is the measure of all things can be said to be true. Though certain judgments, those made with respect to things external to me, will never be said to agree or disagree with a judgment made by any person, we can suppose there is a being for which all judgments are internal perceptions and our judgments about external things can be said to agree or disagree with these evident judgments. Therefore, we have a coherence theory which depends upon there being an evident judger for whom all evident judgments are directly evident. What has been said about Brentano's theory of truth may be applied to his theory of value. The new theory of aesthetic value no longer requires that we be able to compare an internal act of emotion with an external perception of a state of value. On the earlier view, the value of the object could be said to exist even if the object did not exist.⁷ On the later view, there are no such states of value. There are simply persons experiencing emotions-acts of pleasure and displeasure directed upon some object, which will be either correct or incorrect.

V. Aesthetic Pleasure and Displeasure

In characterizing beauty in terms of pleasure experienced as correct, Brentano's aesthetics draws upon his analysis of sensations. Brentano's theory of sensations takes into account the experiences of both sensory and nonsensory pleasure and displeasure. Aesthetic experiences would be examples of nonsensory pleasures and displeasures. Even though many of our aesthetic experiences result from sensations, the aesthetic pleasure or displeasure is not the same as the sensation. Rather, the pleasure or displeasure is an emotion directed upon the having of the sensation or other intentional state (what some philosophers have referred to as a propositional attitude).

Nevertheless, while sensory and nonsensory pleasure and displeasure are fundamentally different, in order for aesthetic pleasure to be genuine, according to Brentano, it will necessarily involve sensory pleasure. Given this, we need to consider briefly what Brentano says regarding sensory pleasure and displeasure.

In setting out his theory of sensations Brentano divided the senses into the categories of (1) sight; (2) hearing and; (3) what is referred to as "the third sense" or "Spürsinn" – the lower sense. The third sense encompasses the tactile sensations, as well as the sensations of taste and smell. The three senses are differentiated according to the nature of the objects which fall under each category. When Brentano speaks of sensory pleasure and displeasure, he maintains that, strictly speaking, these pertain to sensations of the third sense.⁸ Because one may be referring to the sense content – the object of sensation, or to the act of experiencing a certain sense content, in claiming to have a pleasurable or displeasurable sensation, it will be important to distinguish between the two. In the case of the first sense, sight, the seeing, itself, is the act of sensation, while a patch of color would be the sense content – the object of sensation. Hearing would again be an act of sensation, with the sound being the object. The third sense has as objects of sensation certain tastes and smells, along with what we might call "feels" and "throbs". According to Brentano, acts of sensation, as intentional acts, are given in inner perception and are thereby immediately evident. The objects of sensation, however, are sense-data, and as such have no reality in themselves.

For Brentano, sensory pleasure and pain consist in neither the objects of sensation nor in the acts of sensation. Rather, Brentano argued that sensory pleasure and pain are emotional affects. He remarks,

Pleasure and pain are not sensory qualities, nor are they mental relations which would have sensory qualities *in modo recto*; they relate to something mental as object: the sensation of certain sensory qualities is pleasant or unpleasant. This sensation itself is not a mere sensory presentation or affirmation, but also a sensory emotional relation and is directed toward itself as object.⁹

Sensory pleasure and displeasure are acts of emotion, then, directed upon acts of sensation. Certain acts of sensation, in addition to affirming the existence of some object of sensation, present themselves as the object of an emotion. The objects of sensory pleasure and pain are not sense qualities, but the experiencing of these qualities. Brentano puts this elsewhere by saying that "sensuous pleasure and displeasure are directed upon the appearance of certain qualities, but not upon the qualities themselves".¹⁰ This means that the sensations of pleasure and displeasure have a certain sensing of a quality as a secondary object and are directed upon the sense quality, the primary object of the sensing, only indirectly.

But there is the danger of some confusion where Brentano says in these cases, the sensation is "also a sensory emotional relation and is directed toward itself as object." We are not to take Brentano as suggesting here that the sensory pleasure or displeasure, which is an act of love or hatred is directed upon an act of sensation, which is itself an act of love or hatred. The primary object is something different from the act of emotion directed upon it. Sensory pleasure and displeasure are intentional acts, but they are acts of emotion and not acts of sensation. Sensory pleasure is an act of love directed upon an act of sensation. Likewise sensory displeasure is an act of hatred directed upon an act of sensation. This is the emotional relationship to which Brentano refers and which, for him, characterizes our experience of sensory pleasure or displeasure.

According to Brentano, then, sensory pleasure and pain, in addition to involving (1) an object of sensation (a sense quality) and (2) an act of sensation (the sensing of a sense quality) also involve (3) an act of emotion (a love or hatred) directed upon the act of sensation. That these acts of emotion are intentional phenomena is guaranteed through inner perception. If I experience sensory pleasure, not only is it evident to me that I am sensing something, it is also evident to me that I love the sensing. Sensory displeasure is analogous. The sensing and the emotion directed upon the sensing are presented simultaneously and with evidence. Furthermore, (2) and (3) together will have an additional act of emotion directed upon them. The entire experience itself becomes the object of love or hate.

In the case of sensory pleasure, we have the sensing of a sense quality presented together with the act of love directed upon the combined experience. The latter becomes the primary object of the additional affect. With sensory displeasure, the situation is similar. There is a sensing of a content together with a hatred directed upon the sensing of the entire experience is given as a primary object of an additional experience.

We have seen that certain acts of sensation, the sensations of pleasure and displeasure, not only present themselves as secondary objects in an affirmation, but also as primary objects in an emotional relation. Therefore we are capable of distinguishing two classes of sensation: those that have an emotional character, and those which lack this character.

There is another sense, however, in which one may be said to be pleased or displeased. In *The Origin of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong*, Brentano says,

There are two senses in which a man may be said to be pleased with an object or to take pleasure in it, and two senses in which he may be said to be displeased with an object or to take displeasure in it. In the first case he may simply find the object to be agreeable or disagreeable. In the second, he finds the object to be agreeable or disagreeable, and then, because of this fact, he takes pleasure or displeasure in *another* object. As a result of being pleased, or displeased, with the first object, there redounds a *sensuous* pleasure or displeasure.¹¹

Aesthetic pleasure and displeasure would be examples of the second sort. Taking pleasure in some aesthetic object may cause us to take sensory pleasure in some other object. When something that is taken as the object of presentation is also taken as the object of love, we experience as a side-effect certain sense-qualities, which then also become the object of love. The nonsensory pleasure consists not in the love directed upon the object or in the love of the sensing of the qualities which are caused, but in the pro-emotion one has toward the object of presentation together with the sensory pleasure. The love directed upon certain objects will cause the sensing of certain qualities which will themselves be loved.

According to Brentano, any time we experience genuine pleasure in an object, there is caused a sensory pleasure with love directed upon both. What unites sensory and nonsensory pleasure is the act of sensation to which they both belong. Namely, the act caused by a pro-attitude toward an object. The love directed upon this act of sensation is a sensory pleasure which redounds upon the nonsensory pleasure. Something similar can be said with respect to displeasure. Nonsensory and sensory displeasure are related by the fact that sensory displeasure is caused by a hatred directed upon some object.

VI. The Intensity of Aesthetic Pleasure

Brentano believed that the connection between these two types of pleasure and displeasure often leads to a confusion which is reflected in our language. The confusion is that we often attribute the quality of intensity, which properly belongs to physical objects to nonsensory pleasure and displeasure, which are psychical entities. Thus, we sometimes hear the expression "intense joy" and "intense sorrow". Brentano notes that while we may use these expressions, we cannot speak truly of "intense intellectual or spiritual pleasures or displeasures."

Emotions and beliefs have no intensity in the strict sense given that only physical and not psychical things are "intensive". Therefore, Brentano says, to speak of the intensity of nonsensory pleasures and displeasures,

is proper only when sensuous pleasure or displeasure thus redounds from these higher activities; for what is intensive must be such that it is either itself continuous and extended in space or an object that is continuous and extended in space.¹²

We must first look, then, at how Brentano determines the intensity of *sensory* pleasure and displeasure.

For Brentano, the intensity of the love or hatred directed upon an act of sensation is in direct proportion to the intensity of the object of the act of sensation. In sensing a certain sense quality, the intensity of the love or hatred of that sensing will be determined by the intensity of the sense quality – a physical entity. Accordingly, a very intense throb will produce a very intense hatred of that throb and a very intense feel will produce a very intense love of the sensing of that feel. Brentano assumes that the intensity of the psychological activity of nonsensory pleasure and pain is nothing other than the sense qualities which are the objects in sensory redundancies. For this reason, he maintains that one cannot truly be said to be pleased or displeased about something in this sense and not have sensory redundancies as side-effects.

Brentano's view of the intensity of nonsensory pleasure and displeasure applied to aesthetic enjoyment allows him to speak of different intensities of aesthetic pleasure and displeasure. The intensity of the pleasure given from hearing a piece of music is a result of the intensity of the feels which redound. Brentano saw his view as having a clear advantage over analyses such as that of his friend and contemporary Carl Stumpf, for whom there was no connection between sensory pleasures and pains and nonsensory pleasures and displeasures. Stumpf, in Brentano's view, would have to deny that aesthetic pleasures and displeasures are subject to varying intensities. Both Stumpf and Brentano, however, wanted to speak of degrees of intensity involving aesthetic pleasures and pains. It was left to Stumpf to demonstrate how this is possible without relating the two types of pleasure and displeasure as Brentano does.

VII. Aesthetic Objects as Intrinsically Valuable

We have seen that, according to Brentano's aesthetics, if I take pleasure in some aesthetic object and this pleasure is experienced as correct, we can say that "x is beautiful", which is just to say that "x is correctly loved" or "x is worthy to take pleasure in". We call x "beautiful" because the pleasure taken in it is experienced as correct pleasure, and not because of any property held by that which causes the pleasure - that is, the act of hearing a melody, contemplating a poem, or viewing a landscape.

This new analysis raises the following question. How are we to continue to take Brentano's theory of value as a theory of intrinsic value if there are no essential properties? With Brentano's revised ontology, the objects valued and the emotions directed upon these objects are both internal acts. Though Brentano rejects abstract entities in an attempt to avoid having to make comparisons between the act of external perception of the value of an object with an internal emotion, he did not intend to deny that the objects valued are objectively beautiful or ugly. Yet on his new theory, it is difficult to determine how he will be able to account for their objectivity.

If we consider an example of aesthetic experience, the problem will become clear. Imagine someone who is listening to a beautiful melody. According to Brentano, this involves a relation between an individual thing (the person) with another individual thing (the hearing thing), which Brentano, borrowing from Scholastic terminology, refers to as an "accident" of the subject. The aesthetic contemplator, the one-who-hears, is ontologically such that it cannot be separated from the subject. Yet, the subject can exist without being a subject who hears the melody. It is the accident, the act of hearing the melody, and not the melody which bears value. By replacing predicates with concrete terms, it will turn out to be the case that the individual self will have as an accident one-who-hears, which will, in turn, have as an accident, one-who-experiences-pleasure, which will have as a further accident, one-who-takes-correct-pleasure.

On the earlier view, the beauty was an essential property of the melody. Since Brentano has eliminated properties from his ontology, he would have to regard the beauty or ugliness of an object as an accident of it as well. But, if so, we have eliminated a crucial feature of his theory of aesthetic value, namely that it is a theory of intrinsic value. For Brentano, to say that something is beautiful or ugly in the primary sense, means that it is beautiful or ugly for its

own sake, apart from any instrumental value that the object might have. Yet, accidents by their very nature are not essential to the things possessing them.

If we take beauty merely as the impossibility of taking pleasure in some aesthetic object and not experiencing the pleasure as correct, then accidents do not actually bear any value unless we can suppose that corresponding to the emotion experienced as correct, the aesthetic object takes on the property of being "worthy to be enjoyed". Therefore, while Brentano would like to avoid being committed to non-reistic entities, it doesn't seem that there is a way for him to do so and at the same time maintain the feature of his theory of aesthetic value that it is a theory of intrinsic value.

VIII. The Charge of Aesthetic Psychologism

There has been a further objection raised against Brentano's theory that is worthy of consideration. The objection is based on charges of psychologism, issued forth most recently by Peter McCormick in his book, *Modernity, Aesthetics, and the Bounds of Art*. McCormick attempts to establish the realist backgrounds of modern aesthetics by examining the influence Brentano, and his students Husserl, Meinong, and Twardowski have exerted on contemporary work in the philosophy of art. At the center of his investigation is the question of whether aesthetic intentions can be used as the basis for an adequate analysis of the semantic, evaluative, and descriptive natures of artworks in general, and of literary artworks in particular.

Through an appeal to Brentano's classification of mental phenomena and Brentano's thesis that intentionality is the distinguishing mark of the mental, McCormick seeks to determine whether we can define the nature of literary artwork by invoking aesthetic intentions. Thus, he constructs a theory of descriptive intentionalism that might be used in the examination of works of art.

Descriptive intentionalism in its broadest sense is the view that questions about the descriptive nature of artworks can be answered solely by privileging the author's intentions. McCormick's amended version of descriptive intentionalism specifies that "those intentions of the author that are relevant to determining the nature of putative literary texts are precisely the author's judgments about such texts and the basic objects of those authorial judgments about such texts".¹³ Aesthetic intentions are subsequently characterized as mental events that "(1) consist of necessarily reciprocal relations between basic

mental acts and basic mental objects and that (2) have not a contingent but a necessary connection to whatever putative literary texts may be in question at any time".¹⁴

While McCormick believes that his version of descriptive intentionalism has an advantage over alternative formulations in escaping some obvious criticisms, nevertheless, he ultimately rejects descriptive intentionalism as a brand of psychologism. At the basis of his rejection, is the charge that Brentano's theory of intentionality, which serves as the foundation for theories of intentionalist criticism, has an ambiguous character. This ambiguous character, McCormick claims, is not only essential to Brentano's thesis of intentionality, but necessarily leads to psychologism. Because of its perceived inherent ambiguity, McCormick contends that any theory of aesthetics entailing the primacy of the mental will lead to aesthetic psychologism.¹⁵

While I have no quarrel with McCormick's conclusion that we should reject descriptive intentionalism as adequate to understanding the descriptive nature of artworks, his claim to have explored Brentano's analysis of aesthetic intentions, is misleading. Further, the label of aesthetic psychologism represents a wholly inaccurate view of Brentano's own theory of aesthetics.

An application of Brentano's philosophical psychology to the nature of artworks, in spite of adhering to the primacy of the intentional, does not entail a form of psychologism. As we have seen, according to Brentano, emotions, like judgments, are capable of being correct or incorrect. Further, their correctness or incorrectness is not a subjective matter. If one person judges "X is beautiful" and the other judges "X is not beautiful", at least one of them will be mistaken. Two people making contradictory judgments in aesthetics, as well as in logic and ethics cannot both be judging correctly at the same time.

How can we determine this correctness? We have an immediate and direct insight into the correctness of certain judgments and emotions. Certain pleasures and displeasures are experienced as correct. Any judgment or emotion which fits with these directly evident judgments and emotions is itself correct. We come to say that something is beautiful when we have the experience of taking correct pleasure in the object. The statement, "x is beautiful" expresses this pleasure. If the pleasure is experienced as correct, we know that the statement is true.

Since the experience such a claim expresses is not one in which beauty is predicated of anything, there is no correspondence between the aesthetic intention and the nature of the object. Nevertheless, Brentano says that one

loves or hates correctly provided that one's feelings are adequate to their object - adequate in the sense of being appropriate, suitable, or fitting. Given a noncorrespondence theory of value, what does it mean for an emotion to be appropriate or fitting to its object? In his book, *Brentano and Intrinsic Value*, Chisholm has suggested that the relevant sense of appropriateness is to be explicated in terms of requirement. According to Chisholm, "To say that a pro attitude is *fitting* or *appropriate* to an object A, is to say that the contemplation of A *requires* a pro attitude toward A. And analogously for anti attitudes."¹⁶ Therefore, while Brentano takes the evident judger, and so certain mental states, as primary in determining the correctness of aesthetics tastes, these intentional states are not what determine whether or not an object has aesthetic value. An examination of our own mental states can give us insight into the evaluative nature of an artwork, but the aesthetic intentions will be correct only to the extent that they are fitting with object of aesthetic contemplation. The intentions, themselves, are not what determine the aesthetic quality of the work. It should be clear, then, that the Brentano's commitment to the primacy of aesthetic intentions in evaluating artworks does not entail psychologism.

Conclusion

I have attempted to set forth some of the basic principles involved in Brentano's theory of aesthetics. While I am not prepared to defend every aspect of his theory, I believe there is much to be learned from Brentano's general approach to questions in the areas of value theory, aesthetics, and the logic of emotions. A careful analysis of Brentano's aesthetics and its influence upon his students may indeed lead to a better understanding of the realist tradition and its influence on contemporary theories of art.

Notes:

- 1 Franz Brentano. *Grundzüge der Ästhetik*, ed. Franziska Mayer-Hillebrand (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1959) p. 32.
- 2 Franz Brentano. *The Foundation and Construction of Ethics*, ed., Franziska Mayer-Hillebrand and trans., Elizabeth Schneewind (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973) p. 183 and *Grundzüge der Ästhetik*, p. 152.
- 3 "Man spricht wohl manchmal von Geschmacksurteil, aber das ist nicht oder doch nur in metaphorischem Sinne zu billigen. Der Geschmack is kein Urteil, sondern ein

Gefühl, und zwar eine Bevorzugung im Gefühl (für das Schöne gegen das Hässliche und für das Schöner gegen das minder Schöne) oder vielmehr eine Disposition zu solcher Bevorzugung." *Grundzüge der Ästhetik*, p. 32.

- 4 Franz Brentano, *Die Abkehr von Nichtrealen*, ed., Franziska Mayer Hillebrand (Bern: A. Francke Verlag, 1966). pp. 207-208.
- 5 *Grundzüge der Ästhetik*, p.17.
- 6 *The True and the Evident*, p. 122.
- 7 *Grundzüge der Ästhetik*, p. 123.
- 8 Brentano's reasons for distinguishing the senses as he does are presented in his *Untersuchungen zur Sinnespsychologie* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1979) pp. 157-163.
- 9 Franz Brentano. *Sensory and Noetic Consciousness*, ed., Oskar Kraus; English edition edited by Linda L. McAlister. Trans., Margarete Schattle and Linda L. McAlister (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981) p. 59.
- 10 *Ibid.* p. 14.
- 11 Franz Brentano. *The Origin of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong*, ed., Oskar Kraus, trans. Roderick M. Chisholm and Elizabeth Schneewind (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969). pp. 154-155.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 155.
- 13 Peter McCormick. *Modernity, Aesthetics, and the Bounds of Art* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1990). P. 204.
- 14 *Ibid.*, pp. 204-205.
- 15 McCormick argues that Brentano's concept of intentionality is ambiguous because Brentano is insufficiently clear with respect to the kinds of objects that can stand in relation to intentional acts and the relationship of these objects to objects in the physical world. He seems to base his claims on the fact that different authors, e.g., H.B. Spiegelberg and A. Marras, have interpreted Brentano differently, resulting in opposite conclusions about Brentano and the concept of immanent objectivity. The failure by some to understand Brentano's analysis of intentionality does not render the analysis ambiguous, however. Even if it were ambiguous, McCormick suggests nothing by way of argument that would explain how this ambiguity would lead to psychologism.
- 16 Roderick Chisholm. *Brentano and Intrinsic Value* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). p. 54.