
The Primacy of Place: An Investigation in Brentanian Ontology

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1. Introduction

What follows is an investigation of the ontology of Franz Brentano with special reference to Brentano's later and superficially somewhat peculiar doctrine to the effect that the substances of the material world are three-dimensional places. Taken as a whole, Brentano's philosophy is marked by three, not obviously compatible, traits. In the first place, his work is rooted in the metaphysics of Aristotle, above all in Aristotle's substance-accident ontology and in the Aristotelian theory of categories. In the second place, Brentano embraced a Cartesian epistemology. He saw the source of all knowledge as residing in our direct awareness of our own mental phenomena and in our capacity to grasp evident incompatibilities in the realm of concepts.¹ Thirdly, he regarded the existence of an external world as at most probable, and denied outright the existence of a world similar to the world that is given in experience. Finally, and in some sense linking together these opposing strands, he propagated an idea of what he called "descriptive psychology", a discipline which would on the one hand yield exact knowledge of the structures and categories of mental life, and on the other hand provide an epistemologically sure foundation for other branches of philosophy. As we shall see, it is this psychological aspect of Brentano's philosophy which leads him to his conception of the substantiality of place. Surprisingly, however, the psychological considerations which underlie Brentano's thinking will be shown to raise a series of questions strictly ontological in nature, questions which are not without a systematic interest of their own.

2. Three psychologies

Brentanian descriptive psychology is, in effect, an *ontology of mind*. The training in this discipline which Brentano's students received can be seen to have

instilled in them an attitude of what might be called descriptive or taxonomical realism. This involves the thesis that given segments of reality can be described by appropriate methods in a way that is — at some level of generality — adequate to the matters in hand. But it also involves the thesis that the appropriate form of such description involves something like a taxonomy of the different kinds of constituent in the given domain and of the different forms of relation between such constituents.² The early Brentano himself applied these ideas within the domain of psychology.³ His students, however, and in particular Stumpf, Marty, Twardowski, Meinong, Ehrenfels and Husserl, took the attitude of descriptive realism with them into other philosophical domains, going beyond the sphere of the purely mental to yield a sort of *descriptive general ontology*. Even here, however, Cartesian elements are still at work, since the discipline in question is grounded in psychology, which is held to provide a characteristic form of evidence for the theses it contains.

We can distinguish three branches of descriptive ontology pursued by Brentano's disciples: the ontology of *things*, the ontology of *states of affairs*, and the ontology of *values*. To understand this tripartite division we must recognise that the path from mind to objects had already been cleared to some extent by Brentano himself in his work on the notion of intentionality. Brentano, familiarly, had distinguished three sorts of ways in which a subject may be conscious of an object in his mental acts:

I *Presentations*. Here the subject is conscious of the object without taking up any position with regard to it. The object is neither accepted as existing nor rejected as non-existing, neither loved as having value nor hated as having disvalue. Presentations may be intuitive or conceptual: we can have an object before our mind as it were directly, in sensory experience; or indirectly, where a concept is involved, e.g. when we think of a colour or pain in the absence of any intuitive component in our thinking act.⁴ Intuitive presentations are confined

to what is real, for the orthodox Brentanian: we can have no intuitive awareness of what is ideal or abstract or merely possible — a thesis which was rejected by Husserl in the 6th Logical Investigation.

Pure or idealised presentations almost never occur alone, and according to Brentano's *Psychology* they are in fact in every case accompanied by dependent mental relations of other sorts, namely:

II *Judgments*. A judgment arises when, to the simple manner of being related to an object in presentation, there is added one of two diametrically opposed modes of relating to this object, which we might call *acceptance* and *rejection* or "belief" and "disbelief". A judgment is either the affirmation or the denial of existence of an object given in presentation. Thus Brentano embraces at this stage an existential theory of judgment: all judgments are reducible to judgments of existential form. A positive judgment in relation to a certain intuitive presentation *rain* might be rendered colloquially as: *rain exists* or *it's raining*. A negative judgment in regard to the conceptual presentation *unicorn* as: *unicorns do not exist* or *there are no unicorns*. A predicative judgment such as *swans are white* is seen as a negative judgment in relation to a certain *complex* conceptual presentation and might be rendered as: *non-white swans do not exist* or *there are no non-white swans*. The positive (simple or complex) judgment is true if the object of the underlying presentation exists; the negative judgment is true if this object fails to exist.

III *Phenomena of Interest*. Phenomena of interest arise when, to the presentation of an object, there is added one of two diametrically opposed modes of relating to this object which we might call *positive and negative interest* or also "love" and "hate" (typically also accompanied by a positive judgment of existence). This opposition is involved, according to Brentano, in all our mental acts and attitudes across the entire gamut of feeling, emotion and will.

3. Three ontologies

A tripartite division in psychology leads, now, to a tripartite division in ontology. The ontology of *things*, first of all, arises when one turns from the psychology of presentation to an investigation of the non-psychological correlates of presenting acts. "Thing", therefore, is to be understood in the present context as: "possible correlate of presentation", including simple and com-

plex data of sense. Contributions to thing-ontology within the Brentano tradition were made by Stumpf with his doctrine of the partial contents (objects) of visual presentations (1873), by Ehrenfels with his doctrine of *Gestalt*-qualities or higher order objects of presentation (1890), and by the later Brentano, for example, with his investigations of collectives and of spatial and temporal continua (1933, 1976). Brentano's later reism — the doctrine that only things exist — was propounded also in Poland, above all by Twardowski's student Kotarbiński, though Kotarbiński's thinking in this respect was at most indirectly influenced by that of Brentano.⁵

The ontology of *states of affairs* arises, similarly, when one moves from the psychology of judgment to the investigation of the ontological correlates of judging acts. These, given Brentano's existential theory of judgment, will be primarily of the forms: *the existence of A* and *the non-existence of A*, though other types of judgment-correlate — *the subsistence of A*, *the possibility of A*, *the necessity of A*, *the probability of A*, *the being B of A*, and so on — were recognised by Brentano's pupils. More generally it can be said that the Brentanians, for all their differences, shared in common a fascination with the correspondence theory of truth. But where Brentano himself did not clearly distinguish between the content of a judgment on the one hand, and its objectual correlate on the other, his pupils seem to have taken for granted that an investigation of the different types of judgment-contents and of their relations to objectual judgment-correlates can contribute to our philosophical understanding of the notion of truth. Contributions to the ontology of truth in this sense were made, again, by Stumpf, by Marty, and also by Husserl and his disciples in Munich.⁶

The ontology of *values* arises, finally, when one moves from the psychology of feeling, will and preference to an investigation of the ontological correlates of the corresponding acts. Contributions to the ontology of values were made, again, by Ehrenfels, as well as by Meinong and his school in Graz and by a number of other thinkers within the Brentano tradition.⁷ Marty defended his doctrine of *Wertverhalte* as correlates of valuing acts parallel to the doctrine of *Sachverhalte* as correlates of judgment — a doctrine which he had continued to defend even in the teeth of his master Brentano's rejection of all *entia rationis*. Just as a judgment, to the extent that it is true, is seen by Marty as a process of adequation or similarisation to a state of affairs, so an act of feeling or will, to the extent that it is

correct, can be understood as a process of adequation or similarisation to an independently existing “state of values”.⁸

As is well known, Meinong’s theory of objects comprehends all the types or branches of ontology here distinguished.⁹ The first of all the Brentanians to develop a generalised ontology in this sense was, however, Twardowski. As Ingarden puts it, Twardowski’s *Content and Object* of 1894 is “the first consistently constructed theory of objects manifesting a certain theoretical unity since the time of scholasticism and of the ‘Ontology’ of Christian Wolff”.¹⁰ The general ontology presented by Twardowski can be seen to differ from all previous work in the field in having been produced on the basis of descriptive psychological analyses of the different kinds of mental acts in the light of their relatedness to different kinds of objects. The early Brentano, too, can be seen retrospectively to have contributed something of his own to these investigations in general ontology, especially in his treatment of the Aristotelian distinction between “being in the sense of the categories” and “being in the sense of being true” in his dissertation of 1862. When not interpreting the views of other philosophers, however, Brentano seems to have been reluctant (at least in his early writings) to formulate ontological theses of his own — perhaps not least because his work in this period is centred so heavily around problems of psychology. Hence it seems to have been up to Brentano’s students to take the additional step of using Brentano’s psychological analyses as the basis for investigations in general ontology. The extent to which Brentano provoked this additional step cannot as yet be ascertained with conviction. The fact that *all* Brentano’s most important students made a move of the given sort — for example that they all embraced an ontology of “*Sachverhalte*” or “*Urteilsinhalte*” or “*Objektive*” as correlates of acts of judgment — seems, however, to be hardly explicable except on the assumption that the move in question was in some way anticipated in the teaching of Brentano himself.

4. First substance

Ontology, then, not just for Brentano but for all the Brentanians, can be said to have resolved itself into the three multifariously interdependent disciplines of thing-ontology, *Sachverhalt*-ontology and value-ontology.

Here, as promised, we shall concentrate on some aspects of Brentano’s own work on the ontology of things.

In his reflections on this subject Brentano starts out from the doctrine of first substance put forward by Aristotle in the *Categories* and in the *Metaphysics*. It will therefore be necessary to sketch the bare outlines of Aristotle’s views in this respect.

First substances, according to Aristotle, have the following marks:

(i) They are not “predicable of a subject” nor “present in a subject” (*Cat.* 2 a 11; *Met.* 1017 b 10–14, 1028 b 35f., 1029 a 1).

(ii) They are that which can exist on their own, where accidents require a support from things or substances in order to exist (*loc. cit.*).

(iii) They are that which serves to individuate the accident, to make it the entity that it is — a feature seen by Brentano as the most crucial element of the Aristotelian theory (*Anal. post.* 83 a 25; *Met.* 1030 b 10–12; *Cat.* 2 b 1ff.).

(iv) They are that which, while remaining numerically one and the same, can admit contrary accidents at different times (*Cat.* 4 a 10). In this (attenuated) sense the substance is also a locus of change.

(v) They are that which somehow forms a unity, enjoying a certain natural completeness or rounded-offness, both in contrast to parts of things and in contrast to heaps or masses. (*Met.* 1041 b 12, 1052 a 22ff.)¹¹ Hence also, for Aristotle, a thing is that which has no actual but only possible parts (*Met.* 1054 a 20ff.). A part of a thing, for as long as it remains a part, is not itself a thing, but only possibly so; it becomes an actual thing only when it is somehow isolated from its environing whole. In this sense (and also in others) the substance is the bearer of potentiality.

There are in addition certain further marks, less easily documented in Aristotle’s texts because, having been called into question only much later, they were taken for granted by the Greeks. These are above all:

(vi) First substances are independent of thinking; they are a part of nature (though of course no Greek would have understood what is meant by “independent of thinking”).

(vii) They are that which endures. This means, first of all, that things exist continuously in time (their existence is never intermittent); but it means also that there are no punctually existing things, as there are punctual processes or events (for example beginnings, endings, and

instantaneous changes in general). Substances, as contrasted with accidents, typically endure for such a length of time that they may acquire proper names for purposes of reidentification.

(viii) They are that which has no temporal parts: the first ten years of my life are a part of my life and not a part of me. As our ordinary forms of language also reveal, events and processes (occurents), not things (continuants), have temporal parts.

5. Substances and places

Brentano came to differ from Aristotle first of all in his interpretation of (iii), where he adopts a highly unusual view of individuation, according to which the substance serves to differentiate the accident from other, qualitatively identical accidents in virtue of its role as *part* of the accident. The accident is a mere “mode” of the substance in the sense that it is the substance modally extended or qualified in some specific way. By this means Brentano is able to embrace a view according to which both substances and accidents fall within a single category of what he calls “things”.¹²

What substances are, however, is a question difficult to answer, not least because Brentano changed his views on the matter with the passage of time.¹³ On the one hand, some substances are *souls* (“thinking substances” in the sense of Descartes), and their accidents are modal extensions of souls — hearers, judges, haters. On the other hand, some substances are *bodies* in the somewhat special — Cartesian — sense that they are places qualified in special ways. This is so, at least, according to Brentano’s earlier theory, for which a place is a mutually dependent moment of a quality, so that there is no quality that is not at some place in space, but also no place that is not also “corporeal” in the sense that it is filled with some quality: “the determination of place is so intimately unified with the determination of quality, that they individuate each other mutually”.¹⁴ In this respect Brentano’s earlier view of *res extensa*, too, is close to that of Descartes, though there are also interesting parallels between Brentano’s view of place and Aristotle’s own view of *materia prima*.¹⁵

According to the later Brentano, in contrast, as represented above all by the “Appendix” to the *Theory of Categories*, places themselves are the only non-psychic substances. Further, they are such that they may, but need not, be comprehended by qualities as

their accidents. A body, on this conception, is merely a certain sort of modal extension of a place; it includes this place in a manner precisely comparable to the way in which Brentanian accidents in general include their substances.¹⁶

Brentano took so seriously the view that places individuate things that he was prepared to swallow the consequence that the motion of a body is impossible, as is any change of size or shape. What we customarily conceive as corporeal motion is not a change in location of some one given substance, but rather a continuous change of substances. A red dot “moving” across the landscape is in fact a continuum of redness-accidents comprehending a succession of different places. Movement is, accordingly, the becoming modally extended in appropriate ways of a continuum of different places in continuous temporal succession, rather like a ripple “moving” across the surface of a pond, no molecule of which is displaced in the horizontal. He would have accepted also the consequence that mixtures are impossible (in the sense that it would be impossible for two substances A and B to become so thoroughly fused together that they would occupy one and the same place). Apparent mixtures are always such that it is possible to discriminate separate particles of the supposedly mixed substances, each one of which will be of finite size and will occupy a place unique to itself.

6. From “presentation” to “thing”

We can come to some understanding of the reasons why Brentano came to choose places as the ultimate non-psychic substances if we examine the list of the marks of substance set out above. Thus, in regard to (i) and (ii), we do not normally view places as “present in a subject” or as “requiring a support from things or substances in order to exist”. We tend to conceive places as “ultimate” in this sense, and for this reason they may also serve as an undifferentiated Lockean I-know-not-what which would serve as the support for entities given in experience. Moreover, places are (iii) the best possible candidate for the role of that which individuates the accidents by which they are filled. Brentano justifies his view of spatial determinations as substantial most directly by appealing to the Aristotelian thesis according to which entities in the category of substance serve the primary function of individuating the accidental determinations with which they are associated. Thus, outer

perception seems to show us every object as individuated. If, however, we investigate which of the characteristics manifested by an object might serve to individuate it from its fellows, then, Brentano argues, we find that these can only be the differences of place. “Two dots of identically the same red are individually different only because one is here, the other there”.¹⁷ Places are (iv) able to admit contrary accidents at different times, and they are (vi) “independent of thinking”. Marks (vii) and (viii), while not easily applied to the concept of place, seem not to be incompatible with a view which identifies places as substances.

Which leaves only (v) as a mark of substance which ill fits the Brentanian conception. It is, however, precisely in relation to (v) that Brentano came to differ most radically from Aristotle. In fact Brentano came to adopt a view of “thing” — similar, in this respect, to Leśniewski’s concept of “concrete whole” or Leonard and Goodman’s concept of “individual” — as embracing not only unitary substances as classically conceived but also arbitrary collections and arbitrary non-detached parts of things. Brentano does not, in other words, impose on things a requirement of unity. From this point of view, the place concept recommends itself especially strongly, since to regard things as merely (differently qualified) places is precisely to guarantee that arbitrary divisibility and conjoinability of things on which Brentano — like his mereologist successors — insists.

And now Brentano’s principal reason for departing in this way from Aristotle lies in the roots of his own ontology of things in the psychology of presentation. Certainly things, as Brentano conceives them, are not, except in special cases, psychological entities. There is nevertheless a sense in which the term “thing” is a psychological term. For we can understand the meaning of this term only by reflection on the meaning of the term “presentation”. The concept of “thing” is the concept of a “possible object of presentation”, so that Brentano can later rest his argument for reism on the fact that the univocity of “presentation” (and of “thinking” in general) implies the univocity of “thing”.¹⁸

Presentation, as already noted, is of two sorts. In the first place, there is the intuitive presentation of data of sense — from simple patches of colour to entire landscapes. The object world thereby comes to approximate to something like the flat surface of the visual field — which may also explain why Brentano resisted the (Lockean) idea that “thing” involves as one of its marks the concept of resistance or inertia. And because data of

sense are arbitrarily divisible and conjoinable, Brentano comes to require of “things” in general that they manifest a similar divisibility and conjoinability.

In the second place, there is the non-intuitive presentation of things via general concepts. This second sort of presentation is unrestricted in its scope. The concept of thing is, accordingly, applicable without reservation to objects in all material categories — for objects in all material categories may serve as objects of presentations of the conceptual sort.¹⁹ As Brentano himself puts it:

It doesn’t matter at all what word we use to refer to the concept which is common to all that is to be presented. Whether we speak of “thing” or “entity”, it is enough that it represents a highest universal to which we attain by means of the highest degree of abstraction no matter where we look.²⁰

7. Things as homogeneous collectives

Brentano’s ultimate conception of (non-psychical) things is a variant of what we might call the “homogeneous collective view”, a view which takes as its starting point a conception of things which draws equally on examples of *quantities*, *masses* or *homogeneous collectives* as on the unitary substances of the tradition. This view is contrasted with the approach to ontology of (for example) Aristotle, Twardowski and Ingarden, which takes its cue from unitary substances and from the individual accidents which may inhere therein.

There are, interestingly, a number of different routes to the homogeneous collective view (“homogeneous” because the distinction between thing and mass is held to reflect no fundamental ontological division). Quine, for example, seems to have been inspired to adopt a view of this sort particularly by those physical examples (fields, liquids, gases) where arbitrary delineability does indeed seem to hold, as also by related considerations deriving from the semantic treatment of mass terms in natural language. The later Brentano’s acceptance of the homogeneous collective view, as we have seen, was motivated by his early work on the psychology of sensation. Nelson Goodman, too, was provoked by considerations deriving from the psychology of sensation in developing his ontology of “individuals” in *The Structure of Appearance*. Leśniewski, on the other hand, was brought to the homogeneous collective view by

formal considerations deriving from the general theory of part and whole and from his critique of the set-theoretic paradoxes — formal considerations which, of course, also played a role in the work of Goodman and Quine (as indeed in the work of Whitehead).

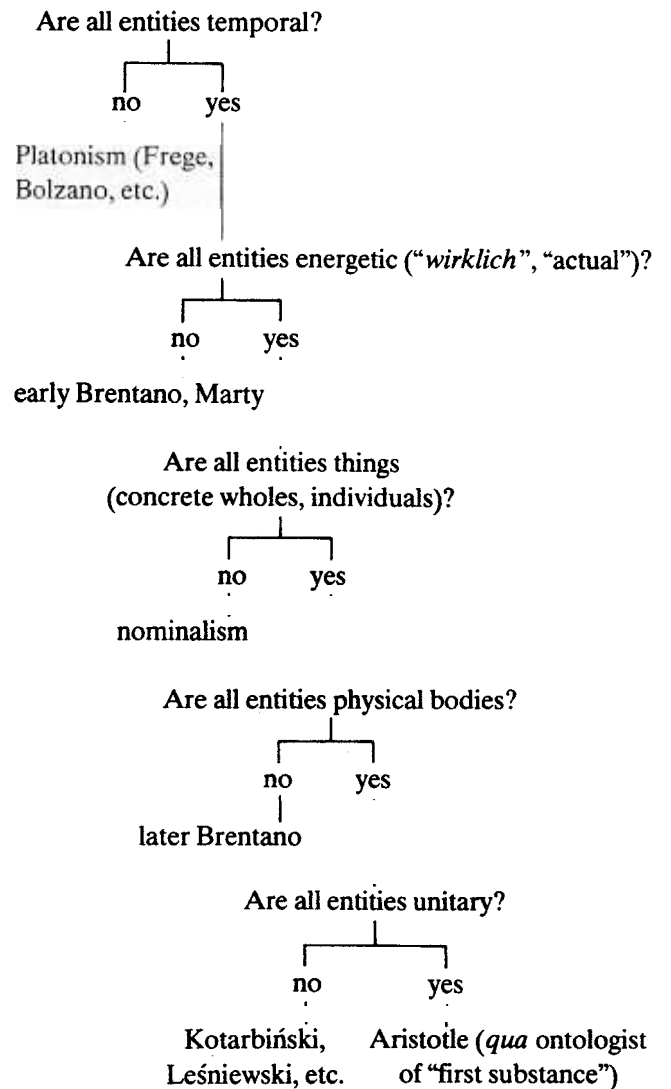
All of the philosophers mentioned reject out of hand any commitment to what might loosely be called “abstract entities”. One can in fact identify from this perspective a spectrum of ontologies, stretching from the Platonism of Bolzano and Frege at one extreme, to the “pansomatist reism” of Leśniewski and Kotarbiński at the other, with intermediate positions dictated by a succession of more restrictive conditions on what can count as “object”. These conditions — of *temporality*, *causality*, *thinghood*, and *unitariness* — are generated by the following questions:

- do all objects exist in time?
- are all objects able to stand in causal relations?
- are all objects things, or does the category of object also embrace, for example, events, states, qualities?
- are there scattered objects? are the parts of objects also objects in their own right?

Bolzano, Frege and the Platonists are, we might say, maximally liberal in the sense that they impose on the entities in their ontology none of these conditions. Above all, they accept both temporal entities and also non-temporal or “abstract” entities such as numbers, meanings or sets. Marty and the early Brentano, on the other hand, while admitting *entia rationis* of various kinds, allowed into their ontologies only temporal entities, so that even an eternally existing state of affairs such as *the non-existence of unicorns* does not exist outside of time, but rather *at all times*. They did, however, recognise a division among temporal entities between the “real” or energetic, on the one hand, and the “non-real” or anergetic on the other. Real entities, from this perspective, are entities capable of entering into causal relations with other entities. Nominalism — which we shall here define as a view to the effect that there are no abstract entities in either the Platonist or the Martian sense — imposes the further restriction that entities are not only temporal but also energetic. The nominalist need not, however, insist that all energetic objects must count as things. He may hold, for example, that processes or events or states of affairs may enter into causal relations. Kotarbiński was an adherent of reistic nominalism in the sense that he held that all objects are both energetic and thingly.²¹ He also

insisted, however, that all things are physical bodies, a notion he sought to define in terms of extendedness in space and time. Neither Brentano nor Kotarbiński lays any requirement of *unity* on things or bodies thus conceived, however, as contrasted with Aristotle — *qua* ontologist of first substance — who does impose a requirement of this sort. All of which may be summarised in the following

Ontological Decision-Tree



Already as it stands this tree enables us to see the inadequacy of any simple-minded opposition, such as is embraced, for example, by Quine and his epigones, between “nominalism” or “reism”, on the one hand, and “Platonism” on the other.²² Thus one does not move

into the realm of abstract entities in embracing in one's ontology events as well as things. For events may be accepted — as for example by Davidson — as *bona fide* individual entities existing in time and space and entering into causal relations with other events. Similarly, one does not move into the realm of abstracta in embracing boundaries of things as (dependent) spatio-temporal objects of a special sort, as was done, for example, by Brentano.²³

8. Other marks of “thing”

We could, of course, go further, and extend the decision-tree by taking into account other oppositions. There are in fact a large number of fundamental ontological oppositions which have at one or another time played a role in the tradition of Brentanian ontology, and it will perhaps provide an appropriate conclusion if we run through some of them, however briefly, in order to demonstrate the fruitfulness of the Brentanian ontological enterprise:

— **Existence:** Note, first of all, that *existence* is not a mark of the concept *thing* as Brentano conceived it: a centaur is a thing, even though no centaurs do in fact exist. For Brentano, however, we can refer at best *modo obliquo* to the non-existent, by referring *modo recto* to something that stands in a certain relation to it. Thus we can refer to a *thinker of centaurs*, and we can refer to present things as later or earlier than past and future things. It is of course Meinong who has contributed most to the building up of an ontology which would dispense with this prejudice in favour of what exists.

— **Individuality:** Nominalism, as defined above, is the thesis that there are no abstract entities. A related, though subtly different position — we might call it individualism — arises when one accepts the thesis that there are only individuals. This position is distinct also from reism, the thesis that there are only things. Individualism, in other words, rejects general objects; reism rejects events, processes and states of affairs, as well as meanings, classes, and other abstracta. Thus it is possible to embrace individualism and at the same time defend an ontology of events;²⁴ and it is possible to reject individualism and defend an ontology of things. This was done, in a sense, by Twardowski, who admitted *general things* or “representative general objects”²⁵ — an idea recently resurrected in the theory of arbitrary objects put forward by Fine (1985).

Brentano himself was, in his later philosophy, both an individualist and a reist.

— **Perceivability:** To the question whether all objects need be perceivable, Brentano responds in the negative. Thus souls are not perceivable, at least not directly: we can apprehend in intuition at most the activities of the soul (the soul as modally extended in certain ways). Further, the empty spaces which Brentano came to accept as substances at the very end of his life are not perceivable either. For someone like Kotarbiński, on the other hand, things enjoy essential perceivability.

— **Reality:** On the one hand, there is a strong realist strain in the Brentano tradition. On the other hand, the Brentanists were, as we have seen, uniquely sensitive to the relations between objects of different kinds and the acts in which they are intended. Realism, now, we can identify as the view to the effect that given segments of reality are *independent of mind*. In relation to the question whether, or in what ways, objects may be dependent on the minds which think them, it was Husserl's student Ingarden who was the first to achieve a clarity of sorts. Drawing in part on his investigations of the ontology of literature, Ingarden was led to distinguish different types of both dependent and independent objects of each of the various categories of thing, event, property, state of affairs, etc.²⁶ His work implies the need to distinguish the formal-ontological concept of *thing* on the one hand, and the quite different concept of *reality* on the other, a concept which for him connotes “independence of mind”.

— **Atomicity:** To Brentano, the idea of an actual or “categorematic” infinity is contradictory, so that every collective whole, however large, can be resolved into a finite number of unitary things, and even a place is arbitrarily divisible only into a finite (if unbounded) number of constituent places. Further, while accidents may themselves have accidents, every accident must contain at least one “ultimate” substance on which it rests. Brentano's ultimate (non-psychic) substances are not, however, atoms in the sense of the mereological atomism of Sobociński *et al.*, i.e. entities which are mereologically simple (have no parts). There can be no (independent, atomic) spatial points, as Brentano conceives things, since every place has further places as its parts. Moreover, every place has (and must necessarily have) a boundary, which Brentano admits as a special sort of dependent thing.

— **Unitariness:** The work of Brentano and his successors implies, accordingly, the need to distinguish con-

ceptually between minimal unitary substances on the one hand, and atoms on the other. For even minimal substances may have non-substantial parts.²⁷ This implies in turn the need for more careful reflection on the different meanings of "unitary". Thus we might distinguish for example the requirement of connectedness of parts, the requirement of spatial separateness from other entities, the requirement of functional interdependence of parts, the requirement of boundedness, and so on. We could investigate further the extent to which things may have parts which are themselves things — as an organism may include as parts its cells, chromosomes, genes, or a society human beings. Such considerations imply, however, in view of the transitivity of *part of*, that different kinds of part-relation would have to be distinguished, since my leg is not a part of the society to which I belong in the same sense in which I myself am a part of this society.

— **Dimensionality:** Things, for Brentano, are not restricted to three-dimensional physical bodies (as they are, for example, for Leśniewski or Kotarbiński). The notion of thing with which Brentano operates is much more general, embracing first of all "topoids" of higher numbers of dimensions, which would exist as it were in parallel to three-dimensional bodies. It embraces also things of lower numbers of dimensions — boundaries (lines and surfaces), and souls, which constitute a special category of *sui generis* zero-dimensional objects having the capacity to comprehend intentionally things of all higher dimensions. Note, however, that while Brentano does not rule out topoids of higher numbers of dimensions, he rejects the idea that three-dimensional bodies may turn out to be boundaries of four- or more dimensional topoids: a boundary can exist only as the boundary of the thing which it bounds; a body, on the other hand, is a thing in its own right, which requires no other thing (except possibly God) in order to exist.

Brentano's ontology of boundaries is developed at length for a wide variety of different cases in his *Philosophical Investigations of Space, Time and the Continuum*, and it is perhaps this theory which is the most original of all the Brentanian contributions to ontology. Brentano shows above all that an adequate treatment of the concept of boundary is indispensable to the philosophical understanding of the nature of both spatial and temporal continua. And while Brentano's insights in this field have hitherto been largely ignored, it is almost certainly in the systematic application of these insights that the next step in the development of an ontology of things may be expected.

Notes

- ¹ Knowledge of the first sort he called "empirical"; knowledge of the latter sort "analytic".
- ² Both of these theses derive from Aristotle, though the latter may also be associated with the name of Porphyrius.
- ³ See especially Brentano, 1982. Brentano's categorial ontology is in many respects comparable to the categorial grammar pursued, for example, by Leśniewski and Ajdukiewicz. See e.g. the latter's 1935 and the 4th of Husserl's *Logical Investigations* (1900/1901).
- ⁴ Perhaps the clearest discussion of that uniform directedness towards an object which all acts of presentation have in common is provided by Adolf Reinach in his treatment of the concept of *Meinen* in his 1911.
- ⁵ See my 1988a.
- ⁶ See my 1987b and 1988, the latter containing a more detailed treatment of Marty's ontology of truth.
- ⁷ On Brentano's own theory of value see, now, Chisholm, 1986.
- ⁸ See Marty, 1908, §84.
- ⁹ See e.g. his 1906/07.
- ¹⁰ Ingarden, 1938, p. 258.
- ¹¹ Contrast, however, *Met.* 1028 b 9—13, 1070 a 14ff.
- ¹² On Brentano's theory of substance and accident, see especially Chisholm, 1978.
- ¹³ See my, 1987.
- ¹⁴ Brentano, 1933, p. 89, Eng., p. 72.
- ¹⁵ There are also parallels to the logical atomist notion of "simple object", as also to Kant's notion of *Ding an sich*, though it would take us too far afield to pursue these here.
- ¹⁶ Brentano, 1933, pp. 35f., Eng., p. 36.
- ¹⁷ Brentano, 1933, p. 247, Eng., p. 177.
- ¹⁸ See e.g. Brentano, 1933, p. 18, Eng., p. 24.
- ¹⁹ On this opposition between formal and material concepts, see Smith, 1981; on Brentano and formal concepts, see Münch, 1986. And compare, again, the discussion of *Meinen* in Reinach's 1911.
- ²⁰ Brentano, 1930, p. 108, Eng., p. 96.
- ²¹ See his 1966 and the critical discussion in my 1988.
- ²² See also Lejewski, 1979, p. 210.
- ²³ See Brentano, 1976.
- ²⁴ See Simons, 1983.
- ²⁵ Twardowski, 1894, §15.
- ²⁶ See esp. vol. I of his 1964/65.
- ²⁷ See above all Stumpf, 1873, §5 and Husserl's 3rd Logical Investigation.

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