DALE JACQUETTE

1 Introduction: Brentano's philosophy

BRENTANO'S SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION

Brentano is among the most important yet under-appreciated philosophers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He led an intellectual revolution that sought to reverse what was then the prevalent post-Kantian trend of German-Austrian philosophy in the direction of an Aristotelian scientific methodology. At the same time, he made valuable contributions to philosophical psychology, metaphysics, ontology, value theory, epistemology, the reform of syllogistic logic, philosophical theology and theodicy, and the history of philosophy and philosophical methodology.

By revitalizing Austrian scientific philosophy, Brentano and his school simultaneously laid the groundwork for twentieth-century philosophy of science as it came to fruition in the logical positivism of the Vienna Circle, for the *Gegenstandstheorie* or object theory of Alexius Meinong and his students in the Graz School, and for phenomenology, notably in the work of Edmund Husserl, and indirectly in such later thinkers as Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Beyond the borders of the German-speaking world, Brentano's philosophy had a profound impact on the course of Anglo-American analytic philosophy, as evinced in tributes to his influence by, among many others, Bertrand Russell, G. E. Moore, Gilbert Ryle, G. F. Stout, and Roderick M. Chisholm.

Brentano was born in Germany to a family of Italian extraction, and spent most of his professional philosophical career in Germany and Austria. After a brief period of lecturing at the Bayerische-Julius-Maximilians-Universität-Würzburg in Germany, he moved to Vienna, where he became a flamboyant and enormously popular

university lecturer. During this time, he taught Husserl, Meinong, Anton Marty, Carl Stumpf, Christian von Ehrenfels (the founder of Gestalt psychology), and Kazimierz Twardowski, among numerous others, and his lectures were attended by such interested nonphilosophers as Sigmund Freud. With his prominent beard and electric delivery, Brentano's lectures were standing-room-only events, in which his audience was stimulated, entertained, and infused with the power and excitement of ideas. Brentano made it his philosophical mission to reverse the influence of German idealist philosophy in Austria. He strove to replace romanticism and subjectivism with a scientific philosophy that opposed Aristotle's and John Stuart Mill's empiricism to Kantian and post-Kantian transcendentalism, and especially to Hegel's dialectical idealism and metaphysics of the Absolute.

In the end, Brentano was driven into voluntary retirement after a dispute with the University of Vienna. He conscientiously resigned from the Catholic clergy and gave up Austrian citizenship in order to marry and preserve his right to a university professorship within the letter of the law. The university had promised to reinstate him in his position, but chose instead to offer him a much downgraded position as Privatdozent, in which capacity he was not permitted to supervise doctoral dissertations. After leaving the university in 1895, Brentano continued an active philosophical correspondence in which the vast panorama of his later philosophy was explored in conversations with a close circle of friends.

Why should readers today be interested in Brentano's philosophy? What is its relevance to the philosophical problems that have become urgent in our time? The answer is that Brentano has insightful things to say about most if not all of the philosophical problems that continue to preoccupy philosophers. He made lasting contributions in all the fields of philosophy to which he devoted attention, and in many instances he set the terms and problems for future inquiry while introducing valuable doctrinal and methodological innovations. The propriety of empirical methods in philosophy, the concept of mind and the intentionality or object-directedness of thought, the ideal of correct epistemic and moral judgment, the metaphysics of individuals, and the definitions of intrinsic good and part-whole relations in value theory which he developed have exerted a powerful influence on contemporary investigations in analytic philosophy. At the same time, Brentano is rightly credited as the originator of a scientific

phenomenology in the rigorous investigation of first-person psychological thought structure and content. If we want to understand the history of these ongoing philosophical discussions and tap into a rich source of ideas that have yet to be fully exploited, we cannot afford to ignore Brentano's philosophy.

AUSTRIAN PHILOSOPHY AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

The flowering of Austrian philosophy at the turn of the previous century is a frequently remarked phenomenon. William M. Johnston, in his landmark study, *The Austrian Mind: an Intellectual and Social History 1848–1938*, offers the matter of fact observation that "It was in Austria and its successor states that many, perhaps even most, of the seminal thinkers of the twentieth century emerged."[1]

When one considers the diminutive geographical portion of the globe occupied by the Austrian empire even during the height of its territorial expansion, this statement is nothing short of astonishing. In the cultural milieu of the intellectually opulent late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, scholars have puzzled over the rare combination of factors that contributed to the unprecedented proliferation of influential philosophical schools at just this time and place.

As a sociological problem, the question of why and how so much interesting philosophy was done in Austria and its political satellites at this time is comparable to the question of why so much excellent painting was centered in seventeenth-century Netherlands. The answer, to whatever extent we can satisfy ourselves about such complex occurrences, is likely in general terms to turn out to be much the same, but may need to be reformulated in terms of large-scale cultural factors, such as the rise of a merchant class commissioning paintings for their walls during the golden age of Dutch art. A similar socio-economic story can also probably be told with respect to the rise of Austrian philosophy; yet a more philosophical answer can also be given. Gershon Weiler, in his probing essay, "In Search of What is Austrian in Austrian Philosophy," testifies to the inescapable impression that there is something special and unique about Austrian philosophy, but also to the difficulty, which many commentators have lamented, in isolating elements that are distinctively Austrian in recent and contemporary philosophy. Weiler adds:

I think there is something interesting and not a little intriguing in the phenomenon of that distinct philosophical style which emerged in Austria, without the benefit of a language of its own to give it natural distinctness. To be sure, language retains its primary importance and so what is common to Austrian philosophy and to the philosophy produced in other regions of the German-language space far exceeds its distinctive characteristics; the reason for this is, among other things, that the language-continuum made it possible for practitioners to move easily about in that continuum. Many of the most typical Austrians were just other Germans who happened to settle in Austria. And yet . . . there *is* something about Austrian philosophy that begs to be given special attention.[2]

Weiler explains the nature and conditions for the emergence of Austrian philosophy. He tries to account for what is distinctive about Austrian philosophy and why it gained the prominence it did in philosophical terms, appealing to specific philosophical reasons that he infers were probably presupposed by different thinkers in the evolution of Austrian thought. Near the end of the essay, he advances an hypothesis concerning the ascent of Austrian thought:

Austrian philosophy emerged, as a reaction to romanticism, in that unique period of time when the inner tensions of the Austrian state began to be visible for all. This was the time not only of tension but also of immense cultural activity. Philosophy in Austria at that time was not manned by revolutionaries and would not be oppositional. It could not be expressive since there was nothing rationally worthwhile to express. So, philosophy turned neutral, science-oriented, analytic, positivistic and, on the historical map, Aristotelian and Humean. Not idealist, not ideological and distinctively lacking in the *Begeisterung* so characteristic of much of German philosophy of the period – philosophy was Austrian at last. Whether Aristotelian or Humean, Austrian philosophy is typically philosophers' philosophy.[3]

What Weiler means by "romanticism" is the kind of anti-rationalism he identifies with dominant trends of post-Kantian philosophy in Germany. He agrees with other commentators who have insisted that this German inspiration never took root in the Austrian philosophical scene. He sees the evolution of Austrian philosophy primarily as a reaction against already established Germanic romantic thought; that is, in a certain sense, as something negatively perceived. Although his interpretation does not fully explain *why* Austrian philosophers reacted against German "romanticism" instead of falling in line or being swept along with it, at one level it takes account of precisely what happened in Austrian philosophy,

with Brentano in the vanguard of thinkers who contributed to the impressive upsurge of scientific philosophy in Germany, Austria, and middle Europe. It is the role of individuals like Brentano and his contemporaries in the movement toward science and away from transcendental metaphysics that we need to understand in order to appreciate how a new philosophy took root in *fin de siècle* Austria.

BRENTANO'S INTENTIONALIST PHILOSOPHY OF MIND

Brentano's first philosophical writings were booklength commentaries on Aristotle's metaphysics and philosophical psychology. His choice of Aristotle as a figure of study in the post-Kantian climate of German idealism at the time is significant, reflecting his interest in empirical, scientifically oriented philosophy, in contrast with the tradition of Hegel, Fichte, and Schelling. These early historical investigations provided Brentano with the background for his most famous and influential treatise, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (*Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt*, 1874). The *Psychology* was originally projected as an overture to a more ambitious multi-volume compendium in scientific psychology that was never completed, and was to have presented detailed applications of Brentano's theory to the psychology of presentations, judgments, emotions and the will, and the relation between body and mind.

Brentano argues in the *Psychology* that psychological phenomena can be distinguished from physical phenomena by virtue of the *intentionality* or object-directedness of the psychological, and nonintentionality of the physical or nonpsychological. This intentionality thesis inspired generations of philosophers and psychologists, some of whom developed Brentano's ideas in a variety of different directions, radiating out from his original investigations. Others devoted their energies to resisting and refuting the concept of intentionality in favor of eliminative or reductive materialist-physicalist, behaviorist or functionalist analyses of the concept of mind, involving treatments of a more narrowly construed model of scientific psychology deriving from the legacy of logical positivism.

Today, Brentano's philosophy remains a focus of interest for specialists in philosophical psychology, philosophy of mind, philosophy of language, theory of knowledge, metaphysics and formal ontology, as well as for philosophers of ethics and aesthetics, theologians and philosophers of religion, and, to a lesser extent, logicians and formal

semanticists. His perspectives on the intentionality of mind have deservedly made him an indispensable figure in contemporary philosophical discussions of the nature of thought and of the methodology for the scientific study of mind. Whether or not they agree with Brentano's thesis that the mind is essentially and distinctively intentional, in-depth expositions of the nature of thought in contemporary philosophical psychology generally find it worthwhile to refer approvingly or disapprovingly, and in general to take their bearings relative to Brentano's intentionalist doctrine as a touchstone in modern philosophy of mind.

Brentano's influence on both Husserl's phenomenology and the object theory of the Graz school makes his work equally important to complementary and sometimes diametrically opposed trends in recent philosophy – indeed, he is arguably the most notable bridge figure between the traditions of analytic and continental philosophy. Heidegger reports that Brentano's dissertation, *On the Manifold Senses of Being in Aristotle* (*Von der mannigfachen Bedeutung des Seienden nach Aristoteles*, 1862), was the first work of philosophy he read seriously over and over again when he first became interested in problems of metaphysics. Heidegger claims that Brentano awakened his fascination with what he later articulated as the central problems of his existentialist ontology, in his preoccupation with the question of being that found expression in his *Sein und Zeit* (*Being and Time*, 1927). The irony is that Brentano would undoubtedly have repudiated Heidegger's existentialism, as he did Husserl's later transcendental phenomenology. Meanwhile, in the analytic philosophical world, Russell was extensively reading the seminal writings of Brentano and the new inquiries of Brentano's star pupil Meinong. Russell seems to have followed these Austrian developments for a time, but later reacted starkly against them, thus irrevocably shaping the future course of analytic philosophy in another, extensionalist, rather than intentionalist and intensionalist, direction, to the present day.

THE CHAPTERS IN THIS VOLUME

The chapters in this volume cover all major aspects of Brentano's philosophy. They place his work in historical context, looking to both its antecedents and the subsequent philosophical movements

over which Brentano directly and indirectly exerted influence. Collectively, the authors critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of Brentano's lifework and its relevance to contemporary philosophical concerns.

The concept of intentionality in Brentano's early and later philosophy of psychology is center stage in every chapter. Although he made numerous contributions to many different fields of philosophy, his name is most frequently associated with the analysis of psychological phenomena as intentional, and he remained faithful to some version of the intentionality thesis throughout his philosophical career. Although he drastically altered his opinion about the nature of intended objects, as his early doctrine of immanent intentionality or intentional inexistence gave way more resolutely to a strict *reism* or ontology of actual individual existents, he never abandoned his commitment to the intentionality of thought. In his philosophy it is the center around which all aspects of his metaphysics, epistemology, value theory, and philosophical theology find their proper place. Methodologically, the importance of intentionality in Brentano's system is in one way inevitable. Given his empiricist presuppositions, which he shares with John Locke, George Berkeley, David Hume, and John Stuart Mill, and even to a certain extent with the rationalist René Descartes, Brentano needs to give prominence to the subjective contents of thoughts and sensations perceived in immediate experience. The phenomenology of sensation as a play of appearances is all that the strict empiricist can consider knowable; belief in the existence of a corresponding external reality or "body," as Hume says, beyond the phenomena can only be conjectural, however psychologically compelling. The implication for Brentano is that an objective scientific philosophical psychology must take priority over all other branches of philosophy, a perspective that can be seen in every phase and every interconnected component of his work.

In "Brentano's Relation to Aristotle," Rolf George and Glen Koehn recount Brentano's early recognition of his intellectual debt to Aristotle's empiricism. Brentano thought of philosophy historically as moving repeatedly and cyclically through four distinctive phases, the final one of which was supposed to be its "natural" phase, represented in ancient Greek philosophy by the work of Aristotle. He believed that philosophy in his day was on the brink of transition from its most recent third, idealist, phase, reflected in the work of

Immanuel Kant and post-Kantianism, to a neo-natural cycle, in a philosophy modeled on the natural sciences. He saw in Aristotle a precursor to the type of philosophy he wanted to advance. George and Koehn examine in detail the influences, similarities, and divergences between Aristotle and Brentano in areas where Brentano made special contributions to ontology, psychology, and theology, using the lens of Aquinas's twelfth-century interpretations of Aristotle, from which Brentano often took his bearings. The picture of Brentano's relationship with Aristotle that appears in their history shines a light on his methodology and philosophical orientation as a neo-Aristotelianism emphasizing the metaphysics of being and the psychology and epistemology of sensation.

Peter Simons, in "Judging Correctly: Brentano and the Reform of Elementary Logic," explains the role of Brentano's theory of correct judgment in his efforts to improve Aristotelian syllogistic logic. As the only quasi-formal systematization of reasoning available until the middle of the nineteenth century, syllogistic logic had essentially remained unchanged since antiquity. Simons describes the innovations by other contemporary logicians such as George Boole and Augustus DeMorgan as background to a detailed discussion of Brentano's work. Brentano's contributions to logic were largely unsung in his time because they were unpublished. Although Brentano did not sustain a strong interest in logic throughout his career, Simons argues that the early Brentano arrived at an original reconception of logical principles that despite its attractions has failed to gain currency in recent logical analysis. Brentano offers an unorthodox approach to the foundations of logic from the standpoint of the theory of judgment in the psychology of reasoning rather than in terms of the purely linguistic Ur-elements of contemporary logic. According to Simons, Brentano defies the Aristotelian tradition and fails at the same time to anticipate mainstream currents in logic, by holding that the fundamental logical form of judgment is the assertion or denial of an existence claim rather than the predicative association of a property term with an object term. His proposal includes a translation scheme for converting subject-predicate judgments to logically equivalent existence judgments, as in the reduction of "All Greeks are human" to "There are no non-human Greeks." The paraphrase reflects his interest in logic primarily as a vehicle of ontology. Simons explains Brentano's simplified formal notation for expressing

existence and nonexistence judgments, introduces primitive Brentanian logical inference rules, and offers a series of formal demonstrations related to classical valid syllogisms and sentences with existential import. He considers the potential applications of Brentano's logic, which he relates to Stanisław Leśniewski's ontology, taking the measure of its importance for the history of nonsymbolic logic, particularly in the philosophy of Husserl, Meinong, and Twardowski.

The taxonomy of psychological phenomena in Brentano's theory of mind is examined by Kevin Mulligan in "Brentano on the Mind." Mulligan introduces Brentano's analysis of the mind as the most detailed description of mental phenomena, including their parts and interrelations, ever provided before the twentieth century. He admires the minute divisions of the mind's awareness of space, time, sensing, sensory perception, internal perception, presentations, judging, inferring, desiring, feeling, consciousness, and the self in Brentano's phenomenology. He finds Brentano's analyses intimately connected with his descriptions of the objects of mental phenomena, such as colors, shapes, sounds, and the like, and with accounts of intentional relations between mental phenomena and their objects. Such characterizations of the structures and interrelations of thoughts constitute the application of an approach to the philosophy of mind that Brentano alternatively called "descriptive psychology," "psychognosy," and "phenomenology," and which he carefully distinguished from "explanatory" or "genetic" psychology, that seeks to provide causal accounts of psychological phenomena in what is recognized today as cognitive science. Mulligan emphasizes the ontological framework within which Brentano develops the principles of his descriptive psychology, and the empiricist epistemology to which he is irrevocably committed. He explains Brentano's concept of inner perception as it relates to his philosophical psychology, and looks in detail at Brentano's fundamental distinction between presentations, judgments, and emotions, and considers his phenomenology of time consciousness, the emotions, crucial to Brentano's value theory, and the self. He concludes that it is impossible to understand intentionalist theories of mind from Meinong and Husserl to later phenomenology without understanding Brentano's pioneering philosophical researches in descriptive psychology.

Dale Jacquette in "Brentano's Concept of Intentionality" considers Brentano's early immanent intentionality or in-existence thesis.

Brentano describes intentionality as "the mark of the mental," but does not explain the ontic status of intended objects, which many critics have observed he conflates with internal thought contents. The impact of his concept of intentionality on the course of phenomenology and the philosophy of mind has been substantial, giving rise to several distinct schools of intentionalist philosophy that departed significantly from his own early immanence intentionality thesis. Jacquette considers Brentano's changing view of intentionality, from his early immanence model with its implicit psychologism, against which Brentano vigorously objected, but never seems to have fully understood, to his doctrine of intended real particulars, in light of his empiricist methodology in descriptive psychology and later reist metaphysics. He concludes that Brentano need not be regarded as unmindful of the deeper questions surrounding the ontology of intended objects, but as deliberately avoiding commitment to any particular characterization of their nature other than as the contents of thought in strict observance of his empirical methodology. The problem of psychologism looms in Brentano's philosophical psychology precisely because of his determination to remain agnostic about the metaphysical status of intended objects, refusing to say anything about their existence beyond describing them as the immediate internal psychological contents of thoughts.

Joseph Margolis further thematizes Brentano's doctrine of intentionality in his chapter, "Reflections on Intentionality." Margolis offers insight into the concept of intentionality not only from the standpoint of an historical scholar of Brentano's thought, but as a philosopher who has considered the advantages and disadvantages of several formulations of Brentano's central thesis. He situates Brentano's intentionality thesis historically in relation to Aristotle's psychology, later intentionalism in the medieval period, and modern philosophy, especially the Cartesian tradition. All of these in different ways were vitally important to Brentano's philosophical recovery of the intentional, although his obligations to his predecessors are complex. Touching on key aspects of the aftermath of Brentano's *Psychology*, Margolis tracks subtleties in Brentano's changing conception of intentionality through his writings and as the intentionality doctrine was understood, adapted, and transformed by his students and critics. Margolis raises the problem of the ontic