

Introduction.

Why Brentano?

This is a book about the late-nineteenth-century/early-twentieth-century Austro-German philosopher Franz Brentano. It attempts to present Brentano's philosophical system, especially as it pertains to the connection between mind and reality, in terms that would be natural to contemporary analytic philosophers; to develop Brentano's central ideas where they are overly programmatic or do not take into account philosophical developments that have taken place since Brentano's death a century ago; and to offer a partial defense of Brentano's system as quite plausible and in any case extraordinarily creative and thought-provoking.

Why write a book about Brentano? For me personally, the primary motivation to study Brentano in detail has been the combination of creativity and plausibility I have found in his work. It seems to me filled with gems that are not so much under-appreciated as virtually unknown by contemporary analytic philosophers. To convince the reader of this is the mandate of the bulk of this book. But there are also metaphilosophical as well as historical reasons to take interest in Brentano. Historically, Brentano's influence runs much deeper, at a subterranean level, than a cursory acquaintance with the prehistory of twentieth-century philosophy might suggest. Metaphilosophically, Brentano's conception of philosophy itself – how and why it is to be done – merits attentive consideration. For Brentano combines the clarity and precision of the analytic philosopher with the sweeping vision of the continental philosopher. He pays careful attention to important distinctions, conscientiously defines key notions, presents precise

arguments for his claims, judiciously considers potential objections to them, and in general proceeds in a very methodical manner – yet he does so not as an end in itself, but as a *means* to something else. The *end* in the service of which he employs these analytical means is the crafting of a grand philosophical system in the classical sense, attempting to produce nothing less than a unified theory of the true, the good, and the beautiful.

The book's primary goal is to make clear to the reader both the grand system Brentano pursued and the analytical means he employed in this pursuit. A further task is to consider the plausibility of various components of the system and propose fixes and improvements where possible. This introduction, meanwhile, has two tasks. In §1, I develop a little more the historical and metaphilosophical themes just aired. In §2, I offer a roadmap to the book and address some scholarly matters pertaining to sources, translations, and so on.

1. Brentano's Significance

This section presents succinctly the historical and metaphilosophical significance I find in Brentano. I start (§1.1) with a bit of historical background about Brentano, for those interested; this part can be safely skipped, from a purely philosophical standpoint. I then (§1.2) try to explain why I take Brentano to be such an important philosopher, in terms of his conception of how philosophy should be done and what the point of doing it is.

1.1. Historical Significance: The Brentano School and Beyond

Brentano was born in a small Bavarian village in 1838 and in his youth was mostly home-schooled. By age 24 he had submitted his doctoral dissertation (on Aristotle on existence) in Tübingen, and at 26 he was ordained as a Catholic priest in Würzburg. Two years later Brentano defended his 'habilitation' (on Aristotle's psychology) and became a philosophy professor at Würzburg. Brentano's alienation

from Catholicism started early on, but was exacerbated when the Vatican adopted the dogma of Papal infallibility in 1870. Thinking this dogma absurd, Brentano started delving into past dogmas and found that many of them were actually inconsistent. By 1873, he withdrew from the priesthood, and in connection with that had to resign his professorship in Würzburg. The following year he was appointed full professor in Vienna. When he married in 1880, in contravention of rules for ex-priests, he had to resign his Viennese professorship as well. He continued to teach in Vienna as a sort of unpaid adjunct ('*Privatdozent*') until 1895. He then moved to Florence, and ultimately died in Zurich in 1917.

Brentano's oeuvre divides into two very different parts. There is the limited number of works he published during his lifetime, which are all extremely methodical and analytic in style. And there is the wealth of posthumous material published by devoted students and students' students, material which is often messy, sketchy, and coalesced from a motley collection of sources. Someone who reads one of Brentano's posthumous books might get the impression of a creative but undisciplined thinker stumbling from one exciting idea to the next. But one only needs to read a few pages from Brentano's magnum opus, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (Brentano 1873), to realize he was a bona fide analytic philosopher thirty years before Russell and Moore. Not only did his style resemble Moore's and Russell's in its clarity and precision, at a substantive level his sense of bringing forth a renewal of philosophy was tied up with vehement opposition to German idealism – just as theirs was suffused with rejection of British idealism.

One could argue that Brentano not only presaged early British analytic philosophy, but actually played a causal role in its inception. The Cambridge philosopher George Stout was thoroughly acquainted with, and influenced by, Brentano's work. In 1896, Stout published a book titled *Analytic Psychology* (Stout 1896), which closely follows Brentano's *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* thematically, organizationally, and sometimes doctrinally. Intriguingly, in 1894 Stout was the tutor at Cambridge of both Moore and Russell, and both read *Analytic Psychology* carefully. They must therefore have been well aware of Brentano from

the outset. Russell repeatedly discusses Brentano's 'doctrine of intentionality' in *The Analysis of Mind* (Russell 1921). Moore sings the praises of Brentano's metaethical work in the preface to *Principia Ethica* and engages with it in a review to be discussed in Chap. 8 (Moore 1903a, 1903b).¹

In the US, Brentano's thought was a late arrival. In 1937, his quasi-student Hugo Bergman delivered a lecture on Brentano at the Harvard Philosophical Society (Bergman forthcoming).² In it he emphasized Brentano's view that the method of philosophy is continuous with the method of science (Brentano 1866) – what after Quine (1951) came to be known in analytic circles as 'naturalism.' Since Quine lectured at Harvard already from 1934, one could only speculate about his presence at Bergman's lecture. A year after that lecture, Roderick Chisholm arrived at Harvard as a first-year graduate student. It is during his doctoral work there that Chisholm was first exposed to Brentano, in a seminar by Edwin Boring. Some years later, reading Russell's *Analysis of Mind*, he was drawn to Brentano's work on intentionality and started reading Brentano himself (Chisholm 1997: 7-8). He would later become Brentano's chief American advocate (see especially Chisholm 1952, 1982, 1986). In the seventies and eighties, Chisholm spawned a number of students whose work focused on Brentano (notably Susan Krantz Gabriel, Linda McAlister, and Lynn Pasquerella) or at least centrally addressed him (Dale Jacquette, Matthias Steup). Chisholm's last student, Dean Zimmerman, discussed in his 1992 dissertation (on extended simples) Brentano's mereology and topology in some detail (see Zimmerman 1992, 1996a, 1996b).³

Brentano's most direct influence, however, was on the European continent. It is there that arose the 'Brentano School,' which was a live philosophical framework, especially in Austro-Hungary and later in Austria and Czechoslovakia, more or less until the German invasion and occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1939 forced Oskar Kraus and Georg Katkov into exile (more on those two momentarily).

Brentano's most celebrated student is Husserl, who of course came to exercise momentous influence on European philosophy. Husserl spent 1884-86 in

Vienna working with Brentano, who then sent him to finish his studies in Halle with Carl Stumpf, Brentano's very first student. (Brentano had lost his professorship by then and could not supervise doctoral students himself.) Husserl and Brentano exchanged letters until about a year before Brentano's death (Husserl 1994), whereafter Husserl wrote a touching piece of 'reminiscences' about his old teacher (Husserl 1919). Reportedly Husserl once said, 'without Brentano I could not have written a word of philosophy' (Brück 1933: 3).⁴ In addition to Husserl, Stumpf had a number of relatively high-profile students, some of whom went on to be central figures of Gestalt psychology (notably Koffka, Köhler, and Wertheimer).⁵ And indeed, both phenomenology and Gestalt psychology clearly bear Brentano's imprint. (At this point I avoid getting into actual ideas, so just trust me on this!)

Brentano's other major student was Alexius Meinong, known to analytic philosophers mostly for his ontology of nonexistent objects (Meinong 1904). In fact, Meinong made important contributions to a range of research areas cast as central by Brentano, such as value theory, the classification of mental phenomena, and the theory of consciousness (see Meinong 1894, 1902, 1906 respectively). Meinong studied with Brentano from 1875-78 and wrote under him his *Habilitationsschrift* (on Hume and nominalism). Although their personal relationship was rather tense (Marek 2017), as a professor in Graz Meinong supervised a number of students who took on Brentanian themes, including two of Brentano's own students, Christian Ehrenfels and Alois Höfler, whom Brentano referred to him in the early eighties. In addition, Meinong taught a number of prominent psychologists (e.g., Stephan Witasek) and had a number of Italian students (e.g., Vittorio Benussi) who went on to establish something of a Brentanian strand in Italian philosophy (see Albertazzi and Poli 1993).

Brentano's most loyal student was probably Anton Marty, who studied with him already in Würzburg and who developed a philosophy of language modeled to a large extent on Brentano's philosophy of mind (Marty 1908). Marty established in Prague a veritable Brentanian orthodoxy, raising generations of students on a steady diet of Brentanian doctrine and method. Marty's students include the three

philosophers who went on to edit and publish most of Brentano's posthumous books: Oskar Kraus, Alfred Kastil, and Franziska Mayer-Hillebrand. All three taught at some point at Innsbruck, which for many decades constituted a sort of Brentanian 'franchise' (Baumgartner 2017). Kraus had his own series of Brentanian students – notably the creative Russian philosopher Georg Katkov (see, e.g., Katkov 1930) – who represent a third generation of Brentanian philosophers (if we take Brentano himself as Generation Zero). Other students of Marty's included the philosopher of art Emil Utitz, the godfather of Israeli philosophy Hugo Bergman, and even Franz Kafka and his friend and editor Max Brod. (All four were schoolmates, born into German-speaking Jewish families in Prague in 1883-4.) For many years, a weekly meeting of these and other Marty students at the Café Louvre in Prague (where one can still get a very good schnitzel!) was dedicated to discussing various minutiae of Brentano exegesis. Arguably, the main obstacle to the philosophical growth of the Brentano School in Prague and Innsbruck, accounting for its eventual atrophy, was its excessively reverential approach to the master's teachings.⁶

One could go on and on about the further-flung influences of Brentano. He exercised considerable influence on Polish philosophy, stubbornly analytic in its character, via his student Kasimierz Twardowski.⁷ One of his students, Tomáš Masaryk, was the first president of Czechoslovakia and one of a handful of twentieth-century intellectuals who served as heads of state. Freud followed Brentano's lectures in Vienna and in one letter describes himself as a Brentano student (Merlan 1945: 375). Rudolf Steiner, the esoteric thinker and inspirer of the Waldorf-Steiner educational approach, followed Brentano's seminar on 'practical philosophy' and was strongly influenced by him (Steiner 1917 Chap. 3). Thus the tentacles of Brentanian thought run deep through philosophy on the European continent, reach Anglo-American analytic philosophy, and go beyond philosophy to Gestalt psychology, psychoanalysis, and pedagogy.

This book takes a decidedly analytic approach to Brentano's thought, if for no other reason than that this is how Brentano himself meant it. Although he did not use the expression 'analytic philosophy,' he both practiced and preached a style of

philosophy characterized by no-fluff prose that puts a premium on clarity and precision and proceeding methodically from a clear statement of a central thesis, through consideration of arguments in its favor and objections against it, to an approximately impartial assessment of the thesis' overall plausibility. It is a style of philosophy that makes assertions about the phenomena themselves rather than about previous thinkers' texts about the phenomena. In all these ways it bears the unmistakable mark of analytic philosophy.

1.2. *Metaphilosophical Optimism*

Analytic philosophy faces today two major internal challenges: hyper-specialization and excessive technophilia. The phenomenon of specialization is not peculiar to (analytic) philosophy, of course. Specialization is on the rise throughout the sciences and the humanities. On the whole, this is a positive phenomenon, indeed an inevitable byproduct of intellectual progress: the more knowledge we acquire, the more we need to zero in on as yet unknown details. To that extent, the kind of specialization we have witnessed in academic philosophy over the past century, too, can be seen as a welcome symptom of underlying progress. On the other hand, philosophy is dissimilar to other disciplines insofar as understanding the 'Big Picture' is inherent to the aims of philosophical inquiry. Wilfred Sellars put it crisply: 'The aim of philosophy, abstractly formulated, is to understand how things in the broadest possible sense of the term hang together in the broadest possible sense of the term' (Sellars 1963: 1). Thus while specialization in every other discipline is an unmitigated good, in philosophy it invites a measure of ambivalence: it is a symptom of intellectual progress, but its effect may undermine the distinctive aim of philosophy. Moreover, one worries that such specialization reflects an unfortunate combination of increased *knowledge* with decreased *understanding* – especially if a central part of what (philosophical) understanding consists in is precisely seeing how different bits of knowledge 'hang together.'

Not unrelatedly, analytic philosophy of the last quarter-century also exhibits increased emphasis on technical work. The most flourishing areas of twenty-first-

century philosophical research have by and large been technically accented.⁸ And large tracts of philosophical research are dedicated to the developing and perfecting of apparatus rather than to seeking insights that target the deep nexus of the perennial problems of philosophy. Such research is seductive insofar as it offers precise and unambiguous answers to the questions it addresses. It provides objective standards of quality assessment readily applicable to philosophers' output. If one is insecure about whether open-ended ruminations on knowledge of the external world, the mind-body problem, determinism and free will, the existence of abstract objects, and so forth are of genuine and lasting value, one would be comforted by engaging in the kind of work which produces concrete results (say, a proof in confirmation theory) instead of roaming in a constant state of intellectual disorientation through the blasted landscape of those intractable-seeming perennial problems of philosophy.

At bottom, I suspect the wave of technophilia washing through current analytic philosophy is a symptom of an underlying malaise: a deep skepticism about what philosophy can really achieve and what value its achievements really have. In the background is a subtle hopelessness about the prospects for genuine illumination on the philosophical core of the aforementioned perennial problems, and more deeply about whether philosophy (as compared to physics and biology, say) can generate quantum leaps in our understanding of the universe. Given twenty-five hundred years of trying to settle the mind-body problem, or to establish the existence or nonexistence of abstract objects, and given war and famine and misery and desperation in various corners of the globe, should philosophers not try to contribute something more tangible to the society bankrolling these ruminations of theirs, which by the way never issue in any resolution of anything? After all, it is not an altogether unrespectable metaphilosophical position that the perennial problems of philosophy simply do not *have* the kinds of answer philosophers seek for them.

Whatever its merits, this line of thought was not shared by Brentano, who apparently radiated an almost messianic optimism about the value of philosophical

activity. His view – highly plausible, as it seems to me – was that this kind of skepticism and hopelessness about philosophy is but a cyclical phenomenon.⁹ More importantly, when we wonder what philosophy might be good *for*, the answer depends on what we want to obtain *ultimately*. Western societies are currently laboring under the adopted goal of increasing *economic growth*. But if economic growth has any value, surely it is only *instrumental* value (increase in the amount of stuff produced does not inherently capture the meaning of life!). Utilitarians have a more perspicuous conception of that which we ultimately want, namely, maximum pleasure and minimum pain. But as we will see in Chap. 9, while Brentano’s ethics adopts the general form of a consequentialist theory, it rejects the notion that pleasure is our *only* final end. Another end – of greater value, actually – is *knowledge of reality*. Insofar as it is the mandate of philosophy to synthesize the knowledge obtained in all other disciplines and produce a regimented total theory of the world, philosophy delivers a product with the highest intrinsic value. This is what economic growth is *for* – it gives us means to make people happier, and even more importantly for Brentano, it gives us means to develop our unified, total theory of the world. Crucially, having such a theory is not valuable (only) for making anyone happier. It is valuable *in and of itself*.

Furthermore, genuine progress in philosophy is possible, though for Brentano philosophical quantum leaps are a cyclical phenomenon too.¹⁰ The progress Brentano has in mind is of the robustly realist kind, consisting of actually closing in on the truth. It is true perhaps that in comparison to scientific progress, philosophical progress produces less of a consensus within the community of inquiry. But from a Brentanian standpoint, consensus is merely a sociological *symptom* of scientific progress, not what scientific progress consists in. And if philosophical progress does not exhibit a similar symptom, that by itself does not impugn the existence of underlying progress. Suppose that Avicenna’s philosophy, say, provides the right framework for producing a preponderance of true philosophical beliefs. Then for Brentano any philosophers working within the

Avicennist framework are carrying the torch of philosophical progress, however anonymously they may be laboring.

I do not personally share Brentano's robustly realist conception of philosophical progress. My view, very roughly, is that philosophical progress consists in explicitation and articulation of the structure of logical space, not in closing in on a 'true' neighborhood within that space. I also do not share Brentano's view that knowledge of reality is intrinsically valuable. At the same time, I hold that philosophical insight affords a kind of delight which is both intrinsically valuable and irreproducible by any non-philosophical means. To that extent, I share Brentano's sunny optimism about philosophy.

Although as we will see Brentano did belabor the technical details of some of his theories, this remained a secondary goal for him. The primary goal was to fashion as stable and as unified a framework for a total theory of the world as he could. In other words, working out the technical apparatus was for him of crucial importance, but only as a *means*. The *end* was to produce a unified theory of everything. Indeed, as I hope to convince the reader by the end of Chap. 10, Brentano actually had a *grand system* in the classical sense of a unified account of the true, the good, and the beautiful. As a committed empiricist, Brentano had no truck with Hegel-style systems that proceed from the top down, imposing theory on the phenomena. Rather, he believed in evidence-driven theorization progressing through a series of local studies – but all the while having in sight their ultimate integration into a cohesive, total system.

In sum, in Brentano's conception of philosophy, specialization and technical sophistication are both of crucial importance, but only as means. As long as we keep in mind a clear and constant awareness of what is an end and what is a means in philosophical work, *hyper*-specialization and technophilia should be kept at bay. For me, this is another reason to take a close look at Brentano's philosophical work – to see what it looks like when a philosopher adopts the standards of clarity and

precision dear to analytic philosophy, but does so in the service of the more romantic goal of constructing a stable total theory of the world.

2. Plan of the Book

This section offers a brief overview of the coming chapters (§2.1) and addresses some scholarly and methodological matter that may not, I confess, fascinate readers ill versed in Brentano scholarship (§2.2).

2.1. Roadmap

As we will see, Brentano's philosophical system is grounded in his philosophy of mind. Accordingly, this book is divided into three parts. The first part discusses the core of Brentano's highly sophisticated philosophy of mind, the second the way his philosophy of mind grounds his 'theoretical philosophy,' and the third the way it grounds his 'practical philosophy.' Each of the three parts is itself divided into three chapters (an organization that would doubtless please Brentano's aesthetic sensibilities!).

The first part includes a chapter on consciousness, a chapter on intentionality, and a chapter on the different 'modes' of conscious intentionality. The rationale for starting with consciousness is as follows. As noted, Brentano's philosophy of mind is the keystone of his system. Crucially, however, Brentano holds that all mental states are conscious. As we will see, this rather implausible claim can be excised from his system without much repercussion. But what it means is that his philosophy of mind is at bottom really just a philosophy of consciousness. Accordingly, the book's opening chapter is an interpretation and defense of Brentano's theory of consciousness. The chapter attempts to do two things: first, to engage the secondary literature on Brentano's theory of consciousness and offer a new interpretation based on a particular understanding of Brentano's mereology; second, to show that Brentano's theory of consciousness, as interpreted in the

chapter, is actually superior in some key respects to leading accounts of consciousness in the contemporary literature.

Chap. 2 is about intentionality, the notion Brentano is best known for. Because this area of Brentano scholarship is well trodden, there is a special premium on saying something really *new* on the topic. In this chapter, I push two ideas. The first is that the idea of ‘intentionality as the mark of the mental,’ popularized by Chisholm, should really be understood, given what was shown in the previous chapter, as ‘intentionality as the mark of the *conscious*.’ More specifically, I provide textual evidence that Brentano took intentionality to be a *phenomenal* feature of conscious states, and to that extent anticipated the currently widely discussed notion of ‘phenomenal intentionality.’ The second line I push is a nonrelational, broadly ‘adverbialist’ interpretation of Brentano’s *mature* theory of intentionality, as presented in various writings from the final decade of his life (and three decades after the publication of his *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, often the main source consulted in relevant discussions).

The upshot of the first two chapters is that there is a kind of conscious intentionality, or felt aboutness, which for Brentano is the essential characteristic of the mental. Chap. 3 offers a systematic reconstruction of Brentano’s taxonomy of kinds of mental state, which is grounded in a more basic taxonomy of *modes* of conscious intentionality. Brentano’s notion of intentional mode is fundamental to his entire philosophy, but is relatively under-discussed in the secondary literature. Accordingly this is a rather lengthy chapter that tries to get into the finer details of Brentano psychological taxonomy. What makes the notion of intentional mode so important, as we get to see later in the book, is that there are two modes of intentionality – what Brentano calls ‘judgment’ and ‘interest’ – that serve as a basis for his theoretical philosophy and practical philosophy respectively.

So much for the book’s first part, titled ‘Mind.’ The second part, titled ‘Being,’ starts with a chapter on Brentano’s heterodox theory of judgment, moves on to Brentano’s metaontology (his theory of what we do when we say that something

exists), and closes with a chapter on Brentano's ontology (his theory of what actually exists).

The theory of judgment is so heterodox, in fact, that it is hard to even make sense of it within the framework of current philosophy of mind. Accordingly, the main contribution of Chap. 4 is to offer a way of thinking of Brentano's theory of judgment in the terminology of today's philosophy of mind. In particular, I propose to understand the fundamental idea as the thesis that as far as the psychological reality of belief is concerned, all our beliefs are beliefs-in rather than beliefs-that. Modern philosophy of mind presupposes exactly the opposite: belief-that is taken to be basic, and reports such as 'Jimmy believes in ghosts' are construed as elliptical for 'Jimmy believes that there are ghosts.' Brentano's surprising claim is that *the opposite* is true: reports such as 'Jimmy believes that some ghosts are scary' are just misleading formulations for 'Jimmy believes in scary ghosts,' while reports such as 'Jimmy believes that all ghosts are scary' should be paraphrased as 'Jimmy disbelieves in non-scary ghosts.' Having formulated the view, I spend much of the chapter trying to push as far as possible a defense of it. In particular, I consider what kinds of paraphrase into (dis)belief-in talk can be offered for *difficult cases* of apparent belief-that (negative beliefs, modal beliefs, disjunctive beliefs, and so on). I close by conceding that there are two major liabilities to this extraordinary theory of Brentano's. The main *advantage* of the theory is to become apparent in the subsequent two chapters: it provides the foundations for a responsible brand of nominalist ontology.

Chap. 5 is about Brentano's highly original metaontology. Brentano embraces the Kantian thought that 'existence is not a real predicate,' but draws from it a surprising lesson. According to Brentano, to say that something exists is to say that the right attitude to take toward it is that of *believing in it*. For example, to say that ducks exist is not to characterize ducks in any way, but is rather to say that it is appropriate or fitting to believe in ducks. (Likewise, to say that the ether does not exist is to say that the right attitude to take toward the ether is that of disbelieving

in it.) Here we start to see the sense in which Brentano's metaphysics is grounded in his philosophy of mind, specifically his theory of judgment.

Chap. 6 is about Brentano's ontology – what he actually think there is. The short answer is that he thinks there are only concrete particulars and mereological sums thereof. Properties and states of affairs are eliminated. However, in order to do justice to the phenomena, Brentano ends up embracing certain quite unusual concrete particulars. We will see the details in due course, but Brentano's basic innovation is this: in addition to ducks, there are also (collocated with ducks) such things as brown-ducks and winged-ducks. Take a brown duck named Duckie. Where Duckie is, it is natural for us to say that there is only one concrete particular, Duckie, but several states of affairs, including Duckie's-being-brown and Duckie-having-wings (states of affairs that have the properties of being brown and being winged as constituents). But according to Brentano, as I interpret him, in Duckie's location there are *many* collocated concrete particulars: Duckie, brown-Duckie, winged-Duckie, and so on. At the same time, there are no states of affairs and no properties (nor property instances). The chapter attempts to make this view clearer and more systematic and to defend its plausibility. Here too, I identify two major costs, but also point out that accepting those costs enables a highly elegant and parsimonious ontology. I close the chapter with a discussion of a virtually forgotten manuscript by Brentano, dictated two years before his death, in which he appears to anticipate the kind of monism about material objects that has attracted so much attention in recent metaphysics.

The book's third part, titled 'Value,' is dedicated to Brentano's practical philosophy and is structured analogously to the second part: first there is a chapter on the crucial types of mental state we must understand in order to understand Brentano's theory of value, then a chapter on Brentano's metaethics (his theory of what we do when we say that something is good), and finally a chapter on Brentano's first-order normative ethics (his theory of what is actually good).

The chapter on the relevant type of mental state, Chap. 7, covers three phenomena that in modern philosophy of mind are often treated in separation: states of the will, emotional states, and pleasure and pain. The chapter tries to show that Brentano has a unified account of all three as characterized by a distinctive, inherently evaluative mode or attitude. Interestingly, in today's philosophy of mind the account is widely accepted for certain mental states but not others. In particular, it is quite popular for such states as desire and intention, but gets less play for emotions. In the chapter, I try to leverage the view's popularity for desire to argue that it should extend rather well to emotion and pleasure/pain. The unified account of all three phenomena does raise a problem of how to *distinguish* them; I appeal to relatively unknown manuscripts of Brentano's to address this problem.

Chap. 8 focuses on Brentano's metaethics. In it, I try to show that Brentano's account of what it means to say that something is good closely parallels his account of what it means to say that something exists. There, the view was that 'ducks exist' means that the right attitude to take toward ducks is that of believing in them. Here, the view is that 'generosity is good' means that the right attitude to take toward generosity is a positive state of *interest* – what we call today a 'pro attitude.' Here we see that Brentano anticipated the currently 'hot' fitting-attitude account of value. The chapter's main focus is on distinguishing Brentano's version of the fitting-attitude theory from later versions. It considers potential advantages of Brentano's version, as well as potential costs. It also discusses Brentano's main *argument* for his fitting-attitude account, which, strikingly, is essentially Moore's open question argument – but developed at least a decade earlier. Toward the end of the chapter, the question is taken up of how one might be able to distinguish *moral* from *aesthetic* goodness. To answer this question, I go into Brentano's aesthetics and his theory of beauty. The theory parallels Brentano's account of the true and the good and may be called a 'fitting delight theory of beauty': very roughly, to say that a thing is beautiful is to say that it is fitting to be delighted with it.

Chap. 9, presents Brentano's normative ethics. Brentano's is an old-fashioned ethical theory, the kind of bold theory that tries to guide us in life – to tell us *what to*

do. Brentano's consequentialist answer is that we should maximize the good in the world, that is, maximize that which it is fitting to have a pro attitude toward. The question is: what *is* it fitting to have a pro attitude toward, ultimately? Brentano's response is to list *four* different things that are intrinsically good, that is, merit a pro attitude in and of themselves. Granting that pleasure is one such thing, he adds three others: (i) conscious activity, (ii) knowledge, and (iii) fitting attitudes. The chapter presents this ethical system and Brentano's case for it, defending it in some places and sounding a more skeptical note in others.

The book's final and concluding chapter pulls together the main ideas from the previous chapters to present the general structure of Brentano's overall philosophical system: his structurally symmetric theories of the true, the good, and the beautiful. As we will have seen by then, for Brentano, we grasp the natures of the true, the good, and the beautiful by grasping (i) three types of mental state – belief, pro attitude, and delight – and (ii) the standard of fittingness for each. The true is that which it is fitting believe, and more poignantly, the existent is that *in* which it is fitting to believe; the good is that toward which it is fitting to have a pro attitude; the beautiful is that with which it is fitting to be delighted. Some of the notions used in these three formulations can be understood in terms of others. For example, the notion of delight can be analyzed in terms of a certain combination of first-order awareness and second-order pleasure taken in that awareness. Ultimately, however, I show that Brentano's system involves five primitive notions. These cannot be understood via analysis. The only way to grasp the nature of the phenomena they denote, for Brentano, is by direct experiential acquaintance. Thus the relevant experiential acquaintance ultimately underpins our grasp of the true, the good, and the beautiful.

2.2. *Methodological*

I have spoken time and again of 'Brentano's system.' But those familiar with Brentano's career may find this strange, given that the man continuously changed his mind on just about everything. Husserl tells us that Brentano's thinking 'never

stood still' (Husserl 1919: 50). And indeed, in Brentano's writings one can often find different views in different texts. How can one speak of *a* system given this?

Here is how I understand what Brentano was about. He had a set of core convictions on which he never seriously changed his mind. These include prominently the notions that intentionality is the mark of the conscious, that there are three fundamental modes of conscious intentionality, and that the true, the good, and the beautiful can be made intelligible only in terms of the fittingness of reactions characterized by those modes. How to construct a stable system around these convictions, in a way that does justice to the phenomena, was the defining challenge of Brentano's adult life. In pursuit of this project, he developed many different lines of thought, in an attempt to see which will serve the purpose best. There are often tensions, or even inconsistencies, between these lines of thought, but this is partly because they were not intended to be held *together*. And some of these lines of thought he endorsed more fully than others. Finally, there is a collection of views closest to his heart (that is, most fully endorsed) that together do constitute a stable system. These views were likely held all at once, with a reasonable degree of confidence, from around 1904 to 1915 – but I suspect were held at other times as well, perhaps with lesser conviction. It is the system arising from this coalition of views that I present here.

In deciding which views are closest to Brentano's heart, and more generally in developing my interpretation of Brentano's system, I have followed a number of methodological principles. First and foremost, I give priority to the texts Brentano published in his lifetime. Brentano's writings can be divided into three kinds: (i) works he published himself during his lifetime, (ii) works published posthumously by others, and (iii) unpublished manuscripts (mostly archived in Graz, Würzburg, and at Harvard's Houghton Library). There is reason to put interpretive premium on the material Brentano himself decided to publish, as more likely to reflect what he was willing to actually endorse – all the more so given that Brentano apparently instructed his students to publish sparingly, and only material in genuinely good

shape.¹¹ So, whenever writings from groups (i) appear to clash with writings from group (ii) and (iii), I have given greater weight to the former.

Secondly, I have taken special care with materials from group (ii). Many of these works were heavily and intrusively edited by the three aforementioned Innsbruck-based editors of Brentano's literary estate (his '*Nachlass*'). Some of the materials were originally lecture notes not necessarily written in full sentences. Others were short fragments dictated by Brentano in the last years of his life, when he was functionally blind. To create intelligible texts out of these materials, the editors essentially needed to do some of the writing themselves. In some cases they took paragraphs from different fragments and put them together into new texts they deemed reflective of Brentano's ideas. Obviously, this process is fraught with risks, and whenever I have used this material, I made sure to consult the original manuscripts to ensure as much as possible that Brentano's ideas are faithfully presented.

Thirdly, when quoting Brentano's work, I have virtually always relied on my own translation, though informed and often helped by the existing English translations. Translating German into English is a delicate affair: English does not work well with long, complex sentences embedding multiple nested phrases – but that is just what German writing *is*. Wisely, the English translators working with Chisholm have by and large chosen not to respect the German grammar of Brentano's sentences, instead breaking long Germanic sentences into several more straightforward English sentences. This renders the English texts more legible, but in a way it involves a measure of rewriting as well. It incorporates a certain understanding of what the sentence is trying to say. For the most part, the translators' understanding matched my own – but not always. In particular, the fact that I have a specific systemic interpretation of what Brentano is trying to do at the level of big picture perforce affects my understanding of individual sentences – whereas the translators had no need to share my systemic interpretation of Brentano.

In some cases, I also think the common translation of certain key Brentanian phrases are misguided. Perhaps the most striking example is Brentano's locution *als richtig charakterisiert*, which plays a crucial role in Brentano's metaethics as well as metaontology. English translators, I suspect under Chisholm's guidance, have translated this as 'experienced as being correct.' This seems to me to commit to a substantive thesis that Brentano may not have shared, and that on philosophical grounds I think he would do well not to adopt (for details, see Chap. 5 and 8). Accordingly, I offer a more literal translation of *als richtig charakterisiert* as 'with the character of correctness.'¹² At the same time, my interpretation of Brentano's metaethics and metaontology sees his use of *richtig* as in some ways closer to 'fitting' than to 'correct' (here my preferred translation is in a sense *less* literal). There are other cases in which individual words receive a different translation in my hands. Thus, another central Brentanian notion is that of *Evidenz*, which is universally translated as 'evidence' but which I translate as 'self-evidence.'¹³ *Bewusstsein* is universally translated as 'consciousness,' but in some contexts 'awareness' seems to me more apt.¹⁴ There are other examples, but where the choice of adopting a nonstandard translation reflects an element of interpretation, I flag this in my discussion.

Because I use my own translations, I refer first to pages of a German edition, followed by the pages in the English translation in brackets (when it exists).

I should mention that throughout the book, I use a device foreign to the annals of translation: when a key German word is not perfectly captured by any one English word, I offer in my translation several relevant English words, separated by slash signs. The idea is that many German words (like non-German words!) have a nuanced meaning better understood when one contemplates what is common across several English words that may legitimately be taken to render it. The device is intended to give a better sense of the original word's 'living sense.' It is telling, I find, that when asked in everyday life for the meaning of some word in a foreign language, we usually proffer two or three words in the home language. Only rarely

and for the simplest words do we offer a single perfect match. I have simply decided to do the same in writing.

I should not hide that my intense work on Brentano over the past half-decade has filled me with something of an adolescent admiration for him. Indeed, I have come to the opinion that Brentano is one of a handful of towering geniuses in the history of philosophy, on a par with the likes of Aristotle and Kant – though rarely if ever mentioned in one breath with such figures. I hope this book manages to convey the grounds for my enthusiasm to the reader. At the same time, I have tried to rescue Brentano scholarship from the reverential approach that characterized so much work within the Brentano School. One aspect of doing so is not to adopt wholesale Brentano’s own terminology in presenting and discussing his ideas, instead imposing on them (where possible) the terminology most natural to contemporary analytic philosophy. I suspect this exercise might seem to some Brentano scholars to do violence to Brentano’s own thought, and to some extent it surely does. The rationale behind, and ultimate justification for, the decision to do this violence is that it casts Brentano’s thought not only as a great historical edifice, but also as a *live philosophical program*.¹⁵

¹ On the link between Brentano, Stout, Russell, and Moore, see Valentine 2003, Nasim 2008, and Schaar 2013, 2017.

² Bergman was a direct student of Brentano’s favorite student, Anton Marty (more on his shortly), and visited Brentano in his summer house at least five times between 1905 and 1911 (Fréchette 2017), and the two exchanged letters for many years (see Bergmann 1946). As a Jew and a Zionist, Bergman’s professional prospects in Austro-Hungary were virtually nonexistent, and he eventually emigrated to Palestine, where in 1935 he became the first Rector of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

³ Outside analytic philosophy, there is also the context of American phenomenology. Marvin Farber, who studied with Husserl and founded *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (and then edited it until Chisholm took over in 1980), was fully aware of Brentano’s crucial role in the inception of Husserlian phenomenology (see Farber 1943).

⁴ Philosophically, Husserl's early phenomenology is largely derivative from Brentano's project of 'descriptive psychology,' the project of *describing* psychological phenomena before we start trying to *explain* them. (Compare: zoologists first describe the zoological phenomena, *then* try to develop explanatory theories about them.) Starting circa 1905, Husserl's phenomenology acquires a broadly Kantian, 'transcendental' dimension foreign to Brentano's thought. Nonetheless, the project retains the Brentanian traces of descriptive psychology.

⁵ As we will see already in Chap. 1, it is central to Brentano's mereology that at least some kinds of parthood involve the whole's priority to its parts – a theme taken up in part by Stumpf (1890) himself.

⁶ An aspect of this was neglect of developments elsewhere in the philosophical world. Kastil himself wondered about this aloud in a 1948 letter to Wittgenstein's editor Rush Rhees (Baumgartner 2017).

⁷ The latter was the teacher of the most prominent twentieth-century Polish philosophers, some of whom seem to have taken up Brentanian themes. The best known among them is Tarsky, who is known for developing the original deflationary theory of truth – though some argue that Brentano already had a deflationary theory (C. Parsons 2004, Brandl 2017), which Twardowski may have appreciated. Leśniewski developed the first formal mereology, but mereological thinking is already present in Brentano (see Chap. 1) and Twardowski (1894). Kotarbiński developed a brand of nominalism that he himself took to be inherited from Brentano (see Kotarbiński 1966). And yet, some scholars maintain that Brentano's main influence on Polish philosophy was in style rather than content, method rather than doctrine (see Betti 2017).

⁸ Consider some of the most flourishing areas of research in contemporary philosophy: in epistemology, formal epistemology and confirmation theory; in philosophy of science, highly specialized parts of the philosophy of physics, the philosophy of chemistry, and the like; in philosophy of mind, experimental philosophy and philosophy of cognitive science; in metaphysics, extremely technical issues in mereology and the ontology of material objects; in moral philosophy, decision theory, game theory, and increasingly technical concerns surrounding the regimentation of expressivist language.

⁹ Brentano actually had a comprehensive theory about the history of philosophy, according to which it proceeds in cycles of four recurring phases: the phase of genuine growth, the phase of popularization, the phase of skepticism, and the phase of gratuitous mysticism (Brentano 1895). I do not wish to endorse this somewhat odd and ham-fisted theory, with its seemingly megalomaniac subtext. (The point of the theory is that post-Kantian German idealism is the mystic phase of the last cycle before Brentano, and Brentano himself represents the renewal and regeneration of philosophy as the opening phase of a new cycle. It is possible to interpret Brentano's curious theory more charitably, though, as partly ironic, taking on a distinctly Hegelian form that makes it feel ham-fisted; this ingenious interpretation was suggested to me in conversation by Guillaume Fréchette.)

¹⁰ See [Note 9](#), and consider the kind of philosophical progress analytic philosophy witnessed around the 1970s. Sandwiched between the present technophilic phase and the logical-positivism-inspired one, fully a generation of exciting philosophical activity had addressed the core issues of philosophy, from direct-reference theory in philosophy of language and reliabilism in epistemology, through non-reductive materialism in philosophy of mind and the Armstrong-Lewis revival of systematic ontology, to virtue ethics in moral philosophy and Rawlsian liberalism in political philosophy.

¹¹ Consider this passage from a letter Husserl wrote to Brentano in 1889: 'My behavior to this point has demonstrated that the ambition to see my name in print as quickly and as often as possible has not driven me to premature publications. I am certain of your approval in this matter. I will only publish what I deem really useful (*nützlich*)...' (Ierna 2015: 71)

¹² I note that while the widely used English translation of Brentano 1889 is the 1969 translation by Chisholm and Elizabeth Schneewind, which indeed translates *als richtig charakterisiert* as ‘experienced as correct,’ there exists also a 1902 translation, by one Cecil Hague, which translates the same locution as ‘with the character of rightness.’

¹³ Although the English word ‘evidence’ has a meaning that suggest demonstrative force, its more dominant meaning suggests exactly the opposite – a non-demonstrative relationship between that which is evidence and that which it is evidence for (as when we say that the big footprints are evidence of a male burglar). The German word that best fits this dominant English sense of ‘evidence’ is *Beweis*, but it is clear that Brentano’s *Evidenz* is nothing like *Beweis* – it concerns precisely the demonstrative phenomenon. Hence my preference for ‘self-evidence.’ (Interestingly, this problem arises only for nouns. For the corresponding adjective the dominant meanings align much better: ‘evident’ means more or less the same as ‘self-evident’ in everyday English and suggests something with demonstrative force.)

¹⁴ English is generous in providing both ‘consciousness’ and ‘awareness’ – any languages, including German, have only one corresponding word, that is, only one word into which either ‘consciousness’ or ‘awareness’ would be translated. There are certain subtle differences, however, in particular the fact that the more dominant use of ‘awareness’ is as a transitive verb (although there is also an intransitive use) whereas the more dominant use of ‘consciousness’ is as a transitive verb (though there is also an intransitive use). This subtle difference is useful in capturing certain subtleties of Brentano’s theory of consciousness – see Chap. 1.

¹⁵ Work on this book was supported by the French National Research Agency’s grants ANR-11-0001-02 PSL* and ANR-10-LABX-0087. It was also supported, in an array of alternative ways, by my wife Lizzie, whose wise meta-level prompts have often helped me move forward when I felt stuck. Yet another type of support I have derived from the Brentano community at large, and in particular Arnaud Dewalque, Guillaume Fréchette, Kevin Mulligan, Hamid Taieb, and Mark Textor. I have also benefited from a pair of seminars on Brentano that I led at the *École normale supérieure* in Paris. I am grateful to the 30-odd students who participated in those seminars. Sadly I do not remember all their names, but here are those I remember: Mathilde Berger-Perrin, Iris Bernadac, Géraldine Carranante, Lucie Cheyer, Victor de Castelbajac, Lionel Djadaojee, Anna Giustina, Vincent Grandjean, Zdenek Lenner, Jean-Pierre Lesage, Valentin Lewandowski, Alice Martin, Florent Papin, Lylian Paquet, Manon Piette, Mikaël Quesseveur, Mathilde Tahar, and Justin Winzenrieth. Finally, I would also like to thank profusely the two anonymous referees for OUP, whose input improved the book considerably both at sentence level and with respect to key arguments, as well my friend and student Anna Giustina, whose input on various class lectures, conference talks, and chapter drafts has more than once saved me from a wrong turn and set me on the right course.