

Chapter 1.

Consciousness

This book makes two main *historical* claims. The first is that Franz Brentano's contributions to philosophy amounted to a philosophical *system*: they offer a unified, structurally symmetric account of the true, the good, and the beautiful. The second is that Brentano's system is grounded in his philosophy of mind. Philosophy of mind serves in it as *first philosophy*, in a sense that will come through in due course.

Importantly, however, Brentano held the problematic view that all mental life is conscious – there are no unconscious mental states. To that extent, his philosophy of mind is more precisely a philosophy of consciousness. Thus it is ultimately Brentano's theory of consciousness that serves as the basis for his entire philosophical system. This is why I open with a chapter on Brentano's account of the nature of consciousness. I argue that for Brentano, a conscious perception of a tree is a single mental state that can be (accurately) conceived of, or framed, either as a perception of a tree or as a perception *of a perception* of a tree. I further argue that this interpretation casts Brentano's theory as quite a bit more plausible than it is commonly taken to be – indeed more plausible than many modern theories of consciousness!

1. Phenomenal Consciousness and the Awareness Principle

Before starting, we should consider whether by 'consciousness' Brentano has in mind the notion that has attracted so much attention in contemporary philosophy of mind, namely, the notion of *phenomenal* consciousness, the what-it-is-like aspect of

experience. Obviously, Brentano does not use the *term* ‘phenomenal consciousness.’ And crucially, while some of the contemporary discussion of phenomenal consciousness has focused on purely sensory phenomena, for Brentano consciousness comes both in sensory and nonsensory varieties. (More on this in Chap. 3.) Nonetheless, I contend, it is reasonable to suppose that phenomenal consciousness is precisely the phenomenon his discussion targets.

On one view, the phenomenal notion of consciousness is the pre-theoretic notion familiar to each of us from our personal experience. This is the approach suggested by Block’s (1978) remark that the correct response to the question ‘What is phenomenal consciousness?’ is just ‘If you have to ask, you ain’t never gonna know.’ If this is how we conceive of phenomenal consciousness, then unless an author indicates otherwise, his or her discussion of consciousness probably targets phenomenal consciousness. Against this background, it would be natural to take Brentano to target phenomenal consciousness – since he in fact does not indicate otherwise.

Another view is that the phenomenal notion of consciousness is a highly technical notion – the notion of something that at least *appears* to be categorically different from physical reality, inducing an appearance of an *explanatory gap*. Thus, elsewhere Block suggests that we appeal to the explanatory gap ‘by way of pointing to [phenomenal] consciousness: *that’s* the entity to which the mentioned explanatory gap applies’ (Block 1995: 382).¹ Against *this* background, we should suppose that Brentano targets phenomenal consciousness only if the phenomenon he has in mind is that which appears so categorically different from matter as to raise the specter of an explanatory gap. It seems to me that this is indeed the phenomenon Brentano has in mind. In his *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (Brentano 1874), he writes:

In reality, physiological processes seem to differ from chemical and physical processes only in their greater complexity... [By contrast,] if one turns one’s attention from the outer to the inner realm (*Welt*), it feels like one has switched to a new realm. The phenomena are absolutely heterogeneous... (Brentano 1874: 71-2 [50-1])

This passage suggests that Brentano thinks vitalists were demonstrably wrong in holding that biological phenomena were *categorically* distinct from physical and chemical phenomena, involving something extra (the *élan vital*). In reality, the former differ from the latter only in *degree*, not in *kind* – their degree of complexity is simply higher. However, a genuinely categorical difference (‘absolute heterogeneity’) does characterize the gap between physical, chemical, and biological phenomena, on the one hand, and conscious phenomena, on the other. Here the difference ‘feels like’ one of kind, not degree.

Thus Brentano’s concern is clearly with phenomenal consciousness, whether understood technically or pre-theoretically. In saying this, I do not mean to claim that he is interested only in *sensory* consciousness. Rather, I mean that he is interested in that very phenomenon which we know more intimately than all others but which nonetheless creates an imposing sense of explanatory gap with the rest of reality. It is a separate question whether or not this phenomenon occurs only in the sensory domain.



The starting point of Brentano’s theory of consciousness is the following claim:

(C1) There is no unconscious consciousness.

As Brentano explicitly notes, this is not meant as a tautology (Brentano 1874: I, 143 [102]). But the only way C1 can be non-tautological is if the two consciousness-terms in it are used in different senses. Oddly, Brentano specifies the two senses only in a footnote:

We use the term ‘unconscious’ in two ways. First, in an active sense, speaking of a person who is not conscious of a thing; secondly, in a passive sense, speaking of a thing of which we are not conscious. (Brentano 1874: I, 143* [102‡])

The passive sense of ‘conscious’ may be understood as follows: a mental state M of a subject S is conscious_p iff S is conscious of M. The active sense is rather something like this: a mental state M of subject S is conscious_a iff M is a state of S’s

consciousness.² As Brentano makes clear toward the end of this footnote, the intended reading of C1 is:

(C2) There is no unconscious_p consciousness_a.

This thesis no longer carries the air of tautology. What it means is that no subject is in a state of consciousness of which she is not conscious. To further dissipate any appearance of triviality, let us replace one occurrence of a consciousness term with 'awareness' (since *Bewusstsein* corresponds to both 'consciousness' and 'awareness' in English). We obtain the following thesis:

(C3) For any mental state M of a subject S, if M is a state of S's consciousness, then S is aware of M.

I will call this the *awareness principle*, as it foreshadows David Rosenthal's (2005) 'transitivity principle.'³ Brentano's theorizing on consciousness grows out of the awareness principle. (I will conduct the discussion in terms of 'states' and not 'acts' – the latter is Brentano's preferred term – because of the prevalence of state talk in current philosophy of mind. There are of course important differences between states and acts, but they do not affect the goals of this chapter.)

Many different theories of consciousness are compatible with the awareness principle. They differ among them on two principal issues. The first concerns the nature of S's awareness of M. In particular, there is a choice to be made between perceptualist and intellectualist construals of this awareness. On one view, S is aware of M in a perception-like manner, as though shining a flashlight on M. On another view, S is aware of M in a thought-like manner, as though mentally describing M. The second issue concerns the metaphysical relationship between M and the awareness-of-M. On one view, the two are distinct: S is aware of M in virtue of being in some other mental state. On a second view, they are *not* distinct: S is aware of M in virtue of being in M itself. In other words: S is aware of M in virtue of being in M*, but is M* ≠ M or is M* = M? This second issue will take up the core of this chapter (§§4-7). But first I want to address the first issue.

2. Inner Awareness and Inner Perception

A conscious experience of a tree involves awareness of a tree. According to the awareness principle, it also involves an awareness of the awareness of the tree. But is this second-order awareness (i) a *perception-of-awareness-of-tree*, (ii) a *thought-about-awareness-of-tree*, or (iii) something else? In other words, is M* (i) a perceptual awareness of M, (ii) an intellectual or cognitive awareness of M, or (iii) something else?

There is no doubt that Brentano opts for (i): M* is an *inner perception* of M. From the earliest chapters of the *Psychology*, Brentano stresses that all conscious states are inner-perceived, ultimately claiming that this demarcates them as mental (1874: I, 128-9 [91-2]). Accordingly, C3 could be sharpened into the following:

(C4) For any mental state M of a subject S, if M is a state of S's consciousness, then S inner-perceives M.

That this is Brentano's view might be obscured by the fact that in various places Brentano describes M* not as an inner perception (*Wahrnehmung*), but as an inner presentation (*Vorstellung*), inner judgment (*Urteil*), inner cognition/acquaintance (*Erkenntnis*), or inner consciousness/awareness (*Bewusstsein*). However, this multiplicity of expressions reflects, for the most part, various substantive views Brentano held about those mental states. We will encounter many of these views in later chapters; but a preliminary glance is necessary to see why Brentano is committed to C4.

A central task of a serious theory of consciousness, according to Brentano, is to offer a 'fundamental classification' of conscious states. Brentano's own classification divides conscious states into three fundamental categories, one of which he calls 'judgment.' As we will see in more detail in Chap. 3, this category covers all conscious states that can be assessed as true, veridical, or accurate. Since perception can be assessed as veridical or accurate, it qualifies, for Brentano, as a

form of judgment in this sense. Perception is a *species* of the genus judgment. Accordingly, any state which can be described as a perception can also be described, at a higher level of abstraction, as a judgment. This explains why Brentano sometimes describes M* as a *judgment*. To our modern ears, describing a mental state as a judgment marks first and foremost a contrast with perception. But for Brentano, the real contrast is with mental states that are not assessable as true or veridical (such as desire, anger, and contemplation). The inner-perceiving of a banana-smoothie experience affirms the existence of that experience, as well as its character, hence can be assessed as accurate or inaccurate. It is therefore a judgment in Brentano's technical sense.

For a similar reason, Brentano sometimes describes M* as an awareness. Brentano uses the term 'awareness' or 'consciousness' (*Bewusstsein*) for the most generic kind of mental state. Indeed, awareness is the genus of which judgment itself is a species. So, anything which is an inner perception can at an even higher level of abstraction be described as an awareness.

As for the term 'cognition,' this is a somewhat unhappy translation of *Erkenntnis*. In English, the verb 'knows' describes two very different relations. We say 'I know that Chalmers is smart,' but also 'I know Chalmers.' In the first case, we ostensibly report a relation to a proposition, fact, or state of affairs. In the second, we report a relation to an individual. In most languages, two different verbs are used for these two relations, but in English we use 'know' for both. At the same time, we can also say 'I am acquainted with Chalmers,' meaning essentially the same as 'I know Chalmers.' In Brentano's mouth, *Erkenntnis* is the kind of state denoted in such reports: a state of acquaintance, or of objectual (as opposed to propositional) knowledge. Crucially, now, one way to be acquainted with an individual is to perceive it. So it stands to reason that Brentano should sometimes describe inner perception as inner *Erkenntnis*.⁴

A further substantive Brentanian position, to be discussed in Chap. 3 as well, is that every mental state is grounded in a presentation. For example, judging that *p*

involves harboring a presentation of *p* and accepting or affirming the content presented. Other types of mental state involve other modifications of the same fundamental act of presenting (Brentano 1874: I, 112 [80]; II, 34 [198]). This applies to perception as well, indeed to *inner* perception: *S*'s inner perception of *M* involves a specific modification of an inner *presentation* of *M*. This explains why Brentano also ascribes to the subject an inner presentation of her conscious state.

This battery of substantive positions thus explains the multiplicity of expressions Brentano uses to describe our awareness of our conscious states. It is in light of all this that passages such as the following make perfect sense:

Every [conscious] act, therefore, is accompanied by a twofold inner awareness, by a presentation which refers to it and a judgment which refers to it, the so-called inner perception, which is an immediate, self-evident cognition of the act. (Brentano 1874: I, 203 [143])

In this passage, it is clear that 'judgment,' 'perception,' and 'acquaintance' are used to describe the same element of experience. My suggestion is that they do so by describing that element at different levels of abstraction: a perception is a species of acquaintance, which itself is a species of judgment, which in turn is a species of awareness. Meanwhile, 'presentation' is used to describe a second aspect of the awareness, though one that grounds, and is thus presupposed by, the inner perception. So the fundamental claim, a claim independent of all these substantive positions, is that we inner-perceive our conscious states.

(In the first edition of the *Psychology*, Brentano also posits a third kind of inner awareness of *M*, beyond the inner perception and its presupposed inner presentation. The third kind is an 'inner feeling' of pleasure or displeasure toward *M*. Brentano later dropped this view – see Brentano 1911: II, 139 [276] – so I will mostly ignore it here.)

It is legitimate, then, to think of Brentano's view as simply invoking a perceptual awareness of conscious states. In this, he belongs to a long philosophical tradition. Locke wrote: 'It [is] impossible for any one to perceive, without

perceiving, that he does perceive' (ECHU 2.27.9). A similar view is attributed to Aristotle by Brentano himself, and more expansively by Caston (2002). In contemporary philosophy of mind, the view is represented by Lycan (1990) among others.⁵ In contemporary presentations, however, the inner awareness is typically qualified as *quasi*-perceptual, to mark the fact that it is also importantly different from standard sensory perception. Brentano too recognizes that there are important differences here. But his terminological choice is the opposite: he considers inner perception to be perception 'in the strict sense' and sensory perception of external objects to be merely 'so-called perception' (Brentano 1874: I, 128-9 [91]). We might say that for him, this sensory awareness of external objects is *quasi*-perceptual, while inner perception is the only kind of full-blooded perception.⁶ The reason for this is partly etymological: the German *Wahrnehmung* means literally something like 'grabbing the true.' The term thus intimates a kind of direct contact with the perceived. As we will see in the next section, Brentano holds that such direct contact characterizes inner perception but not sensory ('outer') perception.

3. What Is Inner Perception?

To the modern reader, it might seem that what Brentano calls inner perception is just what we call introspection. However, Brentano explicitly distinguishes between inner perception (*Wahrnehmung*) and inner *observation* (*Beobachtung*), and identifies introspection with the latter. The distinction is important, because according to Brentano inner observation of one's current conscious experience is in fact impossible.⁷

To appreciate the difference between the two, consider Brentano's argument against introspection:

... inner perception and not introspection, i.e. inner observation, constitutes [the] primary source of psychology... In observation, we direct our full attention to a phenomenon in order to apprehend it accurately. But with objects of inner perception this is absolutely impossible. This is especially clear with regard to certain mental phenomena such as anger. If someone

is in a state in which he wants to observe his own anger raging within him, the anger must already be somewhat diminished, and so his original object of observation would have disappeared. (1874: I, 40-1 [29-30]; see also 1874: I, 180-1 [128])

It is a central aspect of the phenomenology of raging anger that one is *consumed* by one's anger. If the subject has the presence of mind to attend to her anger, to reflect on it, she is no longer consumed by it. She has managed to 'take some distance' from it. Thus in introspecting one's experience, one would perforce be presented with a milder, unconsuming variety of anger. The anger experience one was originally undergoing – the experience one wished to examine by introspecting – was different, a stronger and more violent anger. In this way, the introspecting *alters* the quality of the anger introspected. To that extent, one's lived experience eludes introspection – as soon as one turns one's attention to it, it goes out of existence and is replaced by another experience with a slightly different phenomenal character. Therefore, it is (nominally) impossible to introspect raging anger. (The modality here is presumably nomic, since if the laws of psychology were different, it might have been possible to introspect our experiences without altering their intensity.)

It might be objected that while the felt intensity of an anger experience is an aspect of its phenomenal character, it is not an *essential* aspect and does not go to its identity conditions. It is still the same anger experience, only experienced more mildly. Accordingly, although introspecting an anger alters it, it does not *destroy* it. And therefore, it is still possible to introspect one's anger, albeit altered. In response, Brentano might insist that every aspect of an experience's phenomenal character is essential to its identity. But more cautiously, we might retreat from the claim that introspection is nominally impossible to the following weaker claim: it is nominally impossible to introspect one's anger experience *as it is independently of being introspected*.

It might still be objected that not all experiences are like anger in this respect. Perhaps it is impossible to introspect anger without altering it, but nothing prevents us from introspecting a visual experience of the blue sky without altering it (Textor 2015). To this objection, Brentano might respond that while the altering of anger by

introspection is particularly dramatic, it occurs in a more subdued fashion with other experiences as well. The visual experience of the sky *is* altered by being introspected: it is ever so slightly more vivid, perhaps, just as a headache hurts just a little bit more when we attend to it. Hill (1988) captures this by noting that introspection functions as ‘volume control’ of our experience, in the sense that introspecting an experience alters its ‘phenomenal intensity.’ There is an important asymmetry here of course: introspecting *decreases* the anger’s phenomenal intensity but *increases* the headache’s and visual experience’s. Nonetheless, Brentano might insist, it always alters *in some way* the phenomenal character of the introspected experience.

More cautiously yet, we might make an analogous but merely epistemic claim: for any experience E, it is nomically impossible *to know* whether E’s character is the same when E is introspected as when E is not introspected. This seems to me quite a plausible claim.

Regardless of whether Brentano’s argument against introspection is cogent, we may use it to clarify his notion of inner perception, as opposed to inner observation. What creates the problem for inner observation, according to the argument, is its attentive nature. It is part of the very notion of introspection, for Brentano, that the exercise of introspection involves the control and guidance of attention. (Recall: ‘In observation, we direct our full attention to a phenomenon in order to apprehend it accurately.’) The problem is that attending to a conscious experience alters its phenomenal intensity (if nothing else). The attentiveness of introspection implies further properties, such as voluntariness. Normally, we can *decide* to introspect, and equally, we can decide *not* to introspect, or to *stop* introspecting. By and large, attending, and hence introspecting, are up to us. Accordingly, introspecting is not ubiquitous: sometimes we introspect, sometimes we do not.

From the fact that Brentano’s argument is not supposed to apply to inner *perception*, we may now infer that inner perception differs on these scores: it is non-

attentive, involuntary, and ubiquitous. The claim is that we have a broadly perceptual kind of inner awareness that proceeds independently of attention and goes on in us involuntarily and at all times. When one undergoes an experience of consuming anger, one is *aware* of it, but aware of it (i) non-attentively, insofar as one attends rather to the angering stimulus, and (ii) involuntarily, insofar as one cannot stop being aware of one's anger at will. This non-attentive and involuntary awareness is, according to Brentano, pervasive in our conscious experience.

To appreciate this kind of awareness, consider an analogy with *sensory* ('outer') perception and observation. Right now, I am visually aware of a scene involving a desk, a laptop, a cup of coffee, a book, and a lamp. Visually, I am attentively aware of the laptop. I am not visually attending to the lamp or the cup. Yet I am clearly visually *aware* of them, though in a peripheral, non-attentive sort of way. Brentano would put this by saying that I visually *perceive* the desk, laptop, cup, book, and lamp, but visually *observe* only the laptop. Now, I can deliberately *decide* to start attending to the cup to my right (even without moving my eyes), and to that extent can *decide* to no longer attend to the laptop. I can decide, that is, what I want to observe. But as long as my eyes are open and I do not intervene in the scene before me, I cannot decide what I want to *perceive*. I cannot decide to *shut down* my peripheral visual awareness of the book and the lamp. Thus unlike visual observation, visual perception is not voluntary and need not be attentive.

The same characteristics distinguish *inner* perception and observation. Right now, I am undergoing a complex episode involving visual experience of the scene just described, auditory experience of my dog snoring softly, tactile experience of the soles of my shoes, a mild experience of anxiety about an afternoon appointment, and occasionally a number of fleeting thoughts and episodic memories about last night's film. Of these, I am attentively aware only of the visual experience (since I am trying to describe it). I am not attending at all to the auditory, tactile, emotional, and mnemonic components of my overall experience. Yet I am clearly aware of them too, though in a peripheral, non-attentive sort of way. In Brentano's terms, I have inner *observation* only of the visual component of my overall experience, but have inner

perception of the auditory, tactile, emotional, and mnemonic components as well.^{8,9} As before, I can *decide* to shift around my attention, to stop attending to the visual experience of the scene before me and attend instead, say, to the auditory experience of my dog's snoring.¹⁰ But although I can decide what I want to attend to, I cannot similarly decide what I want to be aware of. I can stop attending to my visual experience, but I cannot at will stop being aware of it. I have control over inner observation, but not over inner perception.

Imagine a paralyzed person who can neither move her neck nor close her eyes at will. She has no control over what appears to her visually, though she can decide to attend to one or another element in her visual field. According to Brentano, we are all in this position when it comes to our awareness of our own stream of consciousness: we have no control over what appears to us, though we can decide to attend to one or another element in our stream of consciousness. That by which our own conscious life appears to us non-attentively, involuntarily, and ubiquitously is what Brentano calls inner perception.



Inner perception, then, is the non-attentive, involuntary, ubiquitous awareness we have of our conscious life. These are the *psychological* characteristics of inner perception. In addition, inner perception is centrally characterized by its *epistemic* properties:

... besides the fact that it has a special object [namely, mental phenomena], inner perception possesses another distinguishing characteristic: its immediate (*unmittelbare*), infallible (*untrügliche*) self-evidence (*Evidenz*). Of all the types of knowledge (*Erkenntnissen*) of the objects of experience, inner perception alone possesses this characteristic. (Brentano 1874: I, 128 [91])

Inner perception has at least three epistemic properties that separate it from other types of awareness: (a) it is *immediate*, in that its justification is not based upon, or mediated by, anything else's; (b) it is *infallible*, in that inner-*mis*perception is

impossible; and it is (c) *self-evident*, where self-evidence is a primitive, unanalyzable notion.

I will expand on the primitive notion of self-evidence (*Evidenz*) in Chap. 5.¹¹ But one may reasonably suspect that with its primitive status comes a certain *foundational* status. After considering a number of arguments for the infallibility of inner perception, Brentano concludes thus:

These attempts to establish the infallibility of inner perception are, therefore, complete failures, and the same is true of any other attempt which might be suggested instead. The correctness (*Richtigkeit*) of inner perception cannot be proved in any way. But it has something more than proof; it is immediately self-evident. If anyone were to mount a skeptical attack against this ultimate foundation of cognition/knowledge (*Erkenntnis*), he would find no other foundation upon which to erect an edifice of knowledge (*Wissens*). (1874: I, 198 [140])

There is no argument for the infallibility of inner perception. The only reason to accept the proposition <inner perception is infallible>, for Brentano, is that it is itself self-evident. We may presume that the same holds of the *immediacy* of inner perception: there is no argument for it, but it is self-evident. To that extent, self-evidence is the most basic of inner perception's epistemic properties.

As for self-evidence itself, there is no argument for it either, the passage suggests, except perhaps a *transcendental* one: if inner perception were *not* self-evident, all knowledge would be impossible. Brentano seems to assume here a form of classical foundationalism, where the epistemic justification of all beliefs derives ultimately from the self-evidence of inner perception (compare Bonjour 2000). We will assess the special role of the notion of self-evidence in Brentano's system in Chap. 5. The only point I want to make now is that for Brentano, none of these epistemic properties characterize introspection. Thus Brentano holds that there is no appearance/reality gap for consciousness, but not with respect to *introspective* appearances – his claim concerns only *inner-perceptual* appearances.

Brentano has no real argument for the self-evidence and infallibility of inner perception, then, but he does have an *explanation* for them. The explanation is that a conscious experience and one's inner perception of it are in fact not numerically distinct mental states; rather, they are intimately connected in such a way as to exclude any daylight between the experience and the inner perceiving of it:

Whenever a mental act is the object of an accompanying inner cognition/acquaintance (*Erkenntnis*), it contains itself in its entirety as presented and cognized/acquainted with (*erkannt*)... This alone makes possible the infallibility and immediate self-evidence of inner perception. If the cognition/acquaintance which accompanies a mental act were an act in its own right, a second act added on to the first one, ... how could it be certain in and of itself? (1874: I, 196 [139])

Recall that the inner perception of an experience can also be described, at a higher level of abstraction, as an inner acquaintance. What gives this inner perception or acquaintance its special epistemic properties, says Brentano, is the fact that it is not really separate from the mental state inner-perceived. Underlying the special epistemic properties of inner perception, then, is an involved view on the internal structure of every conscious experience. It is to this important view that we turn next.

In conclusion, inner perception is a broadly perceptual awareness of our conscious experience that is (i) non-attentive, (ii) involuntary, (iii) ubiquitous, (iv) immediate, (v) infallible, and (vi) self-evident. Brentano spends precisely zero time arguing that there *is* such a thing. The existence of this self-evident inner perception seems to be a foundational insight, something without which the rest of the system cannot work.

4. Inner Perception and the Inner-Perceived: An Elusive Intimacy

Granted that all conscious states are states the subject inner-perceives, as per C4, it remains to ask whether a conscious state and its inner perception are numerically distinct or numerically identical.¹² As we have just seen, it is central to Brentano's

view that the two cannot be entirely distinct. They are intimately connected, or inner perception could not be self-evident and infallible. Brentano is categorical on this:

People have misconstrued the true character of inner self-perception, holding that it is not co-encapsulated (*mitbeschlossen*) in the activity perceived and is not co-given (*mitgegeben*), as Aristotle said, *en parergo* ['on the side']; that it is sometimes entirely absent, and that when it is present, it is not exactly simultaneous but rather follows somewhat as an effect follows a cause as closely as possible... Such a theory eliminates the special characteristic (*Eigentümliche*) that makes possible the immediate self-evidence of self-perception: it omits *the identity of the perceiving and the perceived*. (Brentano 1928: 8 [7-8]; my italics)

Based on passages such as this, many have taken Brentano to hold that a conscious experience and its inner perception are one and the same mental state (e.g., Caston 2002, Hossack 2002, Kriegel 2003a). Already in the *Psychology*, Brentano writes:

In *the same* mental act in which the sound is present to our minds we simultaneously apprehend the mental act itself. What is more, we apprehend it in accordance with its dual nature insofar as it has the sound as content within it, and insofar as it has itself as content at the same time. (Brentano 1874: I, 179-80 [127]; my italics)

That is, it is one and the same mental state that constitutes (i) our hearing a trumpet and (ii) our being (inner-perceptually) aware of hearing a trumpet.

Brentano's use of the expressions 'identity of' and 'the same' in these passages, and of similar locutions in others, suggests that he takes a conscious state and one's awareness of it to be strictly *identical*. This is what Keith Hossack (2002) calls the 'identity thesis':

The thesis I now wish to consider ... which was endorsed by Brentano, is the claim that any conscious state is identical with knowledge of its own occurrence, and that this is in fact the criterion of whether a state is conscious. (Hossack 2002: 174)

Hossack relies on the following passage from Brentano:

While we have the presentation of a sound, we are conscious of having it... [T]here is a special connection between the object of inner presentation and the presentation itself, and ... both belong to one and the same mental act. The presentation of the sound and the

presentation of the presentation of the sound form a single mental phenomenon (Brentano 1874: I, 176-9 [126-7], quoted in Hossack 2002: 174 fn14).

We may call this the ‘identity interpretation’ of Brentano’s view on the relationship between a conscious state M and the awareness of it M*.

Observe, however, that the passage Hossack relies on does not quite say that M and M* are *identical*. Instead, Brentano speaks of a ‘special connection between,’ or rather special *interweaving* (*Verwebung*) of, M and M*. He says that M and M* ‘belong’ to the same mental act, not that they *are* the same mental act; that they ‘form’ a single mental phenomenon, not that they *are* a single mental phenomenon. In other places, Brentano speaks of the ‘peculiarly intimate bond (*Verbindung*) of the mental act [M] with the accompanying presentation which refers to it [M*]’ (1874: I, 187 [133]). He writes:

... the presentation of the sound is connected/bound (*verbunden*) with the presentation of the presentation of the sound in such a peculiarly intimate (*eigentümlich inniger*) way that its being at the same time contributes inwardly to the being of the other. (Brentano 1874: I, 179 [127])

Now, one intimate relation is certainly the *identity* relation. But arguably, if Brentano thought that the ‘special’ and ‘intimate’ relation at play was simply identity, he would have put his claims in terms of identity. The fact that he does not may suggest, on reflection, that he thinks there is something more nuanced going on.

According to Textor (2006), talk about M and M* ‘belonging to,’ or ‘forming,’ a single mental state suggests a *mereological* relation: M and M* are two *parts* of a single mental state. We may call this the ‘fusion interpretation’: a conscious experience of a tree is a mereological fusion of an awareness-of-tree and an awareness-of-awareness-of-tree. Textor writes:

If in painting A and painting A hitting B, I have painted A only once, the two acts of painting *cannot be distinct*. It seems natural to say that the painting of A is contained in my painting A hitting B. Similarly, if the sound is not presented twice over, once in the first-order presentation, a second time in the higher-order presentation, the presentations cannot be

distinct. The mental acts are *interwoven or fused*. This should be taken literally. (Textor 2006: 418; my italics)

There is no question Brentano often frames his view in mereological terms, for instance when speaking of the ‘peculiar fusion (*eigentümliche Verschmelzung*) of awareness and the object of awareness’ (1874: I, 196 [139]) we find in inner awareness. On this basis, Textor (2006: 422) asserts that Hossack’s identity thesis, while perhaps attractive, is simply not Brentano’s view.

Over the next four sections, I want to defend the identity interpretation over the fusion interpretation, while doing justice to the basic motivation for a fusion interpretation. I proceed in two steps. First, I present a novel interpretation of Brentano’s view that casts M and M* as, strictly speaking, identical. I will then show why Brentano sometimes uses mereological language to express his particular version of the identity view. The two basic ideas may be put initially as follows:

- (1) Brentano holds that a conscious experience of *x* is a mental state that can be framed, or conceived of, equally accurately as (i) awareness of *x* or (ii) awareness of awareness of *x*.
- (2) Brentano’s mereology distinguishes two parthood relations, a real-parthood relation and a conceptual-parthood relation, and the awareness of *x* and the awareness of the awareness of *x* are merely conceptual parts of the same state.

What follows elaborates on these two ideas: §5 develops the first idea, §6 presents Brentano’s mereology, and §7 elaborates on the second idea in light of Brentano’s mereology; §8 defends the emerging theory of consciousness against substantive objections.

5. A New Interpretation of Brentano’s Theory of Consciousness

On the interpretation of Brentano's theory I want to offer, a conscious experience of a tree involves the occurrence of a single mental state, but one that lends itself to *characterization* either as an awareness of a tree or as an awareness of an awareness of a tree. On this interpretation, there is an element of identity cited in Brentano's account as well as an element of difference. The identity pertains to the *state itself*; the difference pertains to *ways of construing* the state, or of *framing* it, or *conceptualizing* what it is. Nonetheless, at bottom what there is in the subject's mind is a single mental state.

It is natural for us today to articulate this kind of position in terms of Fregean identity. Hesperus and Phosphorus are one entity, but there are two completely separate ways of *conceiving* of that entity: via the MORNING STAR concept and via the EVENING STAR concept. (This is a case of a posteriori identity regarding a concrete particular, but there are also cases of a posteriori identity regarding properties, events, states of affairs, and so on.) The way I see things, this is exactly Brentano's position on conscious experience: the awareness of X and the awareness of the awareness of X are one and the same entity; the concepts, or conceptualizations, AWARENESS OF X and AWARENESS OF AWARENESS OF X are distinct ways of picking out that entity. Crucially, both conceptualizations are equally legitimate, indeed equally *accurate*. When you point at Venus and say 'This is the morning star,' you speak truly, and so do you when you point at Venus and say 'This is the evening star.' By the same token, you speak truly, while 'pointing at' a conscious experience of a tree, either if you say 'This is an awareness of a tree' or if you say 'This is an awareness of an awareness of a tree.'

Lacking Frege's machinery, I contend, Brentano continuously sought ways of articulating this kind of view.¹³ Sometime during the 1880s, he settled on a way of articulating it that involved mereological language; I will discuss this articulation in §§6-7. But already in the *Psychology* (from 1874) one can find passages in which the idea is all but explicit. Consider:

The presentation of the sound [M] and the presentation of the presentation of the sound [M*] form a single mental phenomenon; it is only by considering/regarding/viewing (*betrachten*) it in its relation to two different objects, one of which is a physical phenomenon and the other a mental phenomenon, that we divide it conceptually [i.e., in thought] into two presentations. (Brentano 1874: I, 179 [127])

In reality, says Brentano, there is only one thing here – the subject’s experience. It is just that we can *consider* or *regard* it in two different ways, depending on whether we consider it as an intentional relation to a sound or as an intentional relation to an awareness of a sound. Accordingly, the subject’s experience can be *grasped* either qua presentation-of-sound or qua presentation-of-presentation-of-sound. But the thing itself is one. (Note that already in this passage Brentano alludes, somewhat cryptically, to a ‘conceptual division’ of the experience into two presentations. Talk of division, or partition, brings in a mereological dimension as yet undeveloped. We will see its fuller development in Brentano’s later writings in §6.2.)

Brentano repeats this formulation in terms of *betrachten* elsewhere in the *Psychology*. For example:

... every [conscious] act, even the simplest, has [several] aspects (*Seite*) under which it may be considered/regarded/viewed (*betrachtet*). It may be considered/regarded as a presentation of its primary object ... ; however, it may also be considered/regarded as a presentation of itself... (1874: I, 218-9 [154])

A conscious thought of the Eiffel tower can be *viewed* as an act of contemplating the Eiffel tower or, just as accurately, as an act of contemplating a contemplation of the Eiffel tower. These are in some sense two different aspects under which the thought can be conceived. But these ‘aspects’ should not be thought of as separate *constituents* of the thought. Rather, they are different ways one and the same thing can be *considered* or *regarded*. The point is stated simply and crisply by Brentano’s *Enkelschüler* (‘grand-student’) Hugo Bergman in his remarkable 1908 study of inner perception. Referring to an act of inner perception as an ‘inner act,’ he writes:

An inner act [M*] and its object [M] are one and the same (*sind eins*), and are only conceptually distinguished (*begrifflich unterschieden*). (Bergmann 1908: 12)

It is this exact position that I want to ascribe to Brentano. As we will see in §6, talk of conceptual distinguishability comes directly from Brentano's mereology.

Call this the *Fregean identity interpretation* of Brentano's theory of consciousness. According to this interpretation, the point of Brentano's theory may be summarized as follows: if you want to know what a conscious state is, imagine a mental state that lends itself at once to understanding as a presentation of something and as a presentation of a presentation of that thing. Such a mental state is what a conscious state *is*. This account of the *nature* of consciousness is striking in its originality: none of the current theories of consciousness offers quite this perspective on what makes something a conscious state (with the possible exception of Nida-Rümelin 2017), and to my knowledge, there is no precedent for this view in the history of Western philosophy.

As such, the view also raises certain immediate question marks. In particular, one might wonder whether there is not *something about* a conscious state that makes it lend itself to two equally accurate framings, something that *grounds* this 'dual-framability' of conscious states. If there is not, the view might seem a tad mysterious. But if there is, then the nature of consciousness should be identified rather with that which *grounds* the dual-framability, whatever that is. We will return to this very real difficulty in §8. For now, let me only stress that it would be a misunderstanding to take Brentano to simply be making the point that a conscious experience of a tree has both the property of presenting a tree and the property of presenting a presentation of a tree. Rather, his point is that there is *no difference* between the property of presenting a tree and the property of presenting a presentation of a tree. They are one and the same property, framed in two different ways. It is a crucial part of the view that the multiplicity of potential framings of a conscious experience is not explicable in terms of a multiplicity of properties or components of the experience. On the contrary, it is only by appreciating the fact that one and the same thing – be it a state or a property – admits of two equally good characterizations that we grasp the essence of consciousness. (More on this in §8.)

6. Brentano's Mereology

Starting in his 1867 metaphysics lectures at Würzburg and up until his death, Brentano continuously developed systematic ideas about part-whole relations. The first published discussion is the chapter on the unity of consciousness in the *Psychology*. But more serious developments, partially abstracted from the psychological context, appear in his Vienna lectures from the late 1880s, published posthumously as Chap. 2 of *Descriptive Psychology* (Brentano 1982). The most systematic and topic-neutral presentation of his mereological ideas published to date is in various dictations from 1908 and 1914-5, collated by Alfred Kastil into Chap. 1 and 2 of *The Theory of Categories* (Brentano 1933).

Brentano never presented an axiomatic mereological system with proofs of consistency and completeness. But his mereological ideas directly influenced work in this direction by his students Stumpf (1890), Ehrenfels (1890), Twardowski (1894), and Husserl (1901).¹⁴ It was a student of Twardowski's, Leśniewski, who first developed a formal system of so-called Classical Mereology (Leśniewski 1916). My approach to the exposition of Brentano's mereology is to first introduce the basics of Classical Mereology and then point out the respects in which Brentano's mereology deviates from it (§6.1); one deviation is particularly important for our present purposes and will be examined in special depth (§6.2).

6.1. Classical Mereology and Brentano's Mereology

Classical Mereology (CM) is most naturally axiomatized in terms of six propositions, couched in logical vocabulary plus four mereological notions: part, proper part, overlap, and sum. The four notions are interdefinable, and it is possible in principle to take a single notion and define the others in terms of it (plus the logical vocabulary). Typically mereologists take 'part' as their basic notion, but sometimes they opt for 'proper part' (e.g., Simons 1987a). As I find 'proper part' to be the more

intuitive notion, I will use it as the basic notion here. We may then say that a *part* of A is something which is either a proper part of A or identical to A; A and B *overlap* when they have a part in common; and the *sum* of A and B is anything that has A and B as parts such that any *other* part it has must overlap them. More formally:

(Def₁) A is a part of B iff (i) A is a proper part of B or (ii) A = B.

(Def₂) A overlaps B iff there is a C, such that (i) C is a part of A and (ii) C is a part of B.

(Def₃) S is a sum of A and B iff any C that overlaps S overlaps either A or B.

In this construction, we define 'sum' in terms of 'overlap,' 'overlap' in terms of 'part,' and 'part' in terms of 'proper part.' The term 'proper part' remains undefined, a primitive of the system.

The axioms of CM divide into two groups. The first are axioms that describe the proper-parthood relation as a strict partial order (irreflexive, asymmetric, and transitive):

(CM_{Ar}) A is never a proper part of A.

(CM_{As}) If A is a proper part of B, then B is not a proper part of A.

(CM_T) If A is a proper part of B and B is a proper part of C, then A is a proper part of C.

Not every strict partial ordering is proper-parthood, however. So CM includes also three more substantive axioms. One is the axiom of unrestricted composition: for any plurality of things, there is a sum composed of them. Another is the 'axiom of supplementation': if one thing is a proper part of a second, the second must have an additional proper part (to make it whole, so to speak). The last is the 'axiom of extensionality': having the same parts implies being identical and vice versa. More formally:

(CM_U) For any plurality of items A, B, ..., there is a X that is the sum of A, B, ...

(CM_S) If A is a proper part of B, then there is a C, such that (i) C is a proper part of B and (ii) C does not overlap A.

(CM_E) A = B iff every part of A is a part of B and every part of B is part of A.

These axioms employ the terms ‘sum,’ ‘part,’ and ‘overlap,’ but can be reformulated entirely in terms of ‘proper part’ and logical vocabulary (by using Def₁–Def₃). As noted, however, CM can also be formulated in terms of six axioms that use only logical vocabulary plus ‘part.’



So much, then, for CM. How does Brentano’s mereology (BM) differ? Brentano explicitly accepts unrestricted composition: ‘Every plurality (*Mehrheit*) of things is a thing’ (Brentano 1933: 11 [19]; see also 1933: 5 [16]). He also defends the thesis of ‘composition as identity’ (Brentano 1933: 5 [16], 50 [46]), which is commonly thought to lead rather straightforwardly to the axiom of extensionality. There are two main differences, however, between BM and CM.

One is that in BM the axiom of supplementation does not hold generally (though it does hold for *substances*, that is, for entities capable of independent existence). The reasons for this odd claim are complex and derive from Brentano’s nominalist agenda; they will be explained and motivated in Chap. 6. As these issues bear nowise on the interpretation of Brentano’s theory of consciousness, I set them aside here.¹⁵

The most important difference between CM and BM concerns the primitive notion of (proper-)parthood. In CM, there is a single, univocal notion at play. This does not seem to be the case for Brentano:

... one may be able to distinguish parts that are actually *separable/detachable* (*ablösbar*) from one another, until one reaches parts where such ... separation can no longer take place.... However, even these ultimate actually separate parts, in some sense, can be said to have further parts.... To differentiate these from others, we may refer to them as *distinctional* parts. (Brentano 1982: 13 [16]; my italics)

Brentano seems to distinguish two types of proper part: *separable* and *distinctional*. Here is one example where they come apart:

Someone who believes in [mereological] atoms believes in corpuscles which cannot be dissolved into smaller bodies. But even so he can speak of halves, quarters, etc. of atoms: parts which are distinguishable even though they are not actually separable. (Ibid.)

By 'atoms' Brentano means not the entities referred to as atoms in physics, but the entities genuinely admitting of no physical division. A 'physics-atom' with one proton and three electrons does have separable parts, since we can separate the electrons from the proton – this is called 'splitting the atom.' The proton too has separable parts – the quarks making it up. But the electrons have no separable parts. It is impossible to 'split the electron.'¹⁶ Still, even though we cannot separate *in reality* different parts of electron E, we can distinguish *in thought* different parts of it. We can call the top half of E 'Jimmy' and the bottom half 'Johnny.' (Or perhaps better: since E has a determinate mass *m*, we can divide *m* by two and consider each of E's two halves independently.) Jimmy and Johnny are thus *distinguishable* parts of E, but not *separable* parts. We may say that they are *merely-distinguishable* parts; Brentano often calls such parts *divisiva*.

It would seem, then, that Brentano distinguishes two notions of (proper-)parthood, which we may call *parthood-as-separability* and *parthood-as-distinguishability*.¹⁷ Accordingly, he recognizes two kinds of (proper) part: separables and distinguishables. The former are separable *in reality*, the latter are distinguishable *in thought*. It may well turn out that whatever is separable in reality is distinguishable in thought, but clearly, not everything which is distinguishable in thought is separable in reality – as the electron case shows.

6.2. Merely-Distinguishable Parts

The notion of merely-distinguishable part does not feature in current mainstream mereology. But many cases appear to suggest it, beside the electron case. Consider the difference between Marie Antoinette's head and Marie Antoinette's smile. There is a sense in which Marie Antoinette's head is part of Marie Antoinette, and there is also a sense in which her smile is a part of her. But these do not seem to be the *same*

sense. Remarkably, Marie Antoinette's head is manifestly a separable part of her, whereas her smile is merely-distinguishable. So one way of making sense of the difference between these two kinds of parthood is in terms of Brentano's separable/distinguishable distinction.

The relationship between a person and her smile is a special case of the more general relation between a 3D object and (any portion of) its 2D surface: the surface cannot be separated from the object and exist on its own.¹⁸ There is a clear intuition that although it is a genuine part of the object, the surface is such in a different sense from any physically separable component of that object. In general, any n -dimensional part of an $n+m$ -dimensional object ($n, m > 0$) is intuitively a part of that object in a special sense worth labeling.

There is more than just intuition here, however. There is a real and deep difference between two kinds of part: some parts are *ontologically independent* of the wholes of which they are parts; others are *ontologically dependent*. We may mark this difference any way we want, but it is deeper than many other distinctions routinely made in current mereology. One perfectly natural way to mark the difference is to call the former separable parts and the latter merely-distinguishable parts. When P is a separable part of some whole W , P is ontologically independent of W . For it can exist *without* W . Accordingly, the destruction of W does not entail the destruction of P . By contrast, when P is a merely-distinguishable part of W , it is very much ontologically dependent upon W . Since it cannot be separated from W , it cannot exist without W . The existence of W is a precondition for its existence. Accordingly, the destruction of W entails the destruction of P .¹⁹

These characteristics of the merely-distinguishable part have clear implications for its ontological status. Brentano tells us that merely-distinguishable parts 'cannot be called *realia*' (Brentano 1956: 232). In lecture notes from the 1860s, he explicitly contrasts the status of *divisiva* (i.e., merely distinguishable parts) and 'real beings':

The metaphysical parts, such as bigness, thought, virtue, lions' nature, and so forth are not real beings (*wahren Seienden*), but rather *divisiva*. (MS 31534, quoted in Baumgartner 2013: 236, though here I offer my own translation)

What does Brentano mean when he says that merely-distinguishable parts are not 'real beings,' not *realia*? The answer is far from obvious, but I would propose the following. When we say that P is a merely-distinguishable part of W, it may seem that 'P' is a referring expression picking out some individual item. But in truth, our statement is just an indirect way of describing an aspect of W's *structure*. It is an infelicitous way of saying that W is structured P-ly. Thus while the truthmaker of 'The ear is part of Marie's face' consists in a parthood relation between two items, Marie's ear and her face, the truthmaker of 'The smile is part of Marie's face' does *not* consist in a parthood relation between two items, Marie's smile and her face. Rather, it consists in one item, Marie's face, being structured in a certain way, that is, in Marie's face being smiley. From this perspective, the point of the notion of a merely-distinguishable part, for Brentano, is to recognize that a thing may have no (separable) parts and yet have *structure*. It is not simple in the sense of being structureless, even though it is simple in the sense of being (in reality) partless. These are two different and non-coextensive kinds of simplicity.

Consider: when we say that Marie is two-legged, what makes our statement true is that Marie has two separable parts each of which is a leg; but when say that Marie is smiling, something must make this statement true as well, even though Marie does not have any separable part which is a smile. That is, even though there are no such entities as smiles, we speak truly when we say that Marie is smiling. Moreover, this is a truth *cum fundamentum in re* – there is something *about Marie* (something about the structure of her face) that makes it true. Talk of merely-distinguishable parts is a device for *describing* this structure. More generally, it is a device for describing structure-without-separable-parts. But we must keep in mind that since merely-distinguishable parts are by definition distinguishable only in thought, what there is in reality is just the structure: although parts are more

fundamental than structure when it comes to separable parts, structure is more fundamental than parts when we are dealing with merely-distinguishable parts.

It might be objected that Brentano's notion of a merely-distinguishable part is still unmotivated, on the grounds that Brentano imposes on us parthood talk where property talk would do just fine. The atom has the *property* of having a mass (or occupying a space) divisible by half, Marie Antoinette has the *property* of smiling, a 3D object has the *property* of having a 2D surface, and so on. Merely-distinguishable parthood is thus entirely dispensable.

For Brentano, however, the important thing is that in conscious experience, there is no *real distinction* between awareness of *x* and awareness of awareness of *x* – whatever ontological category we slot awareness under. So even if we speak of the *property* of being an awareness of *x* and the *property* of being an awareness of an awareness of *x*, Brentano would claim that these are *in reality* one and the same property. And yet *in thought* we can discern in that property two 'dimensions,' or 'aspects,' or indeed merely-distinguishable parts... Thus it appears that the role played by the notion of merely-distinguishable part is needed whether we think of awareness in terms of states or in terms of properties. (Moreover, even if the distinguishable-part role could be played by properties, for Brentano the more important fact is that the property role can be played by parts! Because of his nominalism, which we will discuss more fully in Chap. 6, Brentano needs to be able to say everything he wants to say without ever mentioning properties. More accurately, he needs to paraphrase truths whose truthmakers ostensibly involve a property as constituent into truths whose ostensible truthmakers do not. Thus, he wants to find a truthmaker for 'There is a smile on Marie Antoinette's face' that does not involve the property of having a smile as constituent. His way of doing this is to recognize Marie Antoinette's smile as a merely-distinguishable part of Marie. In Chap. 6, we will see how Brentano's mereological innovations allow him to handle a wider array of apparent truths without invoking properties.)

7. The Mereology of Consciousness

Brentano's distinction between separable and merely-distinguishable parts means that when he uses mereological language to express his view of consciousness, there are two very different things he might have in mind. In saying that an awareness of x and an awareness of an awareness of x are parts of a single state, he might have in mind (a) that they are separable parts of some 'greater' whole, or (b) that they are merely-distinguishable parts of a single thing.

In the *Psychology*, the distinction between the two parthood relations is nowhere explicitly drawn. But where it is drawn – in lecture notes from the late 1880s, at least – Brentano is explicit that parthood-as-distinguishability is what connects an experience M and the awareness of it M^* . He speaks of

... the *inseparable connection/fusion* (*untrennbar Verbindung*) of a primary [M] and a concomitant [M^*] mental reference (*psychischen Beziehung*). Every consciousness, upon whatever object it is primarily directed [e.g., a tree], is concomitantly directed at itself [the experience of the tree]. (Brentano 1982: 22 [25]; my italics)

In describing the connection between M and M^* as *inseparable*, Brentano intimates mere-distinguishability. This becomes more explicit further along, where Brentano considers the internal unity of an audiovisual experience. Imagine having the audiovisual experience of a loud airplane flying overhead. We may distinguish three parts in this experience: (i) the visual awareness of the airplane's shape and color, (ii) the auditory awareness of the airplane's sound, and (iii) the *inner* awareness of the overall experience. Brentano holds that while (i) and (ii) are separable from each other, (i) and (iii) are merely-distinguishable, as are (ii) and (iii).²⁰ The contrast is clear:

Whereas the separation of parts considered there [the auditory and visual parts] can only be actual, the parts considered here [the visual part and the inner-awareness part] can only be separated *distinctly*. This is why, having referred to the former as *actually separable* mental parts, it is probably not wholly inappropriate to call the latter *inseparable* (*distinctly*) parts. (1982: 25 [27]; my italics)

In an audiovisual experience, the auditory aspect and the visual aspect are ontologically independent. If while looking at the airplane you suddenly went deaf, your visual experience would persist without the auditory component; if you instead suddenly went blind, the auditory experience would persist without the visual component. But for Brentano, there is no conceivable event that could bring apart your visual experience and your awareness of your visual experience, or your auditory experience and your awareness of it. These are merely distinguishable parts of a single underlying reality.

Recall now that while separable parts can be separated *in reality*, merely-distinguishable parts can only be distinguished *in thought*. They do not have any individual existence *in reality*. It is only *conceptually*, or *in thought*, that we can pull them apart. If so, when we say that an awareness-of-tree M and an awareness-of-awareness-of-tree M* are merely-distinguishable, it would seem to follow that M and M* are not two separate items in reality; it is only in thought that we can pull them apart. More specifically, it is only in thought that we can pull an awareness-of-tree apart from the overall conscious experience of the tree, and at the same time, it is only in thought that we can pull an awareness-of-awareness-of tree apart from that experience. Neither the awareness-of-tree nor the awareness-of-awareness-of tree can exist on its own. The destruction of the experience entails the destruction of the awareness-of-tree, as it does the destruction of the awareness-of-awareness-of tree.

My suggestion can be summarized as follows, then: all Brentano has in mind, when using mereological language to describe the relationship between M and M*, is that in a single, simple, and indivisible mental state, one can *distinguish in thought* M and one can likewise *distinguish in thought* M*. There is no claim about *real* separability, that is, of *parthood-in-reality*. There is only a claim about different ways the one simple thing in reality can be thought of. This is perfectly consistent, then, with the Fregean identity interpretation of Brentano's theory of consciousness. For it suggests precisely that awareness-of-tree and awareness-of-awareness-of-tree are simply two different ways of thinking of a single mental state.



On the Fregean identity interpretation defended here, Brentano holds that M and M* are merely-distinguishable parts of a single mental state. What this means, I have suggested, is that *in reality* there is only one thing, but we can think of it, or regard it, in two different ways. Just as Venus can be thought of, equally legitimately, as the morning star or as the evening star, a tree experience can be thought of, equally legitimately, as an awareness of a tree or as an awareness of an awareness of a tree.

On this interpretation, it is natural to say that the awareness-of-tree and the awareness-of-awareness-of-tree are *not* numerically distinct, because in reality they are one and the same thing. To repeat, this is *not* meant as the idea that a conscious state has both the property of being an awareness of some object and the property of being an awareness of an awareness of that object; rather, it is meant as the idea that in a conscious state, the property of being an awareness of an object and the property of being an awareness of an awareness of that object are one and the same. The difference is only in how that one property is *regarded*. At the same time, we are missing something if we just assert that conscious experience involves the subject being in a single mental state, or the subject instantiating a single relevant property, and leave it at that. What we are missing, moreover, is the definitive aspect of conscious experience – the way it envelops awareness and awareness-of-awareness in a single mental state. We might therefore say, doubtless somewhat impressionistically, that *qua regarded* the awareness and the awareness-of-awareness are different, even though in and of themselves they are identical. Compare a single duck-rabbit drawing. If we do not see *two* potential book covers here – one suitable for *The Ugly Duckling* and the other appropriate for *The Tales of Peter Rabbit* – we are missing something. Likewise, we can frame the conscious state as M or frame it as M*, and these are different framings.

This explains, I suggest, why Brentano stresses in some contexts the non-distinctness of M and M* and in others their non-identity. When designing a cover for *The Ugly Duckling* or *The Tales of Peter Rabbit*, we would stress the difference

between the duck drawing and the rabbit drawing. But when the bill for the copyright fees arrives, we might stress sameness, arguing that we only used one drawing. Likewise, in the context of discussing the internal *structure* of a conscious state (e.g., in Chap. 3 and 4 of Book 2 of the *Psychology*), Brentano stresses the *difference* between the state's various distinguishable parts (M is not the same *distinguishable part* as M*); but in discussing the threat of infinite regress (e.g., in Chap. 2 of Book 2 of the *Psychology*), Brentano stresses the *sameness* of the state itself.

It is in this light that we should understand passages that appear to underline the non-identity of M and M*. Consider this example:

... it is clear that such a real identity never holds between our concurrent mental activities, and that it will never be found between the diverse aspects of the simplest act which were differentiated earlier... They are divisives of the same reality, but that does not make them really identical with it and thus with one another. (Brentano 1874: I, 229 [161])

Textor (2006: 423) relies on this passage to argue for the implausibility of the identity interpretation – as well he should, given the explicit denial of identity in the passage. I would suggest, however, that Brentano is trying, in such passages, to highlight the difference between a conscious state qua awareness of a tree and a conscious state qua awareness of awareness of a tree. Anyone who simply stated that there is just one mental state here, and left it at that, would be missing *the* crucial feature of conscious states – the fact that they lend themselves to conceptualization in two very different yet equally accurate ways. It is this kind of opponent, who does not even recognize the sense in which conscious states essentially involve awareness-of-awareness, that Brentano has in his sight in passages such as this.

This Fregean-identity interpretation is more flexible than either Hossack's flatter identity interpretation or Textor's fusion interpretation. In expounding his identity interpretation, Hossack (2002) appears to make no provision for the mereological subtleties of Brentano's account (although see Hossack 2006 for some

distancing from the straight-up identity interpretation). In defending the fusion interpretation, Textor (2006) explicitly recognizes that M^* is a divisive (i.e., a merely-distinguishable part) of M . What he fails to recognize, however, is that this means there is only *one* mental state involved. Textor says that ‘A “divisive” is an object that can be distinguished in another object as a part, although it cannot be separated from it’ (Textor 2006: 423). This seems to directly contradict Brentano’s own treatment of parts of a conscious whole as merely *apparent parts*: Brentano tells us that these ‘constitute apparent-parts/part-appearances (*Teilphänomene*) of a mental phenomenon, the elements of which are neither distinct things nor parts of distinct things’ (1874: I, 232 [164]). Saying that a divisive is ‘part of *another* object’ suggests that what we have on our hands here are two different items, the conscious state and its awareness-of-awareness part; yet as we have seen for Brentano there is in reality only one item. The inner perception of a tree perception is not a part of *another* state, that of perceiving a tree. Thus just as Hossack’s identity interpretation has difficulties making sense of fusion-leaning passages (see esp. Brentano 1874: I, 228-9 [161]), Textor’s fusion interpretation has difficulties making sense of the identity-leaning passages (see esp. 1874: I, 179-80 [127]). The interpretation presented here makes sense of both. It is, strictly speaking, an identity interpretation, but one that mobilizes a fuller understanding of Brentano’s mereology to do justice to mereological-sounding passages.

8. Brentano’s Theory of Consciousness Revisited

Higher-order and self-representational theories are motivated by the intuitiveness of the awareness principle: conscious states are states we are aware of having. It has proven difficult, however, to accommodate the principle (and its intuitiveness) without incurring structural problems in one’s theory.

Higher-order theories face a dilemma. They must construe the higher-order state they invoke either as conscious or as unconscious. If they construe it as unconscious, they cannot account for the *intuitiveness* of the awareness principle: it

is unclear why conscious states should immediately strike us as states we are aware of if the relevant awareness is but a sub-personal event (and why the awareness principle should be intuitive if conscious states do *not* immediately strike us as states we are aware of). But if the higher-order state is construed as conscious, an infinite regress immediately ensues: the higher-order state would have to be conscious in virtue of being targeted by a yet *higher*-order state (since it is itself a state the subject is aware of), which would have to be targeted by a further higher-order state, and so on.

Self-representational theories attempt to circumvent the regress problem by claiming that one is aware of one's conscious state in virtue of being in that very conscious state. Since that state represents itself, and is conscious, the state is *consciously* represented – which explains the intuitiveness of the awareness principle. However, self-representationalists face a different dilemma. Not all properties of a phenomenally conscious state are themselves phenomenally conscious: my experience's property of occurring on a Wednesday, for example, contributes nothing to what it is like for me to have the experience. Presumably, self-representationalists would say that a state's phenomenal properties are those which the state represents itself as having. But then a question arises: does the conscious state represent only its non-representational properties or also its representational ones? If it represents only its non-representational properties, it is unclear why the state's directedness at the outside world is phenomenally manifest. If it represents also its representational properties, we are off on a regress again: the state would have to represent its self-representing, and then represent its so representing, and so on. An infinite regress of states is avoided, but an infinite regress of representational properties replaces it.

Within Brentano's framework, the problem is much less pressing. The worst-case scenario would be an infinite regress of accurate ways of conceiving of a conscious state – plainly a less troubling prospect, all told, than an infinite regress of states or properties. In truth, however, it is unclear that any kind of regress attends the Brentanian picture. The view is that a conscious state is a single state which

lends itself to framing both as awareness-of-*x* and as awareness-of-awareness-of-*x*. But there is no discernible pressure to invoke some third-order awareness-of-awareness-of-awareness-of-*x* to illuminate the fact that the conscious state lends itself to a second-order framing as awareness-of-awareness-of-*x*.

In the extant literature, perhaps the most persistent challenge to higher-order theories is that surrounding the 'division of phenomenal labor.' In general, mental states can misrepresent – and that in two ways: (i) by misrepresenting something to have properties it does not in reality have, or (ii) by misrepresenting something to exist that in reality does not. The same applies to the higher-order states that target conscious states: nothing prevents the occurrence of a higher-order state with the content <I am having a reddish experience> when in reality (i) one is having a greenish experience, or even when (ii) one is having no relevant experience at all. It was originally argued that higher-order theories lead to paradoxical results whatever they choose to say about such cases (Byrne 1997, Neander 1998, Levine 2001 Chap. 3, Caston 2002, Kriegel 2009 Chap. 4). More recently, it has also been argued that the problem applies with equal force to self-representational theories (Weisberg 2008, 2011, Picciuto 2011). Bracketing the plausibility of such arguments, it is clear that they do not apply to Brentano's theory. For according to him, there is only one thing in reality, without any division of labor between a first-order representation and a higher-order or self-representation. Some experiences can be accurately framed both as a reddish perception and as an inner perception of a reddish perception. Others can be accurately framed both as greenish perception and as inner perception of greenish perception. But there is simply no experience which can be accurately framed both as a *reddish* perception and as an inner perception of a *greenish* perception.²¹

Rosenthal (1990) once argued that Brentano's theory is incoherent when it comes to conscious desires. For a mental state cannot be both a desire and an awareness of a desire. This is because desire involves a world-to-mind direction of fit whereas awareness involves a mind-to-world direction of fit.²² According to Rosenthal, a single mental state cannot have both directions of fit at once. However,

the principle that a single mental state cannot involve both directions of fit is entirely unsupported. When S is glad that *p*, S presumably both desires that *p* and believes that *p*. If gladness can involve both directions of fit, then conscious desire can as well. (For longer discussion, see Kriegel 2003b.)



Some objections to Brentano's theory can be handled in light of his notion of merely-distinguishable parts. Zahavi (2004) and Drummond (2006), for example, have pressed the following Husserlian complaint against Brentano's theory of consciousness: if a conscious experience of a tree performs double duty as a perception of the tree and a perception of a perception of the tree, the tree would appear in consciousness *twice*. Now, Brentano himself insists that the tree appears only once in consciousness:

We have recognized that the seeing and the presentation of the seeing are connected/bound (*verbunden*) in such a way that the color, as the content of the seeing, at the same time contributes to/constitutes (*beträgt*) the content of the presentation of the seeing. The color, therefore, even though it is presented both in the seeing and in the presentation of the seeing, is still presented only once. (Brentano 1874: I, 188-9 [134])

The Husserlian complaint, presumably, is that nothing *entitles* Brentano to say this. However, there very clearly *is* something that entitles Brentano to say this, namely, his distinction between separable and distinguishable parts, and his claim that the perception of the tree and the perception of the perception of the tree are merely-distinguishable. The tree qua showing up in M's content and the tree qua showing up in M*'s content are one and the same – even though that one tree can be *regarded* in different ways (as perceived and as perceived to be perceived).

The very appeal to the separable/distinguishable distinction may be questioned, though. In particular, it might well be asked: what is the point of insisting on distinguishing different aspects of a single entity *in thought*, if the entity has no parts *in reality*? Indeed, if a thing has no parts in reality, distinguishing in it parts in thought would appear to be in some sense nonveridical or inappropriate. To

my knowledge, Brentano nowhere addresses this worry. As noted in §6.2, however, his basic motivation for the notion of a merely-distinguishable part appears to be to recognize that a thing may have no (separable) parts and yet have *structure*. And thoughts (and statements) about that structure *can* be veridical (or true); it is just that they must be properly understood – as indirectly concerned with structure.

This relates to what is perhaps the deepest objection to Brentano's theory of consciousness (as interpreted here). Granted that a conscious state is a state that lends itself to framing either as an awareness of *x* or as an awareness of an awareness of *x*, we may ask *what it is* about the conscious state that makes it so lend itself. This creates a dilemma for Brentano: either he can cite something in the state itself that grounds its dual-framability, or he cannot. If he can, then whatever he cites should be taken to constitute the essence of consciousness, preempting the dual-framability feature. If he cannot cite anything, then the theory ends up being quite mysterian: we are left with an inexplicable oddity in the midst of the natural world.

As before, Brentano does not address this issue anywhere. But if we apply the general point just made about the relationship between merely-distinguishable parts and structure, we obtain the following response to the dilemma. On the one hand, we must recognize that both 'This experience involves awareness of a tree' and 'This experience involves awareness of an awareness of a tree' are true *cum fundamentum in re*. This means that there definitely is something about the experience that makes it 'dually framable' – a certain intrinsic *structure* that grounds its lending itself to two equally accurate framings. We can use talk of merely-distinguishable parts to indirectly *describe* this structure. But this should not tempt us to start thinking of merely-distinguishable parts as what the account bottoms out in. On the contrary, we must keep in mind that in the case of merely-distinguishable parts, structure is more fundamental than them. Brentano's basic idea, then, would seem to be that, at bottom, there is no way to *characterize* what the special structure of a conscious experience is other than by saying that it is the kind of structure which licenses both a framing as awareness-of-*x* and a framing as awareness-of-

awareness-of-*x*. This can be put more economically, but less perspicuously, by saying that it is the kind of structure that may be described in terms of the merely-distinguishable parts *awareness-of-x* and *awareness-of-awareness-of-x*.

The bitter pill one must take to accept Brentano's account is the notion that an entity's being structured need not consist in its having real parts with different properties. A simple, partless entity may still boast an irreducibly structural character. This is certainly a problematic idea, but one defended by several philosophers on independent grounds (J. Parsons 2004, Horgan and Potrč 2008). Brentano essentially proposes to join forces with them, while continuing to use part talk to capture structure. From his perspective, it is only by successfully wrapping our minds around the notion of a mental state which is equally awareness of *x* and awareness of awareness of *x* that we can understand the special structure characteristic of conscious states. This is a cognitive achievement without which we cannot successfully grasp the nature of consciousness.²³

9. The Unconscious

A discussion of Brentano's theory of consciousness would be incomplete without mention of his least plausible claim about consciousness: that all mental states possess it. Around the time Brentano wrote, it was still possible to deny the existence of the unconscious purely out of dogmatism. (Although the idea of the unconscious had become steadily more central in nineteenth-century literature – from Stendhal in the thirties through Dostoevsky in the sixties to Strindberg in the nineties – it took time for psychological research to catch up.) Nonetheless, Brentano takes pains to develop a sustained *argument* against unconscious mental states; this consumes the long Chap. 2 of *Psychology II*.

The argument can be represented as a destructive dilemma: Brentano considers four ways in which the existence of unconscious mental states may be supported, then rebuts each. The four ways are (1874: I, 147-8 [105]): (a) positing

them as *causes* of conscious states; (b) positing them as *effects* of conscious states; (c) discovering a function f from the intensity of mental states to the intensity of awareness of them, such that for some non-zero value of the former the value of the latter is zero (with the result that some mental states are accompanied by zero awareness and are thus unconscious); (d) positing unconscious mental states as infinite-regress-stoppers. Against (a), Brentano argues that for every existing unconscious-invoking causal explanation of some conscious phenomenon, he can adduce a better explanation that does not invoke unconscious mental states (1874: I, 149-56 [106-11]). Against (b), he argues that all existing attempts to posit unconscious effects of conscious states have violated the principle of 'same effects, same causes' (1874: I, 163-7 [116-9]). Against (c), he offers the following argument: 1) the intensity of an intentional state is always identical to the intensity with which the state's intentional object is presented; so, 2) the intensity of an awareness of a mental state M is always identical to the intensity of M; therefore, 3) there is no M, such that the intensity of M is non-zero but the intensity of the awareness of M is zero (Brentano 1874: I, 169-70 [120-1]). Against (d), we have already seen that Brentano thinks he can avoid the regress without invoking the unconscious.

The argument is extremely carefully prosecuted, but it ignores a *fifth* basis for positing unconscious mental states, which basis has been in fact most operative, in both psychological and literary contexts. This is the idea that we must posit unconscious mental states to causally explain, not conscious states, but certain *behaviors*. The idea recurs in Freudian deep psychology, folk psychology, and experimental psychology.

Its clearest application is in the Freudian case. Suppose a person has no awareness of anger toward her father, but consistently behaves toward him in a variety of inappropriately aggressive, petty, or defensive ways. Because these behaviors would be both explained and rendered intelligible by assuming the person harbors an *unconscious* anger toward her father, we are inclined – quite justifiably, it seems to me – to make this assumption. In doing so, we adopt none of

Brentano's (a)-(d). Instead, we make an inference to the best explanation from behavioral explananda to unconscious explanantia.

Similar reasoning appears implicit in folk-psychological explanations of behavior. Much of your friends' and colleagues' everyday behavior is strictly unintelligible if you do not attribute to them a *desire to be happy*. This desire remains tacit, dispositional, and unconscious for most of your friends' and colleagues' lives: for the most part they are not inner-perceiving their desire to be happy. Some of Brentano's remarks on character traits and other apparently mental dispositions may suggest the following response: we do not actually have a dispositional desire to be happy, but only a disposition to desire to be happy.²⁴ When the disposition is manifested, we have an occurrent, conscious desire which we do inner-perceive. But as long as the disposition is not manifested, we are not in any mental state – we are merely disposed to be in one. More generally, while we have dispositions to enter (conscious) mental states, for Brentano these dispositions are not themselves mental states. This is not an entirely implausible response, but it does face its own dilemma: Brentano must either (a) deny that a person fast asleep wants to be happy or (b) accept that she wants to be happy but deny that this want of hers is properly considered a mental state. It might be thought simpler to just accept unconscious desires as mental states.

Consider finally experimental grounds for unconscious mental events. Already Sidis (1898) and Dunlap (1900) posited such events to explain behavior in experimentally induced circumstances. Imagine a Müller-Lyer arrow in which the arrowheads are extremely thin and light (see Figure 1.1). If you stand very close to such an arrow, you will be able to detect the arrowheads. If you stand very far, you will not see the arrowheads, and the arrows' lines will seem equi-sized to you (that is, you will not fall victim to the Müller-Lyer illusion). But as Dunlap showed, there is also an intermediary distance where human subjects report not seeing the arrowheads but also report one line seeming to be longer than the other (that is, they *are* victim to the Müller-Lyer illusion). The natural explanation of these reports is that subjects at that distance do *see* (or 'visually detect,' if we prefer) the

arrowheads, but *unconsciously*. The subject has a visual representation of the arrowheads that affects downstream visual processing, but at no time is *aware* of that visual representation. This visual representation non-consciously primes the conscious Müller-Lyer illusion. Thus a behavioral datum – the subjects’ reports – is best explained by the position of unconscious visual states.

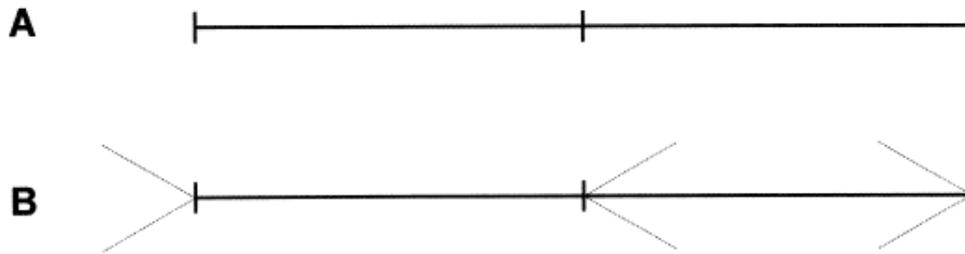


Figure 1.1. Stimuli used by Dunlap (1900: 436)

Brentano might respond that the real datum here is not the subjects’ reports, but the conscious visual illusions being reported. This would make the case fit the first group of reasons for unconscious mentality Brentano rebuts: the unconscious mental states posited to causally explain conscious mental states. Accordingly, Brentano’s response would be to claim that there is a better explanation of the experience of different lengths, one which does not appeal to unconscious visual states. Often, Brentano’s better explanation appeals to association laws more (neuro-)physiological than psychological (see Brentano 1874: I, 155 [111]). In this instance, the idea would be that the visual experience of different line lengths is caused by a merely neural representation of the arrowheads, a representation in visual cortex that does not itself qualify as mental. From the vantage point of modern cognitive science and philosophy of mind, the fact that the visual representation is neural does not exclude its being a *mental* representation. In fact, given the representation’s role in inducing the conscious illusion and shaping the attendant behavior, it rather *merits* qualifying as mental. But this is where Brentano’s substance dualism comes in. Since he takes physiological and mental

phenomena to pertain to different kinds of substance, in classifying the visual representation as neural (hence physical) he considers that he has thereby excluded it from the mental realm.²⁵ The problem with this response, obviously, is its reliance on a strong strand of dualism, in which even a neurophysiological *token* cannot be identical to any mental token.



In general, Brentano's case against unconscious mentality may fare reasonably well against the background of substance dualism: behaviors we explain by citing Freudian suppressed emotions and tacit folk desires can all be reinterpreted as caused by non-mental physiological states. However, anyone who accepts the kind of minimal physicalism whereby mental states can be token-identical to neurophysiological ones would be unimpressed by Brentano's case.²⁶ For against this minimally physicalist background (consistent with *property* dualism), all the neurophysiological states invoked to causally explain intelligible behavior are naturally seen as unconscious *mental* states.

To some extent, the thesis that all mental states are conscious (and the substance dualism that underwrites it) can be excised from Brentano's theory of consciousness with limited repercussions. It is perfectly coherent to hold that some mental states can be accurately framed either as perceptions-of-*x* or as perceptions-of-perception-of-*x*, while others can be accurately framed only as perceptions-of-*x*. The former are conscious mental states, the latter unconscious mental states. Both may be token-identical with some neurophysiological states. The upshot would be a picture that incorporates Brentano's theory of consciousness, as interpreted here, into a wider outlook which is consistent with minimal physicalism in the above sense and is hospitable to unconscious mentality. This is not Brentano's view, but it is a coherent view, and what its coherence shows is the logical independence of Brentano's theory of consciousness from both his substance dualism and his rejection of unconscious mentality.

Conclusion

Although the rejection of unconscious mentality may be an excisable part of Brentano's theory of consciousness, it is crucial to remember when examining his philosophy of mind. For it entails a coextension of mentality and consciousness, with the result that many claims which at bottom target consciousness end up being presented, in Brentano's pen, as concerning mentality writ large. For example, when Brentano claims that all mental states involve inner perception of their own occurrence, what he really means is that all *conscious* states are such; he puts the claim in terms of *mental* states only because he thinks that all mental states are conscious. Another important example concerns the doctrine of intentionality, to which we turn in the next chapter.

The goal of the present chapter has been to present a new interpretation of Brentano's theory of consciousness, what I have called the 'Fregean identity interpretation.' I have argued that for Brentano, every conscious state is inner-perceived by its subject, and moreover, that the conscious state and its inner perception are mutually merely-distinguishable. Accordingly, a tree perception and the inner perception of it are just different ways one and the same underlying reality may be (accurately) framed or conceived of. They relate to each other as the morning star and evening stars do, and as the road from Athens to Thebes and the road from Thebes to Athens do. This interpretation, I have claimed, recovers the grain of truth in both the identity and fusion interpretations of Brentano's theory of consciousness. In a sense, it subsumes them under a more fundamental interpretation. More importantly, this new interpretation has the virtue of rendering the theory particularly attractive, imputing on it certain advantages compared to modern alternatives and blunting the force of traditional objections to it.²⁷

¹ I develop this line of thought myself in Kriegel 2009: 5, 271-2; 2015: 47-53.

² Speaking of a state of consciousness should not be taken to imply that consciousness is a *thing* whose state is being mentioned. Just as we speak of states of *mind* without implying that the mind is a thing in the sense that a chair is, so we can speak of consciousness without that implication.

³ Rosenthal distinguishes between transitive and intransitive notions of consciousness: transitive consciousness is the property ostensibly designated in such statements as 'S is conscious of a tree'; intransitive consciousness is the property ostensibly designated in such statements as 'S's thought of the tree is conscious.' With these notions in place, Rosenthal formulates the following principle: (Intransitively) conscious states are states we are (transitively) conscious of. Given relatively straightforward links between the intransitive/transitive and active/passive distinctions, the transitivity and awareness principles amount to the same.

⁴ Sometimes Brentano sounds as though he reserves the term *Erkenntnis* to judgments with special epistemic properties: *immediately self-evident* judgments. As we will see in §4, Brentano holds that inner perception *has* those epistemic properties. Since he also takes it to be a judgment, it is clear that inner perception qualifies as *Erkenntnis* from this perspective as well.

⁵ Lycan's view is very different from Brentano's along the second dimension in which theories inspired by the awareness principle differ: he construes the perceptual awareness as clearly numerically different from the conscious state of which it is an awareness, whereas Brentano does not. Locke is often considered to have been on Lycan's side in this disagreement (see Guzeldere 1995 among many others), but this is highly questionable (see Coventry and Kriegel 2008).

⁶ Another formulation: while in contemporary philosophy of mind sensory perception strikes us as paradigmatically perceptual, and inner perception (when it is recognized at all) is considered perceptual only insofar as it sufficiently resembles sensory perception, for Brentano the opposite holds, that is, inner perception is seen as paradigmatically perceptual, and sensory perception qualifies as perceptual only by courtesy of its resemblance to inner perception.

⁷ Importantly, inner observation of *past* experiences, presumably using episodic memory, is perfectly possible according to Brentano (1874: I, 48 [34]). But without inner perception of current experiences we would be unable to remember them later (1874: I, 60-1 [43]). It is unclear whether inner observation of past experiences deserves the name 'introspection' – Brentano does not seem to grant the name, but others do. Titchener (1912: 491), for example, calls the examination of past conscious experiences in episodic memory 'indirect introspection.' Here I use introspection, in line with Brentano's usage, to denote a 'live' awareness of a simultaneous phenomenon.

⁸ Thus the distinction between inner observation and inner perception can be accounted for in terms of the focal/peripheral distinction. There is no need to account for it in terms of the disposition/manifestation distinction, as some Brentano commentators repeatedly suggest (e.g., Kim 1978, Rutte 1987).

⁹ Importantly, though, for Brentano there is no guarantee that the visual experience is the same once I attend to it as it was when I attended to its object (e.g., the laptop). It may well be that the experience's phenomenal character has changed in light of the fact that I started attending to it.

¹⁰ This is not yet to say that I can decide to attend to anything that goes on in my mind. If in addition to the conscious anxiety about the afternoon appointment I harbor an unconscious anxiety about my mother's health, I will not be in a position to attend to the latter, since it is unconscious.

¹¹ Throughout this book, I translate *Evidenz* as *self-evidence*. Translators have largely chosen to translate it as ‘evidence,’ but this seems misleading – the English ‘self-evidence’ is much closer to Brentano’s notion of *Evidenz* (Simons 2013).

¹² This question has garnered a considerable amount of attention in recent philosophy of mind (Thomasson 2000, Caston 2002, Hossack 2002, 2006, Kriegel 2003a, 2009, Thomas 2003, D.W. Smith 2004, Zahavi 2004, Drummond 2006, Textor 2006, 2013).

¹³ In Brentano’s immediate world of philosophical reference, the closest case resembling Frege’s is Aristotle’s case of the *road from Athens to Thebes* and the *road from Thebes to Athens* (*Physics* III.3). Aristotle claimed that these are one and the same ‘in number’ but different ‘in *logos*.’ It is not immediately clear what to make of this notion, but the case appears to parallel Frege’s: Phosphorus and Hesperus, too, are one in number but different in *logos*! There is only one road, but we can *think of it* in two different ways, indeed *regard* or *consider* it in two different ways; and likewise there is only one planet, which lends itself to conceptualization or appreciation in two different ways. To my knowledge, Brentano nowhere discusses Aristotle’s case of the Athens-Thebes road. But Aristotle also mentions in the *Physics* another example of the same phenomenon: A’s agency and B’s ‘patiency’ when A acts upon B. Brentano does discuss *this* Aristotelian case, writing in a dictation from 1908: ‘Aristotle said that an action and a passion are the same: “A brings about B” and “B is brought about by A” appear to say the same thing. In such cases, the same accident would be ascribed (*zugeschrieben*) to two things [A and B], though in a different way to each. (Brentano 1933: 55 [49]) Superficially, suggests Brentano, one might think that A’s causing B involves the instantiation of two relational properties (accidents): A’s property of causing B and B’s property of being caused by A. But in reality only one relation is instantiated in such an event, though a relation which may be *ascribed in two different ways*.

¹⁴ For more modern studies and developments, see Baumgartner & Simons 1994 and Baumgartner 2013.

¹⁵ The rejection of the supplementation axiom has certainly met its share of ridicule (Simons 2006: 92), but with some charity may be made sense of (Chisholm 1978: 202). Note, in any case, that for *substances* (such as Socrates and the Eiffel Tower), the supplementation principle holds: if they have a proper part, then they also have some another proper part that supplements it.

¹⁶ I am assuming here what I am perhaps not entitled to, namely, that the spinons, holons, and orbitons ‘making up’ an electron are not really separable parts of it. As we will see momentarily, the crucial feature of a separable part is that the whole’s destruction would not entail *its* destruction. But as far as I understand the physics, it makes no sense to suppose that, if we could destroy an electron, the spinon might be ‘left behind.’ Spinons are more like electron-tropes than physical electron-parts, though tropes that behaves curiously independently in extreme circumstances. I might be wrong about all this, but if so we would just need to change the example, taking a genuinely unsplittable physical constituent as our example.

¹⁷ More accurately: there are *at least* two notions of parthood. For reasons that will not concern us here, it is natural to read Brentano as distinguishing in fact *four* notions of parthood (see esp. Brentano 1956 §20.42). For our purposes here, only the central distinction between separable and distinctional parthood will matter.

¹⁸ In general, Brentano uses many topological phenomena as examples of distinctional parthood (Brentano 1976). Thus, a boundary between two adjacent regions of space is merely-distinguishable from either region.

¹⁹ Here we can see how Husserl’s (1901) distinction between pieces and moments is just a rebranding of Brentano’s distinction between separable and distinctional parts. Husserl writes: ‘Each

part that is independent relatively to a whole *W* we call a Piece (Portion), each part that is non-independent relatively to *W* we call a Moment (or abstract part) of this same whole *W*.' (Husserl 1901: 29)

²⁰ This may not have been Brentano's view in the *Psychology*, where he describes the auditory and visual parts of an audiovisual experience as 'divisives of one and the same unitary thing' (1874: I, 224 [157]). By 1890, it is clear that he uses 'divisive' and 'distinctional part' to mean the same thing. It may be that Brentano later sharpened his notion of a divisive, and in the *Psychology* it would still intended rather vaguely to pick out a special kind of part, or it may be that he changed his substantive commitments on the relationships between the auditory and visual parts.

²¹ Accordingly, no gap can open up between the reality of an experience's phenomenal character and its appearance in inner perception, that is, the phenomenal character it in fact has and the one it inner-perceptually appears to have.

²² The notion of direction of fit will be discussed more fully in Chap. 3.

²³ There is a kind of *effort* involved in this exercise – an effort not unlike the one we make, say, when we try to wrap our minds around quantum indeterminacy. We may first resist accepting it at face value, attempting to explain the apparent indeterminacy in terms of hidden variables, say. But when eventually the gambit fails, we have to stretch our minds in one way or another, exercising a special kind of theoretical imagination, to grasp a fundamentally and ultimately indeterminate world.

²⁴ For Brentano's discussion of apparently mental dispositions, see Brentano 1874: I, 86 [60]. It must be admitted that to posit a dispositional desire *on top* of the disposition to desire would seem to be explanatorily pointless. Thus dispositional desires, insofar as they are meant to be more than just dispositions to desire, would appear to be explanatorily preempted by the latter. An analogous point on dispositional *beliefs* is made by Audi (1994).

²⁵ Contrary to what some have claimed (e.g., Moran 1996), there is no question that Brentano was a substance dualist. For he believed in the immortality of the soul, which he thought was demonstrated by discontinuities between our mental lives and animals' (see esp. manuscript XPs62: 54011-54012, quoted in Rollinger 2011: 273-4).

²⁶ The definition of physicalism is a contentious matter, but most anyone requires *more* than just token-identity of mental with physical phenomena. Thus, Papineau (1993) defines physicalism as the conjunction of token-identity and the (metaphysical) supervenience of mental types upon physical types. Thus what I refer to in the text as 'minimal physicalism' may in fact be too weak to qualify as physicalism. Weak though it is, however, Brentano seems to reject it.

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