

Chapter 4.

Judgment

We already encountered two aspects of Brentano's account of judgment in Chap. 3. First, Brentano offers an *attitudinal* account of judgment, according to which what makes a given mental state a judgment is that it employs a certain mode of intentional directedness, the mode of *presenting-as-true* (or *presenting-as-false*). Secondly, Brentano uses the term 'judgment' idiosyncratically, to denote not just conceptual thoughts but all conscious states with mind-to-world direction of fit, including perceptual experiences. These were the aspects of Brentano's account of judgment that mattered for his classification of mental phenomena. But there is one aspect of Brentano's theory of judgment that is much more crucial for his ontology and metaontology, and which has not surfaced yet. This is Brentano's astonishing claim that judgment is *not a propositional attitude*, but an objectual attitude. In this chapter, I offer an exposition of this highly heterodox theory (§1), discuss the case for it (§2), and consider some objections (§3). In the following two chapters, we will see the theory's implications for metaontology and ultimately ontology.

1. The Belief-in Theory of Judgment

The core of Brentano's theory of judgment can be represented as the conjunction of two theses. The first is that *all judgments are existential*, the second that the existence-commitment involved in existential judgments is an *attitudinal property* of theirs. That is:

EXISTENTIAL :: For any judgment J, J is an existential judgment.

ATTITUDINAL :: For any existential Judgment E, E's existence-commitment is an attitudinal property of E.

In this section, I offer a preliminary explanation and motivation of the two theses. The remainder of the chapter will consider the case for them in more detail.

According to EXISTENTIAL, every judgment is in the business of affirming or denying the existence of something. Thus the judgments that there are marine mammals and that there are no flying dogs are paradigmatic. We are accustomed to think that not all judgments are like this – some are in the business of doing more than just affirming or denying the existence of something. Many, it is natural to think, involve an element of *predication*: rather than commenting on what there is, they make a claim about what something is *like*, what *properties* it has. Thus, the judgment that all dogs are cute predicates cuteness of dogs, thereby 'claiming' that dogs have a certain property, not (just) that they exist. Brentano, however, insists that predication is an accident of language that does not reflect the psychological reality of judgments. (More on that in §3.) In reality, judging that all dogs are cute is just judging that *there is no non-cute dog*. It thus comments on what there is after all.

To show that this generalizes, Brentano systematically goes over the four types of categorical statement in Aristotle's square of opposition (A, E, I, and O) and shows that they are all reducible or 'traceable back' (*rückführbar*) to existential statements (Brentano 1874: II, 56-7 [213-4], 1956: 121):

- (A) <All dogs are cute> is traceable to <There is not a non-cute dog>.
- (E) <No dogs are cute> is traceable to <There is not a cute dog>.
- (I) <Some dogs are cute> is traceable to <There is a cute dog>.
- (O) <Some dogs are not cute> is traceable to <There is a non-cute dog>.¹

Brentano's talk of statements 'being traceable back' to other statements suggests he has something like *paraphrase* in mind: 'All dogs are cute' is paraphraseable into 'There is not a non-cute dog.' Such statements can *express* judgments, or they can be

embedded into corresponding statements that *report* judgments: 'S judges that all dogs are cute' is paraphraseable into 'S judges that there is no non-cute dog.'

This is, at least, Brentano's treatment of Aristotle's four types of statements *for most of his career*. In the final decade of his life, he seems to have complicated the account considerably, adopting his so-called double-judgment theory (see especially Appendix IX of the *Psychology*, as well as Brentano 1956 §30). We are as yet not in a position to understand the double-judgment theory. I will revert to it when we are. For now let me only point out that the double-judgment theory has two main parts, one of which will make no difference to our concerns here while the other will.

Once all categorical statements are shown to paraphrase into existential ones, it is easy to show that hypotheticals follow suit (Brentano 1874: II, 59-60 [218]).² For example:

(H) <If some dog is three-legged, then it is cute> is traceable back to <There is not a non-cute three-legged dog>.

Conclusion:

The reducibility/traceability (*Rückführbarkeit*) of categorical statements (*Sätze*), indeed the reducibility of all statements which express a judgment, to existential judgments is therefore indubitable. (Brentano 1874: II, 60 [218])

More cautiously, all statements used *in Aristotelian logic* turn out to be disguised existentials. We will have to consider other types of statement in §2.

According to EXISTENTIAL, then, all acts of judging are forms of mentally committing to something's existence or nonexistence. According to ATTITUDINAL, now, the existence-commitment which existential judgments carry is an aspect of their *attitude* rather than *content*. On this view, mental commitment to the existence of *x* is not an aspect of *what* the judgment presents but of *how* it does the presenting. In other words: an existential judgment's commitment to the existence of *x* is not a matter of presenting *x* as existent, but a matter of presenting-as-existent *x*. Thus, to

judge that some dogs are cute is to perform a mental act that presents-as-existent cute dogs, that is, presents cute dogs in an existence-affirming *manner*.³

The attitudinal account of mental existence-commitment is unsurprising given that, for Brentano, what characterizes judgment in the first instance is the attitudinal property of presenting-as-true. If all positive judgments present-as-true and all truth is existential, it stands to reason that positive judgments should turn out to be characterized by presenting-as-*existent*.

When it comes to simple *negative* existential judgments, such as that no dog can fly, Brentano's view is that these present-as-*nonexistent* some object, in this case a flying dog. Here we can start understanding Brentano's reluctance to reduce disbelief that *p* to belief that $\sim p$ (noted in Chap. 3). One *could* have the view that the judgment that there are no flying dogs presents-as-existent the absence of a flying dog, but this would embroil one in an ontology of absences. Construing that judgment as a mental state that presents-as-*nonexistent* a flying dog swiftly avoids this potential can of worms.



If the commitment to something's existence or nonexistence does not show up in judgments' content, then that content is exhausted by the individual item whose existence is affirmed or denied. If a judgment that a three-legged dog exists simply presents-as-existent a three-legged dog, then *what* is presented is exhausted by a certain kind of individual object: a three-legged dog. It follows that judgment is an *objectual* rather than *propositional* attitude.⁴ Paradigmatic objectual attitudes include love and fear: I love my wife, not (only) *that* my wife is thus or so; I fear death, not (only) *that* death might be so or thus.⁵ Brentano's theory of judgment casts judgment as continuous with love and fear in being equally objectual: judgments are always directed at some sort of individual object, but present-as-existent/nonexistent that object.⁶ The object at which one's judgment is directed can be quite complicated – a cute dog, a cute flying dog, a three-legged non-cute flying dog, etc. – but in any case what is presented by the judgment is always some kind of

individual object. It is never any entity of a different ontological category, such as a proposition or a state of affairs (Brentano 1930: 122 [108]). This has momentous consequences for Brentano's metaphysics, as we will see in Chap. 5-6.

It might seem odd to posit a *cognitive* attitude directed at objects and not propositions or states of affairs. Love and fear are *emotional* attitudes, and the suspicion may arise that the objectual structure is special to such attitudes. But in fact, we do speak not only of belief-that but also of belief-*in* – as in 'Jimmy believes in Santa Claus.' Belief-*in* is clearly a *cognitive objectual attitude*: the content of Jimmy's state is exhausted by some individual object, Santa Claus, the commitment to whose existence comes in at the level of attitude, through the attitude of believing-*in*.⁷ So essentially, Brentano's theory of judgment can be summarized thus:

BIT :: All positive judgments are *occurrent acts of believing-in*; all negative judgments are *occurrent acts of disbelieving-in*.⁸

Judging that some dogs are cute is just performing a mental act that presents-as-existent a cute dog, that is, occurrently believing in a cute dog; judging that no dogs can fly is just performing a mental act that presents-as-nonexistent a flying dog, that is, occurrently disbelieving in a flying dog.

To be sure, because of a long philosophical tradition of treating propositional attitudes as fundamental in cognition, it is natural for us today to think of 'S believes in *x*' as shorthand for 'S believes that *x* exists.'⁹ For Brentano, this gets the order of analysis exactly wrong. The more fundamental notion is belief-*in*, precisely because it captures correctly the psychological structure of judgments, in particular the locus of existence-commitment in the attitude rather than content. Accordingly, Brentano would propose to take 'S believes in *x*' as fundamental and consider 'S believes that *x* exists' a cumbersome and misleading way of saying the same thing. This allows us to paraphrase the reports of Aristotelian categorical and hypothetical judgments more straightforwardly:

(A) 'S judges that all dogs are cute' \Leftrightarrow 'S disbelieves in a non-cute dog'

- (E) 'S judges that no dogs are cute' \Leftrightarrow 'S disbelieves in a cute dog'
- (I) 'S judges that some dogs are cute' \Leftrightarrow 'S believes in a cute dog'
- (O) 'S judges that some dogs are not cute' \Leftrightarrow 'S believes in a non-cute dog'
- (H) 'S judges that if a dog is three-legged then he is cute' \Leftrightarrow 'S disbelieves in a three-legged non-cute dog'

Here, ' \Leftrightarrow ' just means 'can be paraphrased into.' The arrow is bidirectional because paraphraseability is a symmetric relation: if ' p ' is a good paraphrase of ' q ,' then ' q ' is an equally good paraphrase of ' p .' It is the philosophical *substance* of Brentano's theory of judgment that in each case it is the right-hand-side report that captures correctly the structure of judgment, even though it is the left-hand-side report that is more common in everyday speak.

I call Brentano's theory of judgment the *Belief-In Theory*, or BIT for short.¹⁰ According to BIT, all judgments are conscious acts of (dis)believing in something (some kind of individual object). Brentano's terminology is different, of course. He calls the cognitive objectual attitude that embodies mental commitment to something's existence 'acceptance' or 'acknowledgement' (*Anerkennung*) and the cognitive objectual attitude embodying commitment to nonexistence 'rejection' or 'denial' (*Verwerfung*). However, the associated verbs ('accepting,' 'acknowledging,' 'rejecting,' 'denying') can perfectly grammatically take propositional complements. 'Believing in' and 'disbelieving in' have this advantage, that they can only take objectual complements. They are thus better for expressing Brentano's theory.¹¹

Whatever the terminology, a crucial aspect of BIT is that judgment is an objectual attitude:

OBJECTUAL :: All judgments are objectual attitudes.

OBJECTUAL follows from EXISTENTIAL and ATTITUDINAL given that (dis)belief-in is an objectual attitude. We may formulate the master argument as follows:

- 1) All token beliefs are existential (EXISTENTIAL);
- 2) All existential beliefs are beliefs-in (ATTITUDINAL);

- 3) All beliefs-in are objectual attitudes; therefore,
- 4) All token beliefs are objectual attitudes (OBJECTUAL).

On the emerging view, the sole business of cognition is to manage one's belief in some objects and disbelief in others. Obviously, this is an extremely heterodox view of cognition, which would require a very good argument indeed. I now turn to consider the case for it.

2. The Case for the Belief-in Theory

In the *Psychology*, Brentano spends considerable time and effort arguing that judgment is not essentially predicative. For example, he argues that since perception is a kind of judgment, and perception is not essentially predicative (sometimes we just perceive *a thing*), judgment need not be predicative (Brentano 1874: II, 50 [209]). However, these arguments establish, at most, that *some* judgments are not predicative (and therefore potentially non-propositional). They cannot establish that *all* judgments are objectual rather than propositional attitudes, as OBJECTUAL requires. As far as I can tell, there is no direct argument for OBJECTUAL in the *Psychology*. Nonetheless, in some of Brentano's (posthumously published) letters, dictations, and lecture notes, one can identify a case for EXISTENTIAL and ATTITUDINAL, hence for OBJECTUAL.

The starting point of Brentano's argument is a simple dispensability consideration. In a 1906 letter to his student Anton Marty, he writes:

... every assertion affirming your *entia rationis* [notably, propositions] has its equivalent in an assertion having only *realia* [i.e., concrete individual objects] as objects... Not only are your judgments equivalent to judgments about concrete objects (*reale Gegenstände*), the latter are always available [for paraphrasing the former]. Hence the *entia rationis* are entirely unnecessary/superfluous (*unnützig*) and contrary to the economy of nature. (Brentano 1930: 93 [84]; see also Brentano 1956 §17)

The argument proceeds in two steps. First: every indicative statement that expresses a judgment can be paraphrased into an existential, meaning that indicatives ostensibly expressing beliefs-that can be paraphrased into ones ostensibly expressing beliefs-in. Second: the ontological commitments associated with a belief-in are always more economical than those associated with its corresponding belief-that; for propositions and the like *entia rationis* are more ontologically extravagant than concrete objects and the like *entia realia*. Accordingly, positing beliefs-in to the exclusion of beliefs-that is both feasible and commendable: feasible in virtue of the availability of paraphrase, commendable in virtue of ontological parsimony. The upshot can be summarized thus: the conjunction of EXISTENTIAL and ATTITUDINAL delivers significant ontological economies, and should be adopted on that basis. In what follows, I consider first the feasibility claim (§2.1), then the commendability claim (§2.2).

2.1. Dispensing with Beliefs-that is Feasible

In Brentano, the first step of the argument relies on producing the paraphrases for categorical and hypothetical statements in Aristotelian logic (as seen in §1.1). One may wonder whether paraphrases will be available when we move to modern logic. I now turn to consider some (though not all) particularly hard cases: singular statements, relational statements, ‘molecular’ or ‘compound’ statements, and modal statements. I will argue that all admit of reasonably plausible existential paraphrases, with the potential exception of certain molecular statements.

2.1.1. Singular judgments

Start with such singular statements as ‘Beyoncé is famous.’ These have the form ‘*a* is *F*,’ which does not immediately fit into any of A, E, I, or O. Leibniz, who also rejected the separation of subject and predicate (Leibniz 1686 §8), construed singulars as having the A form. So, ‘Beyoncé is famous’ amounts to being analyzed as ‘All Beyoncés are

famous,' which is Brentano's hands amounts to 'There is not a non-famous Beyoncé.' Sometimes Brentano sounds like a Leibnizian on this, but on other occasions he seems to treat singulars rather as having the I form.¹² This analyzes 'Beyoncé is famous' as 'Some Beyoncé is famous,' and ultimately as 'There is a famous Beyoncé.' In this second approach, unlike the Leibnizian one, 'a is F' commits to the *existence* of something rather than to the *nonexistence* of something. If we follow Russell (1905) in taking the existence of *a* to be a precondition for the truth of 'a is F,' the Brentanian tack should appeal to us more than the Leibnizian.¹³

But what does 'There is a famous Beyoncé' exactly mean? A traditional descriptivist about names would take 'Beyoncé' to pick out whichever individual satisfies a description that lists certain central properties of Beyoncé's. Call an individual that instantiates all the relevant properties *Beyoncé-sque*.¹⁴ Within the descriptivist framework, then, 'There is a famous Beyoncé' means 'There is a famous Beyoncé-sque individual.' Within a direct-reference approach, however, 'Beyoncé' does not refer by courtesy of any description. Rather, it picks out whatever object is appropriately related to it by 'natural,' broadly causal relations.¹⁵ In that framework, it is more natural to understand 'There is a famous Beyoncé' as meaning something like 'There is famous-Beyoncé,' or 'Famous-Beyoncé exists,' where 'famous-Beyoncé' is used as a name. Here the statement is used to simply affirm the existence of someone.¹⁶ The burning question is of course what the name 'Famous-Beyoncé' refers to. Who is this person famous-Beyoncé?! This question takes center stage in Chap. 6.¹⁷

A particularly difficult variety of singular judgment is presented by demonstrative judgments, such as 'This dog is cute.' On the direct-reference view, if 'this dog' happens to refer to Julius, for instance, then 'This dog is cute' is equivalent to 'There is cute-Julius.' On a descriptivist view, it is equivalent rather to something like 'There is a cute dog-being-referred-to-herewith.'

This treatment of demonstratives gives us, by the way, the tools to understand the first part of Brentano's later double-judgment theory. Late in his life,

Brentano came to think that ‘Some dogs are not cute’ expresses *two* judgments: (i) a judgment committing to the existence of certain dogs, and (ii) a judgment to the effect that the dogs referred to in (i) are not cute. The existential paraphrase is therefore something like: ‘There is a dog & There is not a cute dog-being-referred-to-in-the-previous-conjunct.’ Interestingly, Brentano thinks that the same double-judgment structure occurs in the judgment ‘Some dogs *are* cute’: we have here first (i) a belief in a dog and then (ii) a belief in the cuteness of *that* dog. We can see the point of this by comparing ‘Some brown dogs are cute’ and ‘Some cute dogs are brown.’ Intuitively, these say different things. Yet the original account would paraphrase them into ‘There is a cute brown dog’ and ‘There is a brown cute dog,’ respectively, which seem to say the same thing (unless we are willing to distinguish in our ontology between a brown-cute-dog and a cute-brown-dog).¹⁸ The double-judgment theory provides distinct paraphrases: ‘There is a brown dog & There is not a cute brown-dog-being-referred-to-in-the-previous-conjunct’ and ‘There is a cute dog & There is not a brown cute-dog-being-referred-to-in-the-previous-conjunct.’

2.1.2. Relational judgments

I conclude that singulars are amenable to existential paraphrase, pending trouble in ultimately understanding what such names as ‘Famous-Beyoncé’ refer to. What about relational statements, such as ‘Beyoncé and Jay-Z are in love’? Brentano seems to propose that this could be paraphrased into something like ‘There is an in-love sum of Beyoncé and Jay-Z.’ In a 1908 dictation on ‘Ontological Questions,’ he writes:

Thus if one part of an egg is red and another blue, then ‘being multicolored’ (*buntfarbig*) befits the whole. It comes to the same whether I say that the egg is multicolored or that the relevant individual parts differ in color. Wherefore it can be seen that with relations we are dealing with so to speak collective determinations. We are dealing with a plurality of things which are united (*vereinigt*) into one thing, and where a certain determination befits the whole in virtue of (*vermöge*) its various parts. (Brentano 1933: 57-8 [50])

Here relational statements are paraphrased into structural ones: to say that Beyoncé and Jay-Z are in love is to say that the mereological sum of Beyoncé and Jay-Z has a certain intrinsic structural property, namely, that property an object has when it has two proper parts each of which loves the other (and does not have any proper part that does not overlap those two). More generally, every relational statement aRb is paraphraseable into a statement of the form $Sa+b$, where S is a structural property of the sum $a+b$. That is, 'Relation R holds between a and b ' is always paraphraseable into 'There is an S -structured sum of a and b .'¹⁹

One problem is that this strategy cannot extend to antisymmetric relations, such as being-the-mother-of. One cannot paraphrase 'Beyoncé is the mother of Blue Ivy' into 'There is a motherly-structured sum of Beyoncé and Blue Ivy,' because the latter is compatible with Blue Ivy being the mother of Beyoncé. The source of the problem is that while there is such a thing as an *ordered set*, there is no such thing as an *ordered sum* – this is one of the key differences between the grouping operation and the summing operation. (This is why the symmetry of composition is another axiom of both Classical and Brentano's Mereology.) It might be suggested that statements ostensibly about antisymmetric relations could be paraphrased into statements about relational properties, for example if 'Beyoncé is the mother of Blue Ivy' could be paraphrased into 'There is a Blue-Ivy-mothering Beyoncé.' However, as Whitehead and Russell (1913) already showed in the *Principia*, the paraphrase fails: 'Beyoncé is the mother of Blue Ivy' entails 'Blue Ivy exists,' whereas 'There is a Blue-Ivy-mothering Beyoncé' does not. Nonetheless, if this is the only problem with the analysis of relations into relational properties, one wonders whether 'Beyoncé is the mother of Blue Ivy' could not simply be paraphrased into the conjunctive 'Beyoncé is the mother of Blue Ivy & Blue Ivy exists.' The latter certainly does entail that Blue Ivy exists!

This does require that we understand an ostensibly atomic judgment as a disguised compound judgment. That is perhaps not a major liability – provided we have suitable existential paraphrases for compound judgments.

2.1.3. Compound judgments

So far, I have considered only atomic statements, that is, statements no proper parts of which are statements. But what about compound or molecular statements? Since every binary truth-function is definable in terms of conjunction and negation, the task is really just to handle those two – and their combinations.

In separation, they are quite easy to handle. When it comes to straightforward conjunctions of the form $p \ \& \ q$, such as ‘Some cat is white and some dog is brown,’ at least two options are open. One paraphrases them into atomic existentials about mereological sums, such as ‘There is a sum of a white cat and a brown dog.’ The judgment expressed here is a belief in the relevant sum. The other option is to treat conjunctions as expressing a plurality of simultaneous (atomic) judgments. On this approach, in truth we do not make *one* judgment expressed by ‘Some cat is white and some dog is brown.’ Instead, we simultaneously perform *two* judgments – an occurrent belief in a white cat and an occurrent belief in a brown dog – and we use conjunctive statements to express such multiplicity of judgments. In a way, the first option appeals to belief in a mereological sum, the second to a mereological sum of beliefs-in.

As for simple negation, in the Aristotelian system there are two separate cases: the E form (‘No dogs are cute’) and the O form (‘Some dogs are not cute’). As we have seen, the former Brentano handles through the attitude of disbelief, which – recall from Chap. 3 – he takes to be a *sui generis* attitude irreducible to belief. This nonreductive treatment of disbelief allows Brentano to paraphrase ‘S believes that no dogs are cute’ into ‘S disbelieves in a cute dog.’ (Indeed, one senses that it is precisely the potential for accommodating such negations that *motivates* the nonreductive account of disbelief to Brentano.) As for such negations as ‘Some dogs are not cute,’ we have seen that Brentano construes them as expressing a special kind of positive judgment, in our case a belief in an uncute dog.

However, the wide-scope negation can also be treated in another way, indeed is so treated in Brentano's aforementioned double-judgment theory. Brentano proposes that 'No dogs are cute' really means 'It is not the case that some dogs are cute.' And to cast this as an existential, he claims that 'It is not the case that some dogs are cute' amounts to asserting that anyone who judges that some dogs are cute is judging incorrectly. The basic point may be put as follows: 'No dog is cute' is ultimately to be paraphrased into 'There is not a correct (*richtige*) belief in a cute dog.'²⁰ Here the 'double judgment' is not a matter of combination of two judgments, but of a single second-order judgment. This alternative treatment of wide-scope negation may be only optional at this point, given the availability of 'There is not a cute dog' as a legitimate (and simpler!) existential paraphrase of 'No dogs are cute.' But as we will soon see, this device is necessary for handling paraphrasing certain compound judgments that involve *both* negation *and* conjunction.

There are several ways to combine conjunction and negation operators in a single statement. Consider first statements of the form $p \ \& \ \sim q$, such as 'Some cat is cute and no dog can fly.' If one were sufficiently ontologically lax, one could understand such a statement as expressing a belief in a cute and *the absence of a flying dog*. But Brentano is not laid-back enough to admit absences – or as he puts it, *negativa* – in his ontology (Brentano 1930: 81 [71], a fragment from 1905). If there are no absences, then a fortiori there are no mereological sums of cats and absences – and yet the belief expressed by 'Some cat is cute and no dog can fly' is true. It would seem, then, that Brentano's only live option is to take 'Some cat is cute and no dog can fly' to express a sum of two separate judgments, the belief in a cute cat and the disbelief in a flying dog.

Unfortunately, the opposite happens with statements of the form $\sim(p \ \& \ q)$, such as 'It is not the case that some cat is cute and some dog can fly.' Here there is only one judgment that can be said to be expressed. That judgment is a disbelief in the mereological sum of a cute cat and a flying dog. The unpalatable result here is that Brentano has no unified account of $p \ \& \ \sim q$ and $\sim(p \ \& \ q)$. He must trot out

different treatments for different combinations of conjunction and negation. That is something of an embarrassment.

Worse, neither account can handle a statement of the form $\sim(p \ \& \ \sim q)$, such as 'It is not the case that there are flying dogs but no cute cats.' On the one hand, it would be implausible to take such a statement to express a disbelief in the mereological sum of (a) a flying dog and (b) the absence of a cute cat. For then its negation would have to be taken to express a *belief* in that sum, and hence in an absence (which would commit the believer to the reality of absences). On the other hand, nor does 'It is not the case that there are flying dogs but no cute cats' seem to express a disbelief in the co-occurrence of two separate judgments, a belief in a cute cat and a disbelief in a flying dog. For what the subject rejects are not beliefs themselves. (For all she knows the beliefs may well exist!) To that extent, statements of the form $\sim(p \ \& \ \sim q)$ can be handled neither by the '(dis)belief in sums' strategy nor by the 'sum of (dis)beliefs' strategy.

It is here that the introduction of second-order paraphrases for wide-scope negations becomes indispensable. Brentano's idea is to paraphrase 'It is not the case that there are flying dogs but no cute cats' into 'There is no sum of a correct belief in a flying dog and a correct disbelief in a cute cat.' This expresses a disbelief in such a sum of correct judgments. The point is that no one could *correctly* both (a) believe in a flying dog and (b) disbelieve in a cute cat – and this is what statements of the form $\sim(p \ \& \ \sim q)$ really express.

One might reasonably complain that we are left here with a distressingly balkanized treatment of negation: we have seen different devices for handling $\sim p$, $p \ \& \ \sim q$, $\sim(p \ \& \ q)$, and $\sim(p \ \& \ \sim q)$. These devices are: a sui generis attitude of disbelief, single statements expressing sums of different judgments, single judgments about mereological sums of objects, and second-order judgments about correct first-order judgments. This level of disunity looks like a major cost of Brentano's theory of judgment, the complaint might be.

However, it would seem that once we have introduced the device of second-order judgment about correct first-order judgment, it can be applied retrospectively to handle uniformly all four cases: $\sim p$ can be understood as expressing a disbelief in a correct judgment that p , $p \& \sim q$ can be understood as expressing a judgment that p and a disbelief in a correct judgment that q , and $\sim(p \& q)$ can be understood as a disbelief in a sum of correct judgments that p and that q .²¹

There is, however, another objection to which Brentano's account of negation *is* susceptible. Recall that Brentano's paraphrases are not intended as technical moves facilitating the regimentation of a formal language. They are intended to capture the deep psychological reality of our cognitive life. Arguably, however, it is psychologically unrealistic to think that 'No dogs are purple' actually expresses the second-order judgment that there is no correct belief in a purple dog. For harboring such a second-order judgment would seem to require the possession of such concepts as BELIEF and CORRECTNESS, yet a child may well believe that no dogs are purple without possessing those concepts. Furthermore, certain beliefs that appear simple enough that a child could have them are cast as extraordinarily complex in Brentano's theory, again making the theory psychologically unrealistic.

A good example is disjunctive judgments, such as would be expressed by 'Some cat is white or some dog is brown.' Chisholm (1976: 92) suggested on Brentano's behalf that we posit *disjunctiva*, in this case the individual which is either a white cat or a brown dog, and say that 'Some cat is white or some dog is brown' expresses an occurrent belief in this disjunctivum. However, Brentano himself would likely frown on *disjunctiva* just as much as on *negtiva*/absences. Instead, he exploits the definability of disjunction in terms of negation and conjunction:

... anyone who says 'There is an A or there is a B or there is a C' expresses the following: in contemplating that A is not and B is not and C is not, he considers such a combination of thoughts incorrect. (Brentano 1930: 80 [70])

We know that ' $p \vee q$ ' is equivalent to ' $\sim(\sim p \& \sim q)$.' So we can paraphrase 'Some cat is white or some dog is brown' into 'It is not the case that no cat is white and no dog

is brown,' and then into 'There is no mereological sum of a correct disbelief in a white cat and a correct disbelief in a brown dog.'²² However, it is quite plausible that a child could grasp the notion that some cat is white or some dog is brown well before she has the cognitive resources to grasp the idea of a mereological sum of correct disbeliefs.

2.1.4 Modal judgments

Finally, let us consider *modal* statements. These come in two varieties. The easy case is statements about possibilities pertaining to actual objects, for example 'There could be flying dogs.' Such statements can plausibly be paraphrased into 'There is a possibly-flying dog.' The latter attributes to something that exists, dogs, a special kind of property (a 'modal' property), that of possibly-flying. In general, where *a* is actual, 'Possibly, *a* is F' can be paraphrased into 'There is a possibly-F *a*.' However, this strategy has two costs. First, it requires accepting irreducibly modal ways a thing could be. Secondly, it does not work for modal statements about nonactual objects that nonetheless *could* exist, for example 'Unicorns are possible.' An industrial-strength modal realist in Lewis' (1986) vein might extend the strategy so as to paraphrase 'Unicorns are possible' into 'There is a possible-unicorn.' But the paraphrase implies that mere possibilia really exist. And Brentano explicitly rejects such modal realism (e.g., Brentano 1930: 81 [71]).

Brentano's own strategy for paraphrasing modal statements, including statements ostensibly about mere possibilia, relies instead on the introduction of new attitudinal features of judgments. Recall that for Brentano, judgments divide into acceptances (occurrent acts of belief-in) and rejections (occurrent acts of disbelief-in). These exhibit (respectively) the attitudinal properties of presenting-as-existent and presenting-as-nonexistent. But Brentano also holds that judgments divide into *apodictic* and *assertoric*, where these are two new attitudinal features: apodictic judgments exhibit the property of presenting-as-*necessary*, assertoric ones

that of presenting-as-*contingent*. The two distinctions crosscut, producing four types of judgment (see Table 4.2).

	<u>Acceptance</u>	<u>Rejection</u>
<u>Apodictic</u>	present-as-necessarily-existent	present-as-necessarily-nonexistent
<u>Assertoric</u>	present-as-contingently-existent	present-as-contingently-nonexistent

Table 4.2. Modal character of judgments

With these distinctions in place, Brentano has the resources to articulate the following paraphrase strategy for modal statements (in a dictation from 1916):

Nouns such as ‘non-being,’ ‘impossibility,’ ‘possibility,’ and the like, as well as whole sentences, are often used as grammatical subjects and predicates, as though they were labels/designators (*Bezeichnungen*) for objects and named something... But philosophers would never have arrived at such absurd notions if they had kept in mind that these are fictions and so had not neglected to produce a paraphrase (*Rückübersetzung*). Then they would not have affirmed such things as the eternal subsistence of the impossibility of a round square, instead replacing this apparent affirmative with the negative judgment whereby a round square is apodictically rejected. (Brentano 1933: 19-20 [25]; see also manuscript XPs12, dated 1909, and Brentano 1930: 78 [68], which is from 1904)

Thus, to say that a round square is impossible is *not* to assert ‘There is an impossible round square,’ whose grammar suggests that there is something, a round square, which has the unfortunate property of being impossible. Rather, it is to deny the

existence of something but deny it in a modally beefed-up manner. It is to express *apodictic* disbelief in a round square, that is, a mental act that presents-as-necessarily-nonexistent a round square. To capture this in language, we might introduce an *apodictic quantifier*, ‘There is-necessarily,’ and paraphrase ‘A round square is impossible’ into ‘There is-necessarily not a round square.’

What about possibility statements? Here Brentano appeals again to second-order negation:

... if I say that a thing is possible, I do not thereby accept the relevant thing, but rather only deny that anyone who *apodictically* rejects the thing judges correctly. (Brentano 1930: 138 [121], my italics; see also 1930: 114-5 [101])

This again uses the device of appealing to second-order judgments about correct judgments: ‘There could be unicorns’ is paraphrased into ‘There is no correct apodictic disbelief in a unicorn.’ On this view, judging that unicorns are possible amounts to denying the existence of *correct* apodictic rejection of unicorns. It is to disbelieve in a correct apodictic rejection of a unicorn. Attractively, this account of modal truths does not require truthmakers from outside the actual world. Possibility statements are about *our* world: namely, that it does not contain certain (correct apodictic negative) judgments.

This account does face, however, the objection that some of these paraphrases are psychologically unrealistic. Thus, judging that unicorns are possible seems like a fairly simple affair, something a small child could do, whereas disbelieving in a correct apodictic disbelief in a unicorn is much more complicated, potentially requiring the application of concepts children are unlikely to possess.

There is a simpler paraphrase strategy, however, which Brentano does not consider but perhaps should have. This is to treat statements ostensibly about mere possibilia as really about modal properties of the actual world as a whole. Thus, ‘There could be unicorns’ may be understood to mean ‘The actual world could contain unicorns,’ which in turn paraphrases neatly into ‘There is a possibly-unicorn-containing actual world.’ Here the actual world is ascribed an unusual kind

of property, that of possibly having a unicorny part so to speak. The only object whose existence is genuinely asserted here is the world as a whole, which does of course exist.

A limitation of this strategy is that it cannot allow us to paraphrase statements about merely possible worlds. Thus, 'There is a possible world with unicorns in it' must be treated as strictly speaking false. But it is not clear that this is a significant limitation. Arguably, when we contemplate a merely possible world, what we are really doing is just imagining ways the actual world could be. The objection would have teeth only if there were truths ostensibly about merely possible worlds that resisted paraphrase into statements about how the actual world might be. I would contend there are none.

The real cost of the strategy is the acceptance of irreducibly modal ways things could be. I suspect that it is the reason Brentano does not consider it seriously. For him, something about the ways things actually are must ground the truth of modal truths. His attitudinal approach using the apodictic quantifier delivers this.



In conclusion, although Brentano himself rests his case for the paraphraseability of all statements into existentials mainly on consideration of categorical and hypothetical statements, he has some reasonable options for existential paraphrases of singular, relational, compound, and modal statements as well. The paraphrases may not always be elegant, and sometimes entrain real costs, notably the contrast between the relative simplicity of believing (e.g.) that some baby or some dog is cute and the evident complexity of disbelieving in a mereological sum of a correct disbelief in a cute baby and a correct disbelief in a cute dog. Still, it is already remarkable that an existential paraphrase appears to be always *available*. It would therefore not be unreasonable to indulge Brentano and grant him the first step of his argument: dispensing with belief-that is *feasible*.

2.2. Dispensing with Beliefs-that is Commendable

Paraphraseability is a symmetric relation: if 'blah' paraphrases into 'bleh,' then equally 'bleh' paraphrases into 'blah.' Accordingly, in showing that all predicative statements paraphrase into existential ones, we would also be showing that all the relevant existentials paraphrase into predicatives. So the paraphrase by itself does not demonstrate that all seemingly predicative judgments are in fact existential. It could be equally well taken to suggest that the relevant seemingly existential judgments are in fact predicative.

Someone might respond, on Brentano's behalf, that interpreting the paraphraseability as showing that all judgments are existential brings with it increased theoretical unity; the opposite interpretation does not. In one version, the claim would be that although all predicatives paraphrase into existentials, there are also some extra existentials for which no predicative paraphrase is available. In another version, the claim might be that existentials as a class are simply more homogeneous than predicatives. However, both claims are suspect. On the one hand, it is doubtful that there are existentials that cannot be put in predicative form, given the availability of such first-order predicates as 'exists,' 'is existent,' and 'is real.' As for the claim that existentials are inherently more homogeneous than predicatives, it is hard to evaluate such claims in the absence of explicit measures of the relevant homogeneity. At the very least, the envisaged argument would require supplementation in the form of (i) providing a measure of class homogeneity for statements and (ii) showing that, as a class, existentials score higher on this measure than predicatives.

Brentano's own argument, in the above-quoted 1906 letter to Marty, is not from unity but parsimony ('the economy of nature'). The idea seems to be that if some judgments are predicative, then (i) their contents are propositional, which would require us to embrace propositions in our ontology, and (ii) their truthmakers are states of affairs, which would require us to embrace states of affairs

as well. In contrast, Brentano seems to claim, existential judgments do not require a propositional content, and their truthmakers can be individual objects.

The notion that judgments may not require propositions as content is potentially greatly advantageous, given the force of worries about the ‘unity of the proposition’ prominent in recent philosophy of mind and language (King 2007). But the parsimony Brentano pursues most vigorously concerns truthmakers. The truthmaker of a belief that some dogs are cute, it is natural to say, is the *fact* (or the *obtaining state of affairs*) that some dogs are cute. In contrast, the truthmakers of the belief *in* cute dogs are simply the cute dogs. Each and every cute dog out there makes true the belief *in* cute dogs.²³ Thus the truthmakers of beliefs-in are individual objects rather than facts or states of affairs. Other things being equal, then, the thesis that *all* beliefs are beliefs-in paves the way to a nominalist ontology that dispenses with facts and states of affairs. This too is greatly advantageous, given worries about so-called Bradley’s regress attending a state-of-affairs ontology.²⁴

And indeed, as we will see in Chap. 6, Brentano will employ his heterodox theory of judgment to underwrite a nominalist ontology that recognizes only concrete particulars. What the 1906 letter to Marty suggests, I claim, is that that nominalist ontology is the *motivation* for the BIT theory of judgment.

The key to delivering nominalism is the notion that beliefs-in are made true by individual objects, not by *existential states of affairs* (of which such objects are constituents). It might be objected that the belief in dogs is made true not by each dog, but rather by each dog’s *existence* – where a dog’s existence is a state of affairs (the fact that the dog exists). But Brentano explicitly rejects this in the same letter to Marty:

[T]he being of A need not be produced in order for the judgment “A is” to be ... correct; all that is needed is A. (Brentano 1930: 95 [85])

It is the object, and not (the fact of) the object’s existence, that makes true the relevant existential. In a slogan: the truthmakers of (positive) existentials are not existences but existents.²⁵

What is the reason to take the object itself, rather than its existence, to make true the existential judgment? One reason is parsimony of course. But Brentano also adduces a separate argument. It is an argument from infinite regress, presented in that letter to Marty (Brentano 1930: 95-6 [85-6]) and a subsequent letter to Hugo Bergman (Bergmann and Brentano 1946: 84), as well as in a 1914 dictation (Brentano 1930: 122 [108]). Suppose for reductio that belief in my dog Julius is made true not by Julius, but by Julius' existence. Then in addition to Julius, we must add to our ontology the state of affairs of Julius existing. In adding this state of affairs to our ontology, now, we are clearly committing ourselves to its existence. And committing to the existence of the state of affairs of Julius existing is a matter of believing *in* that state of affairs. The question arises then of what makes this new belief true. One view is that it is made true by the state of affairs of Julius existing itself. The other view is that it is made true by not by the state of affairs of Julius existing, but by *the existence of* that state of affairs (that is, by the state of affairs of the state of affairs of Julius existing existing!). If we take the former view, then we allow beliefs in certain items to be made true by those items themselves, rather than by their existences; so we might as well allow already the belief in Julius to be made true by Julius himself, rather than by Julius' existence. If, however, we take the belief in the state of affairs of Julius existing to be made true by *the existence of* that state of affairs, then we are including in our ontology a new, second-order state of affairs, namely, that of Julius' existence existing. This ontological commitment of ours requires us to *believe in* that second-order state of affairs – and off we are on a vicious regress. The only *non-arbitrary* way to avoid the regress is to recognize dogs themselves as the truthmakers of first-order beliefs in dogs.

In summary, the BIT theory of judgment has the advantage of dispensing with states of affairs as the kind of entities our judgments are answerable to. More precisely, what we have here is a dispensability argument to the effect that the conjunction of EXISTENTIAL and ATTITUDINAL results in a doubly parsimony-enabling theory of judgment: there is (i) no need to posit propositions to account for the

structure of judgments, and (ii) no need to posit facts and/or states of affairs to account for the truth of (true) judgments.



The argument is that we should adopt the conjunction of ATTITUDINAL and EXISTENTIAL because doing so will provide downstream benefits. The argument is powerful, but has two limitations. First, it offers no motivation for either ATTITUDINAL or EXISTENTIAL in separation from the other, and second, it present no upstream considerations offering independent support for either ATTITUDINAL or EXISTENTIAL. Now, in the entire Brentano corpus I do not believe there is any independent argument of the sort for EXISTENTIAL. But for ATTITUDINAL there are at least two.

The more explicit argument appears, to my knowledge, only in Brentano's lecture notes from his logic courses in Vienna at 1878-9 and 1884-5 (Brentano 1956 §15). Those who maintain that an existential judgment's existence-commitment is an aspect of content, Brentano reasons, have the following picture in mind. When you judge that the pope is wise, you put together the concept of pope and the concept of wisdom. Likewise, when you judge that there is a pope, or that the pope exists, you put together the concept of pope and the concept of existence. But note, says Brentano, that you cannot judge that the pope is wise without acknowledging (*anerkennen*) the pope, that is, presenting-as-existent the pope. By the same token, you cannot judge that the pope *exists* without acknowledging the pope. But once one has acknowledged the pope, there is no point in *additionally* judging that the pope exists – there is nothing in the latter not already in the former. Since the commitment to the pope's existence is already built into the acknowledging, that commitment is merely replicated in the act's content.

One objection might be that acknowledgement is not built into positive judgment the way Brentano claims. For example, one may judge that Alyosha Karamazov is emotionally wise without acknowledging Alyosha in the relevant sense. However, recall from Chap. 2 that for Brentano such statements as 'Alyosha

Karamazov is emotionally wise' are elliptical for hypotheticals such as 'If Alyosha Karamazov existed, he would be emotionally wise.' This in turn expresses only a negative judgment, namely, that there is not a non-emotionally-wise Alyosha. Such negative judgments are irrelevant to Brentano's argument, since negative existentials do not commit to anything's existence (obviously: they rather involve commitment to nonexistence).

Another objection might be that acknowledgement only *appears* to be a distinctive attitude. In truth, to acknowledge something amounts to judging that the thing has the property of existing. In other words, just as Brentano claims that belief-that reports should be paraphrased into belief-in reports, the present objector claims we should do the inverse. What this objection shows, I think, is that deeper (nonlinguistic) considerations are called for to show that existence-commitment is an attitudinal rather than content property.

Brentano's *main* argument for this is implicit in the *Psychology*. The basic point is that acts of judging and acts of contemplating or entertaining can have the same content (Brentano 1874: II, 44-5 [205]). Yet the judging commits the subject to the reality of what is judged, while the contemplating does not commit to the reality of what is contemplated. Therefore, the existence-commitment cannot come from the content, which is shared. It must come from some other difference between judging and contemplating. The best candidate, says Brentano (1874: II, 64-5 [221-2]), is an attitudinal difference: the judging presents the judged in a way that the contemplating does not present the contemplated. It is that *way* of presenting that encodes (if you please) commitment to the relevant object's existence.

To my mind, this more implicit argument of Brentano's is cogent, and demonstrates that existence-commitment is indeed not a content property, but likely an attitudinal property.²⁶ It is worth mentioning, though, that there is another argument for ATTITUDINAL close to the surface in the *Psychology*. Consider the Kantian claim that 'existence is not a property,' which Brentano cites approvingly:

In his critique of the ontological argument for the existence of God, Kant made the pertinent remark that in an existential statement, i.e. in a statement of the form 'A exists,' existence 'is not a real predicate, i.e. a concept of something that can be superposed (*hinzukommen*) on the concept of a thing.' 'It is,' he said, 'only the positing of a thing or of certain determinations [read: properties], as existing in themselves.' (Brentano 1874: II, 53 [211])

If there is no such thing as a property of existence, any attribution of existence to something would be attribution of a property that nothing has. Accordingly, any existential belief that attributed existence to something would perforce be *misattributing* and therefore mistaken. But in fact not all existential beliefs are mistaken: it is correct, for example, to believe in ducks. So (correct) commitment to something's existence cannot involve attribution of a property of existence. If commitment to Fs' existence is not a matter of attributing existence to Fs, it must instead be built into the very nature of the attitude taken *toward* Fs. This is the attitude of *believing-in*, an attitude whose very *nature* is to present-as-existent.

One final consideration supports ATTITUDINAL as well. It seems that infants and animals can mentally commit to the existence of something even though, plausibly, they do not possess the concept of existence. A kitten may believe that there is food in her bowl – or rather, believe *in* enbowed-food – before she has had the time to acquire the concept of being or existence. If existence-commitment were an aspect of belief content, however, we would expect the relevant constituent of the content to be the concept of existence. By contrast, no such expectation arises if existence-commitment is an aspect of attitude. Similarly for an infant's belief that there is food in her plate. Furthermore: it would be odd to suppose that having started as an attitudinal aspect of this infant's food beliefs, the existence-commitment later migrates into the content once the child acquires the concept of existence.

I conclude that the case for both EXISTENTIAL and ATTITUDINAL is stronger than one might initially suspect. As noted, together they entail OBJECTUAL. And all three theses together constitute BIT, Brentano's Belief-In Theory of judgment. The theory is very unusual, but apparently more defensible than may initially appear. Its

greatest cost, it seems to me, is the gap between the apparent simplicity of certain (notably compound) judgments and the evident complexity Brentano's theory attributes to them.

3. Objections and Replies

Given how unusual Brentano's view is, it is surprising that the case for it should be as solid as it is. Nonetheless, a number of objections suggest themselves. Let us consider the more pressing.

Clearly, Brentano's theory goes against our intuitions as twenty-first-century philosophers 'brought up' on a certain conception of the structure of judgment and belief: as having a subject-predicate structure akin to the structure of the sentences used to express them. But just as clearly, Brentano would reply that these intuitions of ours lie *downstream* of theorizing and therefore cannot be used to *support* the theory. We philosophers have the intuition because we have accepted the theory, not the other way round. We should reject the intuition along with the theory. The objector may insist, however, that the intuition does not come *only* from philosophical theory, but also from the structure of language, as used well before exposure to any theory. It is the subject-predicate structure of indicatives that suggests a similar psychological structure in the judgments they express.

This is a reasonable claim, to which Brentano responds by trying to explain why linguistic expressions of judgments have the structure they do (despite judgments having a completely different structure).²⁷ Ultimately, the explanation is that language and judgment have different *functions*: the primary, original function of language, he claims, is to facilitate communication (Brentano 1956: 25-6), whereas the primary function of thought and reasoning is the acquisition and management of knowledge. The problem is if language were structured in a way that reflects accurately the structure of the thought it expresses and the reality it presents, it would be unable to perform its function – it would be 'an entirely new

and most unwieldy language' (Brentano 1917a: 275 [367]). Insofar as structures derive over time from functions, there is no reason to expect the latter to converge where the former diverge.

The objector may press that certain systematicity phenomena could not be explained within the Brentanian framework. If the structure of language and thought mirror each other, we can understand why no person is in a position to judge that Mary loves John without being in a position to judge that John loves Mary (Fodor 1975). Brentano, in contrast, has no resources to explain this – he must treat as miraculous the simultaneous emergence of the capacities to make both judgments. For the belief in a Mary-loving John and the belief in a John-loving Mary have strictly *nothing* in common in their contents.²⁸

This is indeed a very serious problem for Brentano, but perhaps he could respond as follows. As we have already seen, the fact that an intentional state is non-propositional does not mean that it does not mobilize concepts. Thus, even though fear is an objectual attitude, what a subject can fear depends on the concepts in the subject's possession: if S_1 possesses the concept of a Rottweiler while S_2 only possesses the coarser-grained concept of a big dog, their fears of the same object might be type-different intentional states. This is because S_1 will apply the concept of a Rottweiler to the object he fears while S_2 will apply the concept of a big dog. Now, we can imagine a subject who possesses both concepts, but in whom the two are disconnected in such a way that the subject is unaware that Rottweilers are dogs. In most subjects who possess both concepts, however, the two are linked in such a way that it is impossible for the subject to fear a Rottweiler without *ipso facto* fearing a dog. The Brentanian might hope to produce a similar explanation of why every normal human subject in a position to contemplate a Mary-loving John is also in a position to contemplate a John-loving Mary. It is far from clear how the explanation would go, but it is not inconceivable that some story could be devised. Still, as long as no actual story is proffered, it remains an outstanding theoretical debt of BIT to show that it can recover the phenomena of systematicity.

A related objection is that BIT is false to the phenomenology of making a judgment: what it is like to judge that there are cheetahs and what it is like to judge that all cheetahs are fast is different – there are type-distinct feels associated with these. It is natural to explain this felt difference by invoking something like a ‘phenomenology of predication’ present in one and absent in the other.²⁹

Claims of this sort are notoriously hard to evaluate,³⁰ but in any case Brentano *can* accommodate the alleged felt differences. In the case of the judgments that there are cheetahs and that all cheetahs are fast, Brentano can readily recognize a felt difference between a positive and a negative judgment: the occurrent belief in cheetahs and the occurrent *dis*belief in non-fast cheetahs. Admittedly, this response would not work in other cases. Judging that there are cheetahs and judging that *some* cheetahs are fast feel different, but in both cases they involve believing in something – a cheetah in the first case, a fast cheetah in the second. Here, however, Brentano could suggest that the difference comes from the intentional object – it is the difference between presenting-as-existent a cheetah in one case and a fast cheetah in the other. The crucial point is that Brentano can offer an account of the felt difference that does not appeal to a phenomenology of predication. For the objection to be probing, we would need a case where felt differences persist when the contents and the positive/negative orientation are the same. If there were felt differences between occurrently believing that some cheetahs are fast and occurrently believing in fast cheetahs, for example, that would do the trick. At this point, however, it is *extremely* hard to make the case for a genuinely *felt* difference.³¹

The objector may press that even if BIT is not false to the phenomenology of *atomic* judgments, it certainly is to that of *compound* judgments. As we have seen, Brentano recasts an ostensibly first-order positive judgment that either some cat is white or some dog is brown as a complex affair involving the second-order disbelief in the sum of correct disbeliefs in a white cat and in a brown dog. It might be claimed that the judgment that either a cat is white or a dog is brown *feels* much simpler than how it would if Brentano’s theory were accurate. Or perhaps that making the judgment feels *easier* than making the complex second-order negative

judgment Brentano adduces. Brentano might deny that there is a feel associated with a judgment's complexity or hardness, but this is problematic. There is a clear sense in which making the judgment that $14+17=31$ feels easier (to most of us) than making the judgment that if $a \leq 1$ then $2-2a \geq 0$. In the same sense, it feels easier (to most of us) to judge that some cat is white or some dog is brown than to make the complex second-order judgment Brentano claims we are making.

To my mind, this is a genuine liability of Brentano's account. There are some possible approaches to it, but none terribly satisfying. One is to hide behind the notion that phenomenological claims are too methodologically problematic to warrant rejecting a view for; but this would be odd for a philosopher whose central project was 'descriptive psychology,' the descriptive study of phenomenal experience.³² Another option is to retreat to the claim that the existential paraphrases are not *intended* to capture the psychological reality of judgment, but to perform a more subtle theoretical task; but then the account would be much better presented as concerning sentences than as concerning judgments (whereas Brentano does the opposite). A third option is to revert to Chisholm's suggestion that disjunctive judgments are occurrent beliefs in disjunctiva; unfortunately, it is unclear that this fares any better on the phenomenological front (does the judgment really feel directed at a single thing which is either a white cat or a brown dog?). A fourth option might be to deny the existence of disjunctive judgments and replace them with disjunctions of judgments (just as conjunctive judgments are replaced with conjunctions of judgments); this may be the most satisfying option in the area. Perhaps the view could be framed in terms of credence distributions: one does not really have .9 credence in <there is a white cat or a brown dog>, but rather $.n_1$ credence in <there is a white cat> and $.n_2$ credence in <there is a brown dog> such that $n_1+n_2 = .9$. With the right background story about the phenomenological interpretation of credence talk, this may be workable. Still, the resulting account is bound to be somewhat revisionary and may run into further problems. This is why I consider this issue a genuine liability for Brentano's theory of judgment.

A completely different objection is that BIT is *pragmatically* problematic, perhaps because its acceptance would complicate the conduct of inquiry. More specifically, it might be claimed that predicate logic has worked very well for us to formalize large tracts of science, but with BIT, predicate logic would have to be renounced wholesale. This objection is important, but all it shows is that Brentano owes us a predicate-free formal logic to go along with his predication-free theory of judgment. As it happens, Brentano did start on this project (Brentano 1956), which was further developed by his student Franz Hillebrand (Hillebrand 1891). Suppose a subject judges both that (i) there is a party and that (ii) if there is a party then there is booze, which leads her to judge that (iii) there is booze. The validity of her reasoning is captured in traditional *modus ponens*. Within the Brentanian framework, the reasoning is recast as follows: the subject both believes in a party and disbelieves in a boozeless party, which leads her to believe in booze. The task, then, is to reformulate the familiar laws of logic, in this case *modus ponens*, so that this reasoning is ratified as valid. What has been proposed by various logicians is to replace the traditional

$$\frac{p \rightarrow q \quad p}{q}$$

with

$$\frac{Na\bar{b} \quad Ea}{Eb}$$

This reads: *a* is not without *b* (there is not a boozeless party); *a* is (there is a party); therefore, *b* is (there is booze). With this law in place, we can readily explain why the subject's reasoning to the conclusion that there is booze is valid. Similarly for other logical laws. Now, while I have no competence to affirm that Hillebrand's system works, I have all the competence needed to report that Peter Simons thinks it does (see Simons 1987b).

Conclusion

I personally think that Brentano's theory of judgment is a masterpiece of philosophical creativity. Against the overwhelmingly common philosophical treatment of judgment and belief as propositional attitudes with an internal structure mimicking that of sentences, out of the blue comes Brentano and argues that these are rather objectual attitudes whose only function is to acknowledge or deny existence, or more accurately, present-as-existent or present-as-nonexistent some individual object. Given its considerable originality, I find the case for Brentano's theory surprisingly solid. Real liabilities loom around the issues of systematicity and the phenomenology of compound judgments. Still, the ontological benefits accruing to this kind of theory – in particular, the dismissal of propositions and non-concrete truthmakers – will surely appeal to many. These benefits will take center stage in Chap. 6. There we will see how the theory underwrites a nominalist ontology that manages to avoid the liabilities and loose ends attending more modern forms of nominalism. That ontology relies on a certain metaontology suggested by Brentano's theory of judgment. It is to this metaontology that we turn next.³³

¹ It is worth noting that Brentano's existentials do not have the form 'There is an x , such that x is F ,' but rather the simple form 'There is an F .' The whole point of the paraphrase, for Brentano, is to show that judgments do not have a predicative structure: 'We have shown that the combination of subject and predicate and other similar connections in no way go to the essence of judgment. We based this claim on consideration of affirmative as well as negative existential statements; we confirmed this ... by means of the reduction/tracing back (*Rückführung*) of categorical and, indeed all types of assertion, to existential statements.' (Brentano 1874: II, 64 [222])

² Brentano writes: "The statement (*Satz*) "If a man behaves badly, he harms himself" is a hypothetical statement. As far as its meaning is concerned, it is like the categorical statement "All badly-behaving men harm themselves." And this, in turn, has no other meaning than that of the existential statement "A badly-behaving man who does not harm himself does not exist," or to use a more felicitous expression, "There is no badly-behaving man who does not harm himself.'" (Brentano 1874: II, 59-60 [218])

³ Brentano nowhere states the attitudinal account of existence-commitment as explicitly as one might wish. But he comes close at various points. For example: “The most natural expression is “A is,” not “A is existent,” where “existent” appears as a predicate.... [But such an existential statement] means rather “If anyone should think of A in a positive way, his thought is fitting (*entsprechend*)”.’ (Brentano 1930: 79 [69]) The commitment to A’s existence is an aspect of the *way* (or mode) in which the thinking is done.

⁴ To my knowledge, the expression ‘objectual attitude’ comes from Forbes 2000; and the expression ‘propositional attitude’ from Russell 1904. But the concepts far predate the expressions.

⁵ The existence of such objectual attitudes is defended by Forbes 2000 and Montague 2007 among others.

⁶ In fact, for Brentano *all* mental states are objectual in this way – this is why he writes that ‘All mental references refer to things’ (1911: 158 [291]). Here ‘thing’ is used to refer to an individual object or concrete particular, and ‘mental reference’ is another term for intentionality.

⁷ There are uses of ‘belief in’ that may denote non-cognitive attitude, as in ‘believe in yourself!’ or ‘we believe in the future’ (which seem to denote emotional attitudes such as confidence and hope). But there is also the cognitive usage highlighted in the main text.

⁸ To endorse this formulation, one has to accept that there is such a thing as occurrent believing-in. If one takes believing-in to be always dispositional, then Brentano’s view would have to be formulated more clumsily: all judgments are occurrent manifestations of believings-in. For the sake of smooth exposition more than anything else, I am here treating belief-in as a state that *can* be occurrent.

⁹ Two exceptions are Szabó (2003) and Textor (2007), who reject the analysis of ‘S believes in *x*’ in terms of ‘S believes that *x* exists,’ though on grounds other than Brentano’s.

¹⁰ The name is suboptimal, insofar as belief-in captures only one half of the span of judgments – disbelief-in captures the other half. But BIT has the advantage of being cute, and I trust the reader to keep in mind the relevance of disbelief-in.

¹¹ It might be objected, to my interpretation of Brentano’s *Anerkennung* as belief-in, that Brentano was adamant that there are no degrees of acceptance, whereas one belief-in may very well vary in confidence (constituting a kind of objectual credence). However, it is possible to account for the degree of confidence associated with a belief-in not as an aspect of the belief-in itself, but as a kind of second-order state directed at the likely truth of the first-order belief-in. In itself, then, the belief-in would be absolute in its existence-commitment.

¹² One place where Brentano sounds non-Leibnizian is in his discussion of mereological relations among colored spots in Brentano 1982 Chap. 2. One place in which he mentions the Leibnizian paraphrase in a sympathetic tone of voice is in his discussion of Kant’s classification of utterances in Brentano 1956 §28.

¹³ For background, see Russell’s disagreement with Strawson discussed in Chap. 2.

¹⁴ What happens if there is more than one individual with those properties? Several avenues are open to descriptivists – divided reference, reference failure, and more – but the issues surrounding this possibility have nothing specifically to do with Brentano’s project, so I will set them aside here.

¹⁵ In Kripke’s (1972) causal theory of reference, for example, there is a relation of nondeviant causal chain between a current use of the name and a baptismal event in which the name is introduced in

the presence of the named. One may of course reject this view, while still do justice to most of Kripke's insights, for example by holding a kind of causal descriptivism (Kroon 1987), according to which a name refers to whatever objects satisfies the token-reflexive description 'the object suitably causally linked to this very use of the name.' On this view, 'Beyoncé is famous' means the same as 'The object suitably causally linked to this very use of "Beyoncé" is famous.' This would allow for the standard Brentanian paraphrase.

¹⁶ Statements of the form 'There is N' (where 'N' ranges over proper names) are awkward, but ultimately they mean the same as 'N exists,' which is not awkward.' So the idea is essentially to paraphrase 'Beyoncé is famous' into 'Famous-Beyoncé exists.'

¹⁷ The short answer is that for Brentano Beyoncé and Famous-Beyoncé are two numerically distinct but spatiotemporally coinciding objects. More on this in Chap. 6!

¹⁸ I thank Géraldine Carranante for presenting me with the problem of distinguishing 'Some brown dogs are cute' and 'Some cute dogs are brown'; before she did I never managed to understand the importance of the double-judgment theory.

¹⁹ To be general, this paraphrase strategy requires there to be a mereological sum for every pair of related individuals. That is, it requires Classical Mereology's axiom of unrestricted composition. As we saw in Chap. 1, this axiom is clearly adopted in Brentano's mereology (Brentano 1933: 11 [19]). So this treatment of relational statements seems indeed available to Brentano.

²⁰ By the same token, by the way, 'Every dog is cute' is to be paraphrased into 'There is not correct belief in a non-cute dog.' Brentano's notion of a correct judgment will be expanded upon in Chap. 5.

²¹ The only kind of negative judgment for which it might seem that this device seems irrelevant is that expressed by 'Some dogs are not cute.' As we have seen, however, on the double-judgment theory this amounts to 'There is a dog & There is not a cute dog-being-referred-to-by-the-previous-conjunct.' This could now be seen to express actually two simultaneous judgments: a belief in a dog and disbelief in a correct belief in a cute dog-being-referred-to-by-the-other-judgment.

²² A similar strategy can be extended to material conditionals, since $p \rightarrow q$ is equivalent to $\sim p \vee q$, hence to $\sim(p \& \sim q)$. It might be objected that disbelief in sums of correct judgments is too weak to capture the content of disjunctive and conditional judgments. The claim is not just that nobody has *in fact* made the relevant correct judgments. It is rather that if anyone did make those judgments, they could not do so correctly. This latter claim has a modal depth to it entirely missing from the simple rejection of two correct judgments co-occurring. This objection smells right to me, but it just invites discussion of Brentano's treatment of modality, which is our next topic.

²³ There might be something odd about talk of truthmakers for beliefs *in*. Perhaps it might be thought ungrammatical to say that the belief in ducks is true; it is certainly more natural to say that such a belief is *correct*. In that case, we should speak rather of the worldly correctnessmakers of beliefs-in. I am sympathetic to all this, but will stick with the word 'truthmaker' for simplicity. On this, see Textor 2007: 78-9.

²⁴ In the present context, by 'state-of-affairs ontology' I mean any ontology that admits such entities as states of affairs. Any such ontology faces Bradley's regress (Bradley 1893). The problem is how to understand the 'metaphysical glue' that joins an individual and a property when together they compose a state of affairs. The fact (obtaining state of affairs) that Alec the electron is negatively charged is more than just the sum of the two facts that (i) Alec exists and (ii) being negatively-charged is instantiated. It involves also some kind of 'metaphysical glue' that 'brings together' Alec and being negatively-charged. If we try to understand this 'glue' in terms of a *relation* between Alec and being negatively-charged – 'exemplification' or 'instantiation,' say – then we would require

something to glue Alec, being negatively-charged, and that relation. Appealing to a second-order metaphysical glue would only launch us on a regress – Bradley’s regress.

²⁵ There is a question of how to handle the truthmaking of negative existentials. This is something Brentano had nothing to say about. Perhaps this is because for him the issue is not really one of truthmaking, but of the ontological commitment that positive existentials involve. Since negative existentials involve no ontological commitment, the same issue does not arise for them.

²⁶ I write ‘likely’ because other candidate explanations of the difference between contemplating and judging have to be ruled out (other than the content candidate) before we can more confidently assert that the difference is attitudinal. Much of the issue overlaps with the question of the irreducibility of presentation to judgment, discussed in the previous chapter.

²⁷ In general, Brentano takes the structure of language to be a poor guide to the structure of our mental life. This is stated unequivocally in a short 1905 fragment titled ‘Language’ (Brentano 1930: 81 [71]) and can be found in various places in the aforementioned logic courses (e.g., Brentano 1956 §12).

²⁸ Thanks to Marie Guillot for pressing on me this objection.

²⁹ This objection presupposes that there is a phenomenology of making a judgment, a so-called cognitive phenomenology (Pitt 2004). This could be rejected, but since neither Brentano nor I would do so, I do not call into question this presupposition.

³⁰ It is noteworthy that Brentano virtually never rests his case for a thesis on a phenomenological claim, or as he would put it, the testimony of inner perception. One gets the sense that his theses are sometimes *motivated* by the testimony of his inner perception, and when they are he tends not to be shy about asserting that that is the testimony of inner perception. But he always adds further arguments, and gives the testimony of inner perception only a supporting role.

³¹ Another option for the objector is to claim that differences in intentional objects (what is judged) cannot by themselves accounts for phenomenal differences – only differences in attitude and in the *structure* of content can. But this seems like a difficult argument to carry through. Certainly it is the objector’s burden to do so.

³² Brentano distinguished between two kinds of psychology, *genetic* and *descriptive*. The former provides causal explanation of the genesis of mental phenomena; the latter merely describes the phenomena. That is, the former answers questions of the form ‘How did it come to be?’, the latter questions of the form ‘What *is* it?’ For Brentano, importantly, descriptive psychology is prior in the order of understanding to genetic psychology: in an ideal reconstruction of science, we would presumably proceed first by describing the phenomena in need of explanation and only then offering an explanation of them. Without knowing what ‘it’ *is*, it is hard to see how we might be able to explain how ‘it’ came to be. For more on this, see Seron forthcoming.

³³ For comments on a previous draft, I am grateful to Géraldine Carranante, Anna Giustina, Alex Gzrankowski, Franz Knappik, Michelle Montague, and Kevin Mulligan. I also benefited from presenting related materials at the Australian National University, Columbia University, École Normale Supérieure, the University of Girona, and at IHPST and IJN in Paris; I am grateful to the audiences there, in particular Damiano Costa, Imogen Dickie, Nemira Gasiunas, Thibaut Giraud, Anna Giustina, Vincent Grandjean, Erick Llamas, Myrto Milopoulos, Michael Murez, Ben Phillips, David Pineda, Maria van der Schaar, Benjamin Schnieder, Moritz Schultz, Robert Stalnaker, Daniel Stoljar, Eric Tremault, Agustín Vicente, and especially Marie Guillot.