

# Brentano on Sensations and Sensory Qualities

Olivier Massin

[To appear, “Brentano on Sensation and Sensory qualities”, in *Routledge Handbook of Brentano and the Brentano School*, ed. U. Kriegel]

The term “sensation” (*Empfindung*) famously displays an act/object ambiguity. It might be used to refer:

1. To our sensing of something: a sensory act (e.g., a hearing);
2. To what we sense: a sensory object (e.g., a sound);
3. To some mental episode of ours having no object distinct from itself. Pain is sometimes said to be such a “subjectively subjective” mental episode, some sensing which is its own *sensa*.<sup>i</sup>

In his relentless prowl for act/object conflation, Brentano systematically uses “sensation” in the first sense, to denote only sensory acts – hearings, smellings, seeings, etc. Each sensation bears on something distinct from itself, which Brentano calls its sensory *object* or *content*. There is no “subjectively subjective” mental episode for Brentano: no sensation, not even pain, is purely self-reflexive, in the sense of referring to itself only. Sensations are all intentional, and therefore mental.

While sensations are mental phenomena, their objects are physical phenomena (in Brentano’s idiosyncratic sense, which does *not* entail that physical objects exist in reality, apart from being apprehended by sensations; see CHAP. 22). As a result, the superficially similar expressions “a sensation of sound” and “a sensation of hearing” have fundamentally different structures: in “a sensation of sound” the “of” is intentional (as in “the seeing of a tree”; “the remembering of a

concert”); but in “a sensation of hearing”, the “of” is specificatory (as in a “piece of cake”; “a textbook of psychology”).

Brentano discusses sensations and sensory qualities abundantly; such discussions are found in his psychological as well as in his metaphysical works, in his earlier as well as later works (1907, 1981a, 1981b, 1988, 1995a, 1995b, 2009). This is due to the fact, first, that he takes sensations and sensory qualities to be *fundamental* mental and physical phenomena (as we shall see), and second, that although he denies the reality of sensory qualities and objects, he amply uses them as paradigmatic examples to introduce his metaphysical views through.

Sensations have two kinds of features. Some, such as their intentional mode, or their temporal features, cannot be explained away by looking at their object. Others, such as their intensity or the difference between senses, are features that sensations inherit from their objects.

Accordingly, this chapter has three sections. The first introduces Brentano’s view of *sensations* by presenting the intentional features of sensations irreducible to features of the sensory objects. The second presents Brentano’s view of *sensory objects* —which include *sensory qualities*— and the features of sensations that such objects allow to explain, such as their intensity. The third section presents Brentano’s approach to *sensory pleasures and pains*, which combines both appeal to specific modes of reference and to specific sensory qualities.

## **1. Sensations**

Sensations are mental acts which are intentionally directed at sensory objects. Brentano calls such objects “concrete”, but these are not concrete objects such as lemons, persons or mountains. Sensory objects are rather colour spots, sounds, smells, etc. These constitute the *primary* objects of sensations. Thus seeing, hearing,

etc. are sensations intentionally directed towards colour spots, localized sounds, etc. as their primary objects.

Sensations are also their own *secondary* objects, in conformity with Brentano's doctrine that mental acts essentially have two objects: an object distinct from themselves (the primary object); and themselves (the secondary object) (see CHAP. 5). Together with the presentation of a colour spot, we have the presentation of that presentation (1995a: 127-8; 1995b: 25; 1981b: 41).

Sensations are, furthermore, *fundamental* mental acts (1995b: 91), by contrast to *superposed* acts, which depend on fundamental acts. Thus the presentation of the general concept of colour presupposes some sensory presentation of a concrete instance thereof, and is thus superposed. But that latter is not grounded in any other presentation, and is thus fundamental.

Sensations are, third, the *only* fundamental acts, and all general presentations are superposed on them (1995b: 149). This constitutes a substantive empiricist strand in Brentano's thought (see Chrudzimski 2001: 71ff).

How do sensations refer to their objects? Brentano distinguishes three modes of intentional reference: (i) presentation, (ii) acceptance and rejection, (iii) love and hate (see CHAP. 9). Sensations are not sheer presentations of their object: seeing a red dot does involve a presentation of the red dot, but is not exhausted by such a presentation. It also involves a "blind assertoric accepting" of the red dot, in the sense that one accepts it, judges it real. This primitive belief in the primary object is an inseparable part of the sensation, by contrast to a merely superposed act that would merely be caused by it, as is the presentation of the general concept of colour (1995b: 92-4, 168; see §2.1 below on inseparable parts).

Although Brentano speaks of judgment as being intrinsic to sensations (such as hearing sounds), it is worth stressing that he is by no means committed to some form of conceptualist approach to sensations. His idea is that within a sensation, the sensory object is not merely presented, but also accepted, in the sense that its

existence is taken for granted; it is not that sensory contents are conceptualised in any way (1995a: 209; 1995b: 104).

Whether sensations also essentially involve the love and hate of their primary and secondary objects is an issue on which Brentano changed his mind, which we shall address in §3.

On top of these questions pertaining to the psychological status of sensations, Brentano addresses the following questions:

1. How are sensations *individuated*?
2. How should we understand the *intensity* of sensations?
3. Which sensation belongs to which *sense*, what are the different senses?

Contrary to the questions pertaining to the psychological status of sensations, these further questions are answered by looking at the *objects* of sensation. Thus:

1. The question of the individuation of sensations is answered by providing an account of the individuation of sensory objects;
2. The question of the intensity of sensations is answered through Brentano's account of the intensity of sensory qualities;
3. The question of the number of senses is answered by classifying sensory qualities into homogeneous kinds.

Let us therefore turn to the question of sensory objects and qualities, so as to present these various answers.

## 2. Sensory Qualities

### 2.1. Sensory objects: qualities and places

Sensations bear on objects, such as blue spots, which Brentano describes as “physical” and “concrete” objects. This terminology may be misleading: for Brentano objects of sensations have no actual existence, but only an intentional one — they exist only within the mind (1995a: 10, 19, 88n1, 92; 1995b: 10, 17; 1981a: 208). Sensory objects are *determinate* and *individual*. Contrary to the objects of abstract, intellectual or “noetic” consciousness, they do not have any indeterminate or general features (1995b: 152).

Sensory objects are complex: they are made of different parts. These parts are of two sorts:

- The first are *separable* parts, such as, typically, *spatial* parts: the upper half of a blue spot might be removed while its lower half remains intact.
- The second are *inseparable* parts: these are, to begin with, the *extension* and the *quality* (e.g., colour) of a coloured dot, which Brentano calls respectively its spatial and qualitative “determinations”. Inseparable parts cannot be *actually* separated from the whole they compose; we can only get at them through an act of distinction. Brentano therefore calls these inseparable parts “distinctional” [*distinktionelle*] parts (1995b: 16; see CHAP. 17).<sup>ii</sup>

All sensory objects therefore have qualitative and spatial determinations. Brentano here agrees with the “nativists”, who, contrary to “empiricists”, maintain that all sensations have, on top of their qualitative determination, also spatial determination (this way of drawing the nativist/empiricist distinction comes from Helmholtz). His views on the relation between these two determinations have however evolved.

In his *Descriptive Psychology* (1995b), Brentano thought that the spatial and qualitative determinations were nearly on a par. He describes them as “mutually

pervading parts”, and equates them to mutually dependent distinctional parts of sensory objects (1995b:19); likewise in his *Theory of Categories* (1981a), he claims that “determination of place and the determination of quality are so closely associated with each other that each is individuated by the other” (1981a: 72). To this mutual dependency between qualitative and spatial determinations corresponds a mutual dependency between the mental acts directed at them: “If, for example, in the case of seeing, colour and spatial determination pervade one another in the object, then we must accordingly distinguish in it the seeing of place [*das Ortsehen*] and the seeing of colour [*das Farbsehen*] as two mutually pervading parts” (1995b: 104; see also 1995b: 152-3).

Yet already at the time, Brentano ascribes some priority to spatial determinations over qualitative ones. For while he denies that one and the same sensory object can change its sensory location, he maintains that one and the same stationary sensory object can change its colour. Qualities do not survive changes of locations, but locations survive changes of qualities (1995b: 19) —all locations need is *some* quality filling them. While colours are inseparable from the individual location they fill, locations only require some colour, *whatever it is*, to fill them. In other terms, visual qualities are *individually* dependent on visual locations, but visual locations are only *generically* dependent on visual qualities.

Why does Brentano deny that red spots can move? In what sense is the colour of a blue spot inseparable from its location? This is a consequence of the view he came to explicitly adopt around 1889 according to which locations<sup>iii</sup> *individuate* sensory objects: “The principle of individuation for sensory qualities must consist in some sort of spatial category” (2009: 132, my translation; see also 1995b: 19,63). Motion, in the strict sense, implies that what moves remains numerically the same across places. But since locations individuate sensory objects, i.e., since the numeric identity of a sensory object is given by its location, motion is impossible. What we get instead is this: a first sensory object, say, blueness-here, which ceases to exist just when another object, blueness-there begins to exist (1995b: 19).

A corollary of this view is that sensory qualities are individually dependent on (inseparable from) the place they fill. Brentano thus notices that in the case of two exactly similar blue spots, there are not only two individual places — the ones occupied by the spots— but also “two individually different qualities” (1995b: 19), making Brentano an upholder of what contemporary metaphysicians call “tropes”.

That primacy of place over qualities became stronger after 1896, when Brentano ended up accepting the existence of “empty phenomenal locations”, that is, of phenomenal —although unnoticeable— places not filled with any qualities (2009: 134; see also 1981b: 50; 1995b: 169; 1995a: 216; 1988: 152). While qualities are dependent on locations, locations are no longer dependent —even only generically— on the qualities filling them. The exception is visual places, sight being the only sense in which no empty phenomenal locations are to be found (see next sub-section on intensity).

“Unqualified places” also became central to Brentano’s late theory of perception in a second respect. Brentano held in 1917 that all localized sensory qualities are perceived as being at certain distance in a certain direction from an unqualified point of reference (1995a: 311-4), corresponding to what we would naturally call a point of view (which is however the same for all senses). That unique and empty point *from* which sensory objects are perceived, is perceived *in modo recto*. These sensory objects —localized sensory qualities— cannot be perceived *in modo recto*, but only derivatively, *in modo obliquo*, on the basis of the direct perception of that empty spatial point of reference.

That evolution of Brentano’s thought towards a hypostatizing of places within the realm of sensory objects is paralleled by a similar evolution in his metaphysics.<sup>iv</sup> Thus, from 1915 (see 1981a: 208-11; 1988: 150-5), Brentano argues that space is the only physical substance, that accidents attach to part of that unitary substance, that such spatial parts —i.e. places— can be empty (“the portion of the substance between these accidents are themselves free of accidents”, 1981a: 209), and that

motion of substance is thereby impossible —all we have is a succession of accidents at different places.<sup>v</sup>

## *2.2. Intensity and multiple qualities: Brentano's chessboard*

Although Brentano abandoned his early view that all mental phenomena have intensity (1995a: 286), he never gave up the view that all *sensations* have intensity. His view is that the intensity of a sensation consists in the intensity on the sensory quality towards which it is directed (1995a: 120). How then should we understand the intensity of sensory qualities?

Before addressing this question, it is worth raising another one, which will receive a very similar answer. Compound qualities are sensory qualities such as purple, orange, or chords, which are phenomenal compounds of simple qualities. Brentano argues that compound qualities are real—in the sense that there is a genuine phenomenal difference between simple and compound qualities (2009: 91-160). Besides, he wants to maintain that compound qualities do not violate the impenetrability of sensory qualities of a same kind: a purple dot is composed of red and blue, yet red and blue can never fill the very same place at the very same time. How can the existence of compound qualities be reconciled with the impenetrability of qualities of a same kind?

Brentano's answer to these two questions—intensity and compound qualities—relies on the assumption that our sensory field is made up of small pixels, much like a chessboard, which are each filled by a sensory quality or left empty. Crucially, these chessboard “squares” are individually too small to be perceived. They can only be collectively perceived. But such a perception is doomed to be *indistinct*: since we cannot perceive the squares individually, we cannot perceive the details of their distribution within the chessboard. Suppose half of the squares of such a chessboard are red. Looking at it, we cannot see where exactly the different red squares are, we are only presented with there being some redness in that whole



area. (The original presentation of this chessboard account is in 2009: 132-4; the proposal is then appealed to in various places: 1988: 8, 147, 152; 1981a: 67-70; 1981b: 50-1; 1995a: 275-8; 1995b: 50).

The intensity of sensory qualities is then explained in the following way: a sensory quality is more intense the more imperceptibly small pixels of the field it fills. The more empty parts there are, the lower the intensity of a perceived quality. Intensity of sensory qualities, in other words, is equated with the spatial density of such qualities (1981b: 51, 54). That account of the intensity of sensations has an immediate consequence for the disputed question of the relation between intensive and extensive magnitudes. The latter, contrary to the former, have parts. Thus while a small extensive magnitude is a part of the larger, a small intensive magnitude is never a part of a large one (1981b: 50). Thanks to his “chessboard account” of intensity, Brentano is in a position to reject intensive magnitudes (1907: 176-87) and to claim that the intensity of sensation is in fact extensive (see Seron 2012).

Brentano notes that the existence of phenomenally empty pixels is nonetheless impossible in the case of sight (while it is possible in the case of other senses), since the absence of colour corresponds to a phenomenally positive colour: black (by contrast, small locations of the auditory field may contain no sound, for silence, by contrast to black, is not a positive quality —silence is not a sound). According to Brentano, this particularity of vision turns out to support his theory of intensity. Brentano, in effect, agrees with Hering (1874) that sight is the only sense where no differences in intensity can be found (2009: 134-5; 1988: 152).

The chessboard account also allows Brentano to reconcile the reality of compound qualities with the impenetrability of sensory qualities of a same kind. Purple is equated to a chessboard of alternately blue and red squares. Although no small square is both red and blue, in accordance with the impenetrability of sensory qualities, the indistinct perception of the whole chessboard presents us with red and blue participating in the purple whole, in accordance with the reality of compound colours.

### 2.3. *The classification of the senses and of sensory qualities*

What, finally, distinguishes the different senses and how many senses are there? Brentano's most detailed treatment of this question is to be found in his text "On the number of senses" (1907: 157-63). Brentano rejects the views that senses should be individuated thanks to differences of organs, or thanks to differences in modes of intentional reference (all senses having an assertoric mode of reference). Following Aristotle, he argues that the difference between senses consists in the differences between the kinds of sensory qualities on which they bear. Since space or bodily motions are not sensory qualities, there is no sense of space and no sense of the position of the body (the sensations of pressure through which we maintain our equilibrium belong to the same sense as the sensation of pressure on our skin; 1907: 157-63; 1981b: 46).

The key question becomes how to group sensory qualities together. Here Brentano takes his lead from Helmholtz, who argues that two sensory qualities belong to a same kind if and only if gradual transitions from the one to the other are possible.<sup>vi</sup> While Brentano first considered such a solution as unproblematic (1995a: 150), he later worries that Helmholtz's criterion is not secure enough as it stands (1907: 158). His worry stems from the existence of compound qualities, which Brentano granted, as we saw. To travel from blue to red, one passes through purple, which is a compound colour —a mixture of blue and red. Now, given the possibility of compound qualities, one may also, apparently, start from blue, pass through a mixture of blue and say, hot, so as to arrive at pure hot.

The dilemma is then the following:

- Either it is possible to "travel" from one simple sensory quality to another via some compound qualities, and one is led to the conclusion that there is only *one* sense (for it is always possible to mix qualities of different kinds —e.g. red and hot);

- Or one forbids transit through compound qualities, and one is led to the view that the sense of blue is distinct from the sense of red, for one can no longer travel from red to blue.

We get either only one sense, or too many. Brentano's solution to this worry is to accept that compound qualities are necessary to mediate between simple qualities, but to deny that red and hot, by contrast to red and blue, can compose a compound quality. Why can't red and hot be mixed together? Brentano believes that all kinds of sensory qualities can be said to be "light and dark" in some sense: thus there are light and dark colours, but also light and dark tones (high and low), light and dark tastes (sweet and bitter), light and dark temperatures (cold and warm). However, qualities of different kinds are said to be light and dark only in an *analogous* sense (1981b: 47; see also 1995b: 122; 1907: 162-3, 215n17); only qualities which are light and dark in the same sense can be mixed, and hence are qualities of a same kind. Colours and sounds alternately filling imperceptibly small pixels will never give rise to a medium degree of clarity, because they are light and dark only in an *analogous* sense. Hence Helmholtz's criterion of continuous transition is reliable, as long as only genuine compound qualities —compounds of qualities of a same kind of clarity— are allowed to mediate between simple qualities. The different kinds of sensory qualities therefore boil down to the different kinds of light and dark: "We determine the number of senses according to the number of genera of light and dark" (1995b: 122).

This idea, that sensory qualities are grouped together thanks to their kind of clarity, led Brentano to the astonishing view that sensory qualities are of only *three* kinds: colours, sounds, and the qualities of the third sense, which he calls the "*Spürsinn*", which includes temperatures, pressures, tastes, smells but also algedonic qualities (i.e., the qualities presented by pleasure and pain), as we shall now see. As a consequence, Brentano thinks that there are only three senses: sight, hearing, and the "*Spürsinn*". While the group of quality proper to the *Spürsinn* may sound heterogeneous, Brentano maintains that they are all light and dark in the same

sense, one of his main argument being that sensations of temperature and pressure, or sensations of temperature and taste, commonly influence each other (1995b: 47-8; 1907: 160-3).

### 3. Sensory Pleasures and Pains

#### 3.1. Pleasures and pains as affective sensations

Brentano takes sensory pleasure [*sinnliche Lust*] and sensory pain [*sinnliche Schmerz*] to be opposites and stresses that neither of them are sensory qualities: both are intentional acts. Brentano thus strongly opposes Stumpf, who held such affective sensations [*Gefühlsempfindungen*] to be sensory qualities (see Brentano 2009:176-90 for Brentano's objection to Stumpf's views).

How do sensory pleasures and pains refer to their object? For Brentano, sensory pains and pleasures are *affective* acts, together with "longing, feeling, hoping, fearing, anger" (1981b: 59; see CHAP. 11). One might have thought that, in the same way that sensory qualities are presented, they might be loved or enjoyed: that we could refer to them affectively. But Brentano rejects this. What we enjoy, in sensory pleasures and pains, are not the localized sensory qualities, but the sensations directed towards them: "where I hear a harmonious sound, the pleasure which I feel is not actually pleasure in the sound but pleasure in the hearing." (1995a: 90; see also 1995a: 144; 1981b: 14). This clearly does not mean that sensory pleasures are second-order acts whose primary objects would be sensations: the pleasure is rather the sensation itself, which on top of presenting its primary object (the localized sensory quality) and presenting itself, also *affectively* refers to itself (but *not* to its primary object). Thus among the three modes of reference involved in sensations, only presentation and judgement are directed at the secondary object (the sensations) *and* at the primary object (the sensory quality). Love and hate are only directed at the secondary object.

We can still *say*, however, that sensory pleasures have sensory qualities as objects. But when we do, we must keep in mind that this is true only in the sense that we take pleasure in the sensations which present these sensory qualities. In Brentano's terminology, we take pleasure in the sensation *in modo recto*, and in the sensory quality only *in modo obliquo* (1981b: 59; see Chilsholm 1987; Mulligan 2004; Massin 2013 for discussions).

Which sensations can be sensory pleasures? Brentano changed his view on this matter. He first thought that *all* sensations are accompanied by some pleasant or unpleasant sensory feeling. No sensations are neutral, and hence, no sensory quality can be sensed indifferently. At best some sensation "involves a mixture of pleasant and unpleasant feeling" (1995a: 151). Brentano later came to accept neutral sensations (1995a: 276; 1995b: 92, 168; 1981b: 48), and consequently, to considerably restrict the class of sensory pleasures. According to this later view, all sensations of sight and hearing, as well as some (not all) sensations of the *Spürsinn* (1981b: 48) are held to be essentially neutral. Only a sub-class of the sensations of the *Spürsinn* are genuine sensory pleasures and pains. When we speak of the pleasure of hearing, of seeing, or of tactual perception, what happens in fact is that our visual, auditory or tactile sensations are accompanied by co-sensations (*Mitempfindungen*) which are bodily pleasures and pains (2009: 84, 171).

### 3.2. *Algedonic qualities*

On such bodily pleasures and pains, Brentano never changed his mind: already in 1874, at the time he was accepting other sensory pleasures (visual, auditory, tactile, etc.), Brentano considered these bodily pleasures and pains to have a special status.<sup>vii</sup> What are the objects of these paradigmatic sensory pleasures and pains? They are directed at a *sui generis* class of sensory qualities, which fill space in the very same way as colours, sounds, and other sensory qualities, and which are distinct from sounds, colours, pressures, temperatures, tastes, and smells (1995a: 82-3; 1973: 113; 1981b: 13, 46). Some instances of these are the quality

corresponding to the sensation of being cut, burned, or tickled (1995a: 82-3) or “stuck with a needle” (1981b: 46). Let us call such sensory qualities “algedonic qualities”. Brentano is clear that such qualities constitute a specific sub-class of sensory qualities. In his late view, algedonic qualities are included within the third sense, the *Spürsinn*. Among the qualities of the third sense, and in fact among all sensory qualities, algedonic qualities are the only ones whose sensations is necessarily affective: warmth or pressure, by contrast, are objects of neutral sensations (1981b: 48).

Bodily pleasures and pains are of special importance to Brentano for, as he repeatedly notes, they constitute the most pressing objection to his view that all mental phenomena are intentional, an objection he attributes to Hamilton (see note 1 above). Brentano’s answer to this objection is straightforward: even in the case of bodily pains, one should distinguish the pain, which is a sensation, from the algedonic quality that the pain presents. But Brentano does not only want to *answer* the objection from bodily pain; he also takes great care explaining its intuitive appeal. How is it that we tend to conflate the pain-presentations with the pain-qualities, while we are not in the least tempted to conflate the pleasure taken in a sound with the sound towards which it is —obliquely— directed? Brentano advances two answers.

The first is that we typically have only one name for the affective acts and for the algedonic qualities. This is so, for instance, in the case of “pain” (1995a: 84; 1981b: 118). Such equivocations are “one of the main obstacle in recognizing distinctions” (1995a: 84).

The second explanation is more complex (it appears first in 1995a: 83-4, and is reformulated in 1995a: 145 and 1981b: 14). It starts from the observation above that bodily pleasures and pains are typically co-sensations, sensations which accompany other auditory, visual, tactile, etc. sensations. For instance, when we have some bodily pleasure or pain (say, a tickle), we have not only the presentation of the corresponding algedonic quality (some tickling quality), but also the presentation of

some other quality (say, some slight pressure). We are then presented, primarily, with two physical localized sensory qualities (an algedonic tickling quality, and a pressure extent), and, secondarily, with two mental sensations referring to them (a bodily pleasure and a neutral tactile sensation).

Now, Brentano notices: “when several sensory phenomena appear at the same time, they are not infrequently regarded as *one*” (1995a: 43). This leads us to conflate the algedonic qualities with the other qualities with which they are associated. In our example, we tend to conflate the tickling quality with the pressure quality. Besides, on the mental side, we tend to retain only the sensation whose affective self-reference is stronger, namely the one which is directed at the algedonic qualities. As a result, although we have two sensations directed at two corresponding qualities, we end up believing that we have only one affective sensation (of tickling) directed at one sensory quality (of slight pressure). Suppose now, Brentano pursues, that the sensation of pressure ceases. In such a case we are led to believe that we have an affective sensation of tickling to which corresponds no object. We are thus naturally led to fail to notice the distinction between pains or tickles and their objects.

## **Conclusion**

Wrapping up, Brentano’s account of sensations and sensory qualities contains the seeds not only of the key aspects of his general theory of intentionality —the distinctions between acts and objects, between primary and secondary objects, between three modes of intentional reference, the theory of indistinct perception— but also of central strands of his metaphysics —the primacy of place, the concept of inseparable/distinctional part, the principle of impenetrability, not to mention his account of the spatial continuum (1988: 8, 147).

That Brentano's metaphysics was influenced by his account of sensory qualities may be found surprising: after all, Brentano insists that such qualities are not real (see §2.1). Let us, to conclude, try to dissolve that air of paradox. Brentano's anti-realism about sensory qualities is moderate in the following respect. Contrary to "a subjectively subjective sensation" (see n.1), "a color which is not presented" (1995: 93), Brentano urges, is not contradictory. He thus strongly criticizes Bain's view that unseen colors would be self-contradictory (1995a: 92-4). Realism about sensory qualities is, for Brentano, not logically defective but only inconsistent with empirical science. This is what allows him to "fictitiously" treat sensory qualities as real (1995b: 17). Still, what licenses the move from descriptions of such fictitious objects to metaphysical conclusions? Brentano's tacit assumption here is that the *formal* distinctions drawn about such fictitious objects —e.g., between numerical difference and numerical identity; between separable and distinct parts; between spatial and qualitative determinations; between generic and specific determinations—generalize to mind-independent reality. Under that hypothesis, although our sensory contents "do not exist outside of us" (1995a: 10), their minute description provides an entry point to reality.<sup>viii</sup>

## References

- Albertazzi, L. (2006) *Immanent realism: introduction to Franz Brentano*. Springer, Dordrecht
- Brentano, F. (2009). *Schriften zur Sinnespsychologie*, ed. Thomas Binder and Arkadiusz Chrudzimski, Frankfurt: Ontos Verlag, p. 85–207
- Brentano, F (1973b). *The Foundation and Construction of Ethics*. Trans. E.H. Schneewind. London: Routledge.



- Brentano, F. (1907). *Untersuchungen zur Sinnespsychologie*. Hamburg: Meiner Verlag, 1979.
- Brentano, F. (1981a). *The Theory of Categories*. Trans. R.M. Chisholm & N. Guterman. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Brentano, F. (1981b). *Sensory and Noetic Consciousness*. Trans. M. Schättle & L.L. McAlister. London: Routledge. · Franz Brentano (1987).
- Brentano, F. (1988). *Philosophical Investigations on Space, Time, and the Continuum*. Trans. B. Smith. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Brentano, F. (1995a). *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*. Trans. B. Müller. London: Routledge.
- Brentano, F. (1995b). *Descriptive Psychology*. Trans. B. Müller. London: Routledge.
- Carnap, R.,(1967), *The Logical Structure of the World*, translation by Rolf A. George, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Chisholm, R. M. (1987). "Brentano's theory of pleasure and pain". *Topoi*, 6(1), 59-64.
- Chrudzimski, A., 2001, *Intentionalitätstheorie beim frühen Brentano*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht.
- Clark, A. (1993). *Sensory Qualities* Oxford University Press, USA.
- Goodman, N. (1977) *The Structure of Appearance*, 3rd ed. Boston: Reidel.
- Hamilton, W. (1882). *Lectures on Metaphysics and Logic*, H. L.Mansel and J. Veitch, eds., vol. 1-4. Edinburgh: WilliamBlackwood and Sons.
- Hering, E. (1878). "Über die sogenannte Intensität der Lichtempfindung un über die Empfidung des Schwarzer (1874)", in *Zur Lehre vom Lichtsinne, Sechs*

- Mittheilungen an die Kaiserl. Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien*, Zweiter, unveränderter Abdruck. Gerold, Wien, pp. 51-69.
- Mulligan, K., Smith, B. (1985). "Franz Brentano on the Ontology of Mind". *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 45(4), 627-644.
- Mulligan, K. (2004). "Brentano on the mind". In D. Jacquette (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Brentano* 66-97. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schaffer, J. (2009). "Spacetime the one substance". *Philosophical Studies*, 145(1), 131-148.
- Schultess, D. (1999). "L'individuation selon Brentano". *Philosophiques*. 26(2), 219-230.
- Seron, D. (2012). "The Fechner-Brentano controversy on the measurement of sensation." in *Franz Brentano's Metaphysics and Psychology*, ed. Ion Tănăsescu, Zeta Books, pp. 342-365.
- Smith, B. (1987). "The substance of Brentano's ontology". *Topoi*, 6(1), 39-49.
- Smith, B. (1989). "The primacy of place: An investigation in Brentanian ontology". *Topoi*, 8(1), 43-51.

---

<sup>i</sup> The expression "subjectively subjective" comes from Hamilton (1882, vol. 2: 432, 463) who uses it to describe feelings of pain and pleasure. Brentano often quotes this expression (1995a: 89, 91, 144, 244; 1981b: 59), which he takes to capture the main alternative to his thesis that all mental episodes are intentional, but which he also deem to be "self-contradictory".

<sup>ii</sup> For a detailed presentation of Brentano's theory of parts, see Mulligan & Smith (1985).

---

<sup>iii</sup> By which Brentano means absolute rather than relative locations (1981b: 50). He stresses, besides, that local determinations are homogeneous across all senses —visual and auditory locations are not of different kinds, *pace* Berkeley (1981b: 54-5).

<sup>iv</sup> See Kastil notes 134 and 230 in Brentano (1981a) and Smith (1987, 1989).

<sup>v</sup> See Smith (1989) and Schultess (1999) for presentations of this late view of Brentano, which anticipates in several respects the view of supersubstantialism discussed in contemporary metaphysics (see esp. Schaffer 2009).

<sup>vi</sup> Such a view were to be endorsed by Carnap (1967), Goodman (1977), or Clark (1993).

<sup>vii</sup> Brentano lacks a clear terminology to refer to these —he sometimes speaks of “the pleasure of the so-called sense of feeling [*Gefühlssinnes*]” (1995a: 145).

<sup>viii</sup> I am very grateful to Uriah Kriegel for invaluable comments on this paper. Thanks to Riccardo Braglia, CEO, *Elsin Health Care* and the *Fundazione Reginaldus* (Lugano) for financial support of the work published here.