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Brentano's Two Stages of Intentionality in the *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*

1. The puzzles surrounding intentionality

Brentano's discussion of intentionality stands out as one of the notable milestones in modern philosophy of mind. The famous paragraph containing Brentano's notion of intentional in-existence is the following:

> Every mental phenomenon is characterized by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental) in-existence of an object, and what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously, reference to a content, direction towards an object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a thing) or immanent objectivity. Every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself, although they do not all do so in the same way. In presentation, something is presented, in judgement something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on.[1]

In this paragraph, Brentano provides us with not only a further indication of his sources of inspiration, i.e. the Scholastic tradition, but also a definition of the term "intentional in-existence." As we read, he defines it as: the "reference to a content" or "direction towards an object"; "immanent objec-

1 *PES*, p. 68.

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tivity"; and "the including of something as an object within itself."[2] From this general proposition, Brentano seems to describe what is immanent as both a 'content' and an 'object', and the mental act refers to or is directed to something immanent. If that is the case, Brentano roughly formulates two kinds of directedness: the reference from the mental act to its content and the directedness from the mental act to the immanent object. The ambiguity between content and object plants the seeds to several questions with regard to Brentano's proposal of intentional in-existence of which we will turn to later.[3]

Brentano's notion of intentionality has received considerable attention and produced a heated debate. The debate centers on the distinction between mental and physical phenomena, how to interpret intentional in-existence, the non-existent object, and the implication of "in" in "in-existence", etc.[4] Roderick Chisholm (1976) interprets that "intentionally contain an object in themselves" shows how the mental attitudes have an object even though the object does not actually exist. This is a peculiar relation which is sustained even though one of their "terms" does not exist. He interprets physical phenomena as those which cannot intentionally contain objects in themselves. There must be a real material object existing to finalize the relation of physical phenomena.[5] Linda McAlister contends that Chisholm's

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2 Even though Brentano mentions both content and object, it is rather confusing what "content" and "object" exactly are. The English translators of *PES* (1995) comment that "Brentano here uses 'content' synonymously with 'object'. He later came to prefer the term 'object'". p.68.

3 According to Carlo Ierna's interpretation: in Brentano's middle stage, Brentano in fact means the immanent object as content, which is revealed in the descriptive psychology lectures, "every presentation has a content of presentation, but not every presentation has an object." Ierna claims that Twardowki's position about the distinction between content and object draws directly on Brentano's lectures. Cf. Ierna (2015), p.11. In my division of Brentano's stages, I divide it into two stages based on the two editions of *PES*. At Brentano's first stage, it seems that Brentano uses content and object without distinction. However, in his appendix of 1911 version of *PES*, he makes a distinction between content and object. p.227.

4 Tim Crane says that Brentnao's claims about intentional inexistence are well understood, especially by analytical philosophers in the second half of the 20th century. Cf. Crane, (2006).

5 Chisholm (1976).

distinction between mental phenomena and physical phenomena is incorrect. She argues that Brentano's concern is not that mental phenomenon can have an object which can exist as well as not exist, nor that physical phenomena refer to objects that must exist. Instead, according to McAlister, Chisholm wrongly understands the *realia* and *irrealia* as what exists and what does not exist in Brentano, thus resulting in an incorrect distinction between mental phenomena and physical phenomena. In McAlister's opinion, the German word *Reales* that Brentano uses is to be translated as an individual *thing* rather than as *real* existence. This means that mental phenomena refer to a *Reales,* i.e., an individual thing. Even though some objects of the mental phenomena (for example, a unicorn) do not exist, according to Brentano they have independent meaning in themselves and can be the intended object given that the intended object is an individual thing, rather than a universal, species, genus, a state of affairs or values. McAlister argues that the main difference between mental phenomena and physical phenomena is that mental phenomena are relational, while physical phenomena do not have this relational characteristic.[6]

Tim Crane (2006) follows the same line of reasoning as McAlister and rejects that Brentano's opening point in proposing intentional inexistence is to deal with the problem of non-existent objects. According to his investigation on this issue, "Brentano's view is not that there is a distinction between 'physical objects' which exist, and 'intentional objects' which do not exist" (p.5). Crane continues by arguing that "Brentano's view is rather that none of the things which are studied by science 'really and truly exist': they are phenomena, mere appearances, which are signs of an underlying reality but which are not real themselves" (p.5). Philip J. Bartok is also in line with McAlister and Crane's rejection of Chisholm's distinction between mental and physical phenomena. He disagrees with Chisholm's characterization of existence/ non-existence, internal/ external as the relevant distinctions.

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6 Another objection which McAlister proposed is that the physical phenomena is not what Chisholm says of physical activities, but rather sensible qualities, such as "a color, a figure, a landscape which I see, a chord which I hear, warmth, cold, odour which I sense, as well as similar images which appear in the imagination" Cf. McAlister (1976).

According to Bartok, both mental and physical phenomena are conscious appearances and experiential facts which the mind can immediately access.[7]

Another issue that deserves our attention is the implication of "in" in the term "in-existence." Daniel C. Dennett argues that it is not clear whether the prefix "in" means that the intentional object enjoys a form of non-being, or an existence in the mind, or both.[8] Dale Jacquette assesses it as locative, meaning that the intended object or content is located in the psychological state. Quoting Brentano's description of "In presentation, something is presented, in judgement something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on" (*PES*, p. 68), Jacquette holds that the intended object of the psychological activity is contained immanently in the psychological act (p.102).[9] In addition, Crane comments that intentional inexistence means that the mental act has the physical or mental phenomenon as object and these phenomena are mind-dependent. Crane says "intentional inexistence of an object means, literally, existence in the mental act itself." (p.10)[10] This location interpretation is also adopted by Smith, who states that "every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself is to be taken literally-against the grain of a seemingly unshakeable tendency to twist Brentano's words at this point." (p.40)[11]

These debates around Brentano's intentionality are partly due to the fact that intentionality is a developing concept in Brentano's work. Therefore, in order to give a comprehensive interpretation of Brentano's notion of intentionality one must take into account his later development. I

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7 Philip J. Bartok concludes Chisholm's psychology thesis and ontological thesis of intentional in-existence by arguing that the psychological thesis means that the intentional relatedness to an object serves as a "mark of the mental" – a criterion mental phenomena may be distinguished from physical phenomena. The ontological thesis is that the objects intended by mental acts are objects with a special ontological status or unique mode of being – that is, intentional inexistence (a mode of being that is short of actuality but more than nothingness). For more, please see Philip J. Bartok. "Brentano's intentionality thesis: beyond the analytic and phenomenological reading".

8 Daniel C. Dennett. *Content and Consciousness*. 1986.

9 Cf. Dale Jacquette, "Brentano's concept of intentionality" (2004). The supporters for the locative in-existence also include Smith (1994) and Tim Crane (2006).

10 Crane, (2006).

11 Smith, (1994).

divide Brentano's thesis of intentionality into two stages based on the two editions of *PES*: the first stage is the first edition of *PES* (1874); and the second stage, is based on the foreword and appendix of the 1911 edition of *PES*. The obvious distinction between these two stages is that Brentano turns his focus from what is immanent to mental reference and the ontology of the intentional object is veered from *nicht Reales* to *Reales*. In the following discussion, I shall first examine the formulation of "intentional in-existence" in the first stage, and then expound on his revision of this notion at the later stage of his philosophical thinking.

2. The early stage of intentionality

Brentano(1874) claims that the intentional in-existence of an object is the peculiar and exclusive character possessed by each mental phenomenon. It signifies that mental phenomena have a relational characteristic in the mental activity and it is worth noting that intentional in-existence applies to an act-immanent object which is different from the mental act as such. As Brentano declares in the example of hearing, the immanent object of our hearing is different from the act of hearing (*PES,* p.95).

The distinction of mental and physical phenomena is Brentano's main concern in setting up the empirical psychology. Brentano states that:

> Every idea or presentation which we acquire either through sense perception or imagination is an example of a mental phenomenon. By presentation I do not mean that which is presented, but rather the act of presentation. Thus, hearing a sound, seeing a colored object, feeling warmth or cold, as well as similar states of imagination are examples of what I mean by this term.[12]

It thus appears that Brentano regards mental phenomena as mental acts – such as the acts of presentation, hearing, seeing, feeling, etc. Even though intentional in-existence of the object mostly characterizes mental phenomenon, Brentano also provides other distinctions between mental and physical phenomenon. For instance, he states that "mental phenomena are only

12 *PES*, p.60.

perceived in inner consciousness, while in the case of physical phenomena only external perception is possible." Inner perception has the distinguishing characteristic of immediate, infallible self-evidence. (*PES*, p.70). The objects of external perception are mentally-independent entities – such as sound, color, horse, tree, etc. When we hear a sound, the sound is the primary object and physical phenomenon which we perceive. At the same time, we are aware of our own act of hearing of the sound. That is to say, in the perceptual experience as hearing, it is not only directed to the primary object (the sound), but also incidentally directed to itself as a secondary object.[13] In this way, the mental phenomenon mediates the external perception in that the external perception itself is perceived by inner perception. In addition, all mental phenomena are unextended (*PES*, p.74), whereas physical phenomena are extended. Mental phenomena appear to us as a unity, while physical phenomena do not appear in the same way as part of one single phenomenon. (*PES*, p.75) Mental phenomena possess real (*wirklich*) existence[14] as well as intentional existence, whereas physical phenomena only have a phenomenal and intentional existence. (*PES*, p.70). Conscious experience can concern both mental phenomena and physical phenomena, and they are immediately cognized by the mental activity. That is why both of them share the intentional existence. The real existence that the mental phenomena exclusively hold spells out that knowledge, joy and desire really exist because they are immediate, infallible self-evident – whereas color, sound and warmth, and similar physical phenomena are intentionally

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13 "The presentation of the sound and the presentation of the presentation of the sound form one single mental phenomenon; it is only by considering it in its relation to two different objects, one of which is a physical phenomenon and the other a mental phenomenon, that we divide it conceptually into two presentations. In the same mental phenomenon in which the sound is present to our minds we simultaneously apprehend the mental phenomenon itself. What is more, we apprehend it in accordance with its dual nature insofar as it has the sound as content within it, and insofar as it has itself as content at the same time." (*PES*, p.98)

14 Brentano's explanation of the real existence of mental phenomena is that "we went on to define mental phenomena as the exclusive object of inner perception; they alone, therefore, are perceived with immediate evidence. Indeed, in the strict sense of the word, they alone are perceived. On this basis, we proceeded to define them as the only phenomena which possess actual existence in addition to intentional existence." *PES*, p. 75.

given, can be had as objects as well, but cannot be proved to exist.[15] (*PES*, p.72) Maria van der Schaar explains that physical phenomena are not real in the sense that they do not enter into relations of cause and effect (p.5),[16] meaning that physical phenomena are not the effect produced by the mental act, and neither are they mentally-dependent object.

According to Brentano, the characteristic of intentional in-existence of objects belong to all mental activities. Whenever we carry out mental activity, it will contain a specific immanent object. For example, in the cases where: I see a bird; I desire a bottle of water; I hope that there is no war in the world, etc. In each of these, the bird, the bottle of water, and the state of affairs where there is no war in the world, have a kind of mental in-existence in first-person experience. It would thus be odd to say that I am perceiving or thinking, but that there is nothing in that perception or thought.

Therefore, with regard to the debate surrounding Brentano's intentionality in the beginning, I agree with McAlister, Tim Crane and Bartok's stance that the non-existent object is not Brentano's primary concern when he distinguishes between mental and physical phenomena in his 1874 edition of *PES*.[17] However, we do find Brentano's mention of the non-existent object in the appendix of the 1911 edition of *PES*.[18] McAlister also attempts

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15 Crane explains that the distinction between physical phenomenon and mental phenomenon on real existence means that the physical phenomena have relative truth, whereas mental phenomena are phenomena of inner perception which are true in themselves. As they appear to be, so are they in reality. Cf. Crane, (2006).

16 Maria van der Schaar, (2016).

17 However, even though mental phenomena can contain a non-exist object is not an idea found in Brentano's original meaning in the 1874 edition of *PES*, it can be reasonably implied from a letter written by Brentano to Anton Marty in the later period (1905), in which he refers to the situation when there is no external object, "I spoke of an object of the presentation, which it likewise is about, when there is nothing outside the mind corresponding to it". From this, it implies that non-existing objects can be presented to the mental state even though it does not exist in the external world. But given that at this period Brentano already modified the intentional relation as directing from mental act to the real thing, the object of presentation which is presented to the mental act should better be interpreted as mental content, or else Brentano will contradict himself. See: Dale Jacquette, "Brentano's concept of intentionality". p. 116.

18 *PES*, p.227.

to explain the nature of the non-existent object by proposing that the intentional object has an independent meaning in itself. But in the distinction of mental phenomena and physical phenomena, Brentano does not necessarily have non-existent objects in mind. Chisholm's interpretation of Brentano's distinction between mental phenomena and physical phenomena seems to regard phenomena as activity. According to him, mental phenomena have a peculiar relation between the mental attitude and an intentional object even though this object is non-existent; while for physical phenomena both relatum must exist. In this way, the intentional object is regarded by Chisholm as a unique mode of being, different from that of any physical object, and the intentional relation still holds between the mental act and this peculiar intentional being. But for Brentano, he regards mental phenomena as being characterized by their intentional relation to the object, whereas physical phenomena are like sensible qualities (for example color or sound or so forth) which does not imply a relation, nor is it an activity. This reminds us of Brentano's explication that mental phenomena possess real existence as well as intentional existence in consciousness. According to Brentano, what real existence means is that they are immediate, with infallible evidence. Even though Brentano does not necessarily have non-existent objects in mind when he describes the distinct character of mental phenomena, the non-existent object as the intentional object is hardly implausible given that it has real existence and can be infallibly perceived in mental act.

When it comes to the implication of "in" of "in-existence", I agree with Jacquette when he argues that this immanent intentionality is Brentano's early standpoint, and that Brentano adopts more neutral terminology to avoid the many criticisms on his thesis (p. 103).[19] As to the intentional inexistence theory of Brentano, it indicates the immanence of the intended object in the psychic act. It is in this sense that the "in" has a locative implication. As such, I am in line with Smith, Crane and Jacquette. However, the description of reference or direction to this immanent thing unavoidably suggests an active subject which introduces a relation from the mental act to this immanent thing – though, not a relation in the normal sense. Carlo Ierna suggests not to interpret "*Beziehung*" as "relation": first, because it is in the four kinds of relations Brentano discusses in his logic lectures, and intentionality is not mentioned as the relation between the mental act

19 Jacquette, (2004).

and the intentional object; second, Ierna adopts from Brentano's *DP* that "everything psychical has an object; this 'having-an-object' is not a relation, because it does not involve the existence of another thing."[20]

We can see later that Brentano describes the reference as a quasi-relation, which is a special kind of relation.[21] In *DP*, Brentano highlights the relational characteristic of consciousness as follows:

1. Hence, the peculiarity which, above all, is generally characteristic of consciousness, is that it shows always and everywhere, i.e. in each of its separable parts, a certain kind of relation, relating a subject to an object. This relation is also referred to as 'intentional relation'. To every consciousness belongs essentially a relation.

2. As in every relation, two correlates can be found here. The one correlate is the act of consciousness; the other is that which it is directed upon.
   Seeing and what is seen,
   Presenting and what is presented,
   Wanting and what is wanted,
   Loving and what is loved,
   Denying and what is denied etc.
   As highlighted already by Aristotle, these correlates display the peculiarity that the one alone is real, [whereas] the other is not something real [*nichts Reales*].

3. Explanation of the term object: some internal object-like thing [*ein innerlich Gegenständliches*] is meant. It need not correspond to anything outside.
   To avoid misunderstandings, one may call it 'in-dwelling' [*inwohnendes*] or 'immanent' object.[22]

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[20] Carlo Ierna (2005). p.9.

[21] See also: *PES*, p. 211-212.

[22] Franz Brentano. *DP*, p. 23-24. I will use the abbreviation *DP* in this dissertation.

The characteristic of the intentional relation lies in the intricacy of the psychic domain, which spells out a relation with no requirement of external existence of the intentional object at all. The intentional object, in this sense, is dependent upon the mental act and is immanent in consciousness. We see that Brentano insists on the intentional object as *nichts Reales* during this period, considering that the immanent object can be the presented, wanted, loved, and denied object, rather than an individual thing. It is not until the 1911 edition of *PES* that he claims the intentional relation can only direct to a real thing *[Reales]*.[23] For now, it spells out that intentionality consists of a relation between the mental act and the immanent object (as *nicht Reales*), which does not require a counterpart in reality. The immanent object is thus mentally-dependent.

In the appendix of the 1911 edition of *PES*, Brentano continues to support his claim that mental reference can distinguished from relation in the strict sense in that "the terminus of the so-called relation does not need to exist in reality at all" (p. 212). As sated previously, the term Brentano uses is "quasi-relation" ("*Relativliches*"). However, what differs in the 1911 edition is that Brentano stresses that a mental relation cannot have something other than a thing *[Reales]* as its object.[24] This implies a change of the ontological status of the intentional object from *nicht Reales* to *Reales*.

Considering Brentano's aim of elaborating upon the peculiarity of the mental activity which provides us direct experience of the thing we are conscious of, intentional in-existence is qualified to undertake this task by signifying the immanence that can be directly cognized by the mental activity. Meanwhile, since a mental phenomenon is directly accessible by presentation or another psychic activity (and since we immediately are conscious of its real experience), the empirical psychology Brentano is constructing boils down to this foundation.

This is the picture of Brentano's framework of intentional in-existence we have arrived at thus far: It is the most notable characteristic of mental phenomena —meaning that there will be an immanent object contained in consciousness and this intended object can be directed or referred to by

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23 We will disclose "*Reales*" and "*nicht Reales*" in a later section of this dissertation.

24 In the foreword of the 1911 version of *PES*, "one of the most important innovations is that I am no longer of the opinion that mental relation can have something other than a thing *[Reales]* as its object." xxv.

the mental act. Mental phenomena are equally characterized as intentional in-existence which Brentano regards as a mode of real existence that is different from that of physical phenomena.[25] However, upon further scrutiny, some limitations appear within the framework of intentional in-existence. First, the intentional relation that is outlined by Brentano is a relation between the mental act and its immanent object. If so, it seems that there will be a rift between the mental act and the external world. Since the immanent object is independent of the external world, a tendency of idealist dogmatism seems to be unavoidable – or, as Dale Jacquette argued, we will arrive at epistemic idealism.[26] There will be a barrier between our interpretation of the external world and the external world itself, given that what we directly experience is a mentally dependent object which possess its own existence. Its mode of being is different from the external object, and thus cannot give us certainty about the external world.[27] Since there is a direct relationship between the mental act and the immanent object, the external object or the external world is always secondarily cognized. What is more, although Brentano stresses that the immanent object need not correspond to anything outside, we have to admit that in cases when we are conscious of the existent object, there is always a real counterpart existing in reality.

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25 Even though Brentano attributes a special mode of being to the intended object, it is not quite clear what kind of ontology status the intended object has. For example, Dale Jacquette thinks that either from Brentano's *PES* or his 1880 *Logik-Vorlesung* and 1867 *Ontologie and Metaphysik-Vorlesung*, there is no clue as to the ontic status of intended objects. Cf. Dale Jacquette. "Brentano's concept of intentionality". (ed.) by Dale Jacquette. *The Cambridge companion to Brentano*. 2004. p.104.

26 Jacquette's charge is that "if the intended objects are somehow internal to the thoughts by which they are intended, then it appears that no two persons can ever possibly think about precisely the same thing.....It is unclear how thoughts can ever reach beyond their own internal states in order to contact or make reference to entities in the external world." Ibid, p.103.

27 Rolf George and Glen Koehn propose another clue about Brentano's ignorance concerning the external world. This appers is in *Psychologie III*, and in English as *Sensory and Noetic Consciousness*, where Brentano talks about the primary knowledge of objects, and secondary knowledge of the mental activity. Brentano addresses that "mental activity always includes the evident consciousness of that activity" (SNC, p. 4), and even more strongly when he states that "[a]side from our knowledge of ourselves as mentally active beings, we have no directly evident knowledge of facts" (SNC, p. 5). Cf. George and Koehn (2004).

Therefore, it seems that Brentano is confronted with the danger of doubling the object by providing another object in the psychic realm. So, should we still call the immanent thing an object? The ambiguity of object and content which we brought to attention in the opening stage of this paper causes trouble for Brentano.[28]

3. The later stage of intentionality

Brentano's followers try to complete and modify the program of intentional in-existence by addressing the ambiguity in it. Alexius Meinong and Alois Höfler make a distinction between objects: the immanent object[29] and the transcendent, mind-independent intentional object. Kazimierz Twardowski clearly distinguishes the mental act, the content of presentation and the transcendent object, clarifying that the intended object Brentano claims is, in fact, the content of the presentation.[30] On this theory, the intentional object is independent of the mental act and transcendent to the thought. The relation between the content of the presentation and the transcendent object is a kind of representation.[31] With regard to the dilemma that Brentano's proposal of intentional in-existence faces, Twardowski suggests a distinction between object and content. Yet Brentano expresses a relation

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28 Neil Allan points out other problems in Brentano. He refers to Frege and Russell's concern about how natural language could refer to unicorns or the present king of France without such sentences being obviously distinct, grammatically or logically. He proposes a similar problem aroused for Brentano: the "non-existent" object could be presented in intentional states in the same manner as truly existent entities. This leads to the outcome that there is consequently no basis from which to distinguish between such non-veridical objects of intentionality. Cf. Neil Allan, "The Brentano School".

29 According to Jacquette, the immanent object Meinong adopts is what Twardowski refers to as the content of presentation, that which is part of or contained within the experience. Cf. Dale Jacquette (2004), p. 114-115.

30 Twardowski, (1977). English translated by R. Grossmann.

31 Husserl presents his objection to Twardowski's proposal of the relation of content and object. Twardowski links the relation between content and object as a kind of picture or image theory, which depicts the content as the sign or picture of the object. Husserl criticizes the degree of resemblance between them and clarifies that the relation is not a limited resemblance. Cf. Hickerson (2007).

between the psychical act and the immanent object, which he expounds as the reference to a content, or directing towards an object. Hence, it is quite different from Twardowski's claim that the intentional relation is directed to the transcendent object, and not to the content that is presented in the mind. If for Brentano what is immanent works as a relatum of the intentional relation, then Brentano is required to explain the problem of doubling objects and provide a description of the correlation between the immanent object and the external world.

In his later work, Brentano is concerned about the problem of universals. He adopts a reism standpoint[32] and claims that "I am no longer of the opinion that a mental relation can have something other than a thing [*Reales*] as its object",[33] by which he emphasizes that a mental act can only be directed at a real thing (*ens reale*), and that the insubstantial thing cannot be the intentional object.[34] According to McAlister's comment:

> Brentano later acknowledged that the way he attempted to describe consciousness here, adhering to the Aristotelian tradition which asserts 'the mental inexistence of the object', was imperfect. The so-called 'in-existence of the object', the immanent objectivity, is not to be interpreted as a mode of being the thing has in consciousness, but as an imprecise description of the fact that I have something (a thing, real entity, substance) as an object, am mentally concerned with it, refer to it.[35]

According to this claim, it turns out that the intentional relation, at Brentano's later stage, lies in the reference of the mental act to the individual thing, *concretum* or *ens reale*.[36]

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32 Reism means that only things can exist and only things can be objects of thought.

33 In the new Foreword of the 1911 edition of *PES*.

34 According to Linda L. McAlister's interpretation, what Brentano means is "a *reales* is a particular individual thing, while an *irreales* is a non-thing, as for example, a universal, a species, a genus, state of affairs or values." Cf. McAlister. "Chisholm and Brentano on intentionality." p. 331.

35 According to McAlister's comment at the footnote in *PES*, p.68. 2009.

36 According to Benito Müller's introduction part in *DP*, "following Aristotle, the 'early' Brentano was an advocate of a correspondence theory of truth and of the doctrine that the ontologically relevant sense of 'existing' is that of 'being true', and thus he

Brentano's shift to the intentional relation with a real thing is based on the distinction between content and object made by him in the Appendix of the 1911 version of *PES*. The content is analogous to the object in a very loose and improper sense because the content can be said to have its being in the active subject. For example: there are trees, but it is not just that the trees exist, but the existence of trees has *being*, which corresponds to the claim that some trees have being outside of the subject in the strict sense and in reality. But strictly speaking, "a content is never presented in the sense of being object of the presentation, nor is it ever affirmed, in the sense in which an object is affirmed, not even by those who believe that it is to be affirmed." (p. 229). It is not that we agree or deny that the content of a judgement exists, but we agree or deny that the thing exists. Content is "something which is in some way more than the object, for it includes the latter within itself, and is likewise within the subject" (p. 227). The word "content" is a name, which has no meaning and does not name anything. According to Fréchette's investigation of content and object in Brentano's lectures, Brentano's content and object are distinct in that "the content (or the object-presented-as-it-is-presented) serves as a mediator for the referential function of the expression, and the object may or may not exist" (p. 3617). The content is always there when the object is presented; however, the object may not exist in reality at all. That means that for a non-existent object, like a unicorn, even though it does not exist in reality, we can have a presentation of the unicorn as content in mind. The object is what is presented through the content, but in the case of the presented unicorn, no corresponding external object can be found. When we refer to the university in Leiden, this expresses the content of the presentation, but this also refers to the object (the university in Leiden) through the mediation of the content.[37]

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was obliged to accept non-real things, or *irrealia*, in his ontology. The first of these views was later rejected in favor of his theory of evidence (mainly developed in his Vienna years) which has been considered by some to be Brentano's most important achievement. As concerns ontology, he later rejected all irrealia as linguistic fictions. Indeed, after his 'reistic turn', Brentano saw expressions such as 'existence', 'possibility' and 'necessity' as merely synsemantic in nature—like prepositions and conjunctions—as devoid of any descriptive meaning." xiii.

37 I make use of Guillaume Fréchette's example of "the highest bell tower in Salzburg". Cf. Fréchette, (2017). p. 3616-3617.

Fréchette emphasizes that for Brentano, the distinction between content and object is based on that "both the expressive and referential functions of language are at play" (p.3617).[38] In fact, as Fréchette points out, the distinction between content and object is not only revealed in the 1911 version of *PES*, but appears in the late 1860s and early 1870s logic lectures of Brentano, as well as his descriptive psychology lecture from the mid-and late-1880s.[39] Though, in the 1874 edition of *PES*, we see that Brentano does not yet distinguish content and object when putting forward intentional in-existence, and it is only in his 1911 edition that he especially marks it out. Van der Schaar also points out that Brentano makes a distinction between content and object in his logic lectures, and she does not believe the distinction plays a prominent role in Brentano's notion of intentionality. She contends instead that, in Brentano's framework of intentionality, the content may be a physical phenomenon as well as a mental phenomenon.[40] It turns out that for Brentano, the content is something that is immanent in the mental act and contains the object – or to say, is about the object.

The object is defined by Brentano as follows:

> And so it holds true generally that only that which falls under the concept of a thing (*Reales*), can provide an object for mental reference. Nothing else can ever be, like a thing, that to which we mentally refer as an object— neither the present, past, nor future, neither present things, past things, nor future things, nor existence and non-existence, nor necessity nor non-necessity, neither possibility nor impossibility, nor the necessary nor the non-necessary, neither the possible nor the impossible, neither truth nor falsity, neither the true nor the false, nor good nor bad. Nor can the so-called actuality of Form, of which Aristotle speaks, and which we express in our language by means of such abstractions as redness, shape, human nature, and the like, ever be the objects of a mental reference, and this is

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38 *Ibid.* Fréchette analyzes the cases of intuitive presentation where the presentation has a determinateness of the object, so that it is not plausible to forcefully make a conceptual distinction between content and object. The distinction is possible when the content of a presentation has an innate language and referential function and is expressed in language, meanwhile it should allow a degree of determinateness.

39 See: Fréchette (2017).

40 Van der Schaar (2016), p.5-6.

> true further of objects as objects (*Objekte als Objekte*) as for example, the affirmed, the denied, the loved, the hated, the presented.[41]

Dale Jacquette also refers us to Brentano's draft of *Entwurf zur Klassifikation der psychischen Phänomene* in 1910 about the real thing:

> We have only things as objects, all fall under a higher concept.
> The majority of things are also regarded as real. Look at the so-called objective [*Objektiv*] (contents of judgments such as for example that all men are mortal).
> Negatives are not objects. Past and future tenses are not objects. Possibilities are not objects. Origin of the so-called concept of possibility . . . Psychic correlates such as that which is acknowledged, that which is denied, the loved, the hated, the presented, are not objects. Truth, error, good, bad, are not objects. That for which the abstract names are signs, are not objects.[42]

Brentano vigorously rejects universals as objects, as well as psychological correlates, negations, modalities or emotions. Further, concepts and abstract signs are all abandoned. Brentano regards individual things and substances as intended objects and now takes these things to be *Reales* (*entia realia*) in the strict sense. To be more explicit, Brentano regards the intended objects as individual entities or substances instead of the presented objects or the acknowledged, denied, loved, and hated objects which need to be presented by the mind. Besides, the non-existent object (such as a unicorn), is also the individual thing which can be the relatum of this quasi-relation.

The reference to something as an object is regarded by Brentano as what is characteristic of every mental activity, according to his Appendix added to the 1911 edition of *PES*.[43] In this Appendix, he stresses that to have something as an object equates to being conscious of something. "Object" is not an independently meaningful word, but an expression which is only de-

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41 *PES*, p. 229.

42 Brentano, "Entwurf zur Klassifikation der psychischen Phänomene," March 1910, ANR, pp. 219–20 (Dale Jacquette's translation). Cf. Jacquette (2004), p. 118.

43 *PES*, p. 214-215.

pendently meaningful (synsemantic).[44] It shows that even though Brentano changes the intended object from *Nicht Reales* to *Reales*, he nevertheless continues to insist on the characteristic of reference of the mental act to this intended object, whose existence or non-existence in reality is irrelevant. As he discloses, it is a different style of mental reference, in which the one who carries out the mental act must exist, but the intended object need not exist at all. That is why it is better to call it something which is "quasi-relational" ("*Relativliches*"). Meanwhile, it implies that at the later stages of Brentano's work, the intentional object can be a mentally independent object.

Edmund Runggaldier claims that Brentano fails to clearly state what is meant by the immanent-object-quality, the intentional in-existence of an object and the reference to an object in his 1874 edition of *PES*. He believes this is the reason why Brentano abandons the formulation of mental in-existence and later adopts the directedness towards something.[45] This is consistent with Benito Müller's introduction in *DP* which states:

> The intentional object is always 'immanent'; it is something that is non-real, or insubstantial [*unwesenhaft*], but it may be said to exist – and to exist in itself – to the extent that the thinker has it as his intentional object. It is a non-real correlate of the thinking that has it as its object. The intention thus involves as relation a pair of correlates of which 'the one alone is real, [whereas] the other is not something real [*nichts Reales*] (p. xix).

> Brentano was later to reject this doctrine of intentional in-existence, or mental holding [*geistiges Inhaben*]. According to his final view, the statement 'There is something which is being thought [*ein Gedachtes*]' is an improper formulation of 'There is a thinking-thing [*ein Denkendes*]'; statements ostensibly about immanent objects are actually statements only about the thinker who may be said to have those objects. According to this final view, there are no insubstantial entities; everything is an *ens reale*. (p.xx)[46]

Comprehensively speaking, I would like to generalize the interpretation of Brentano's intentionality thesis as follows: in his early stage, intentio-

44 According to the translator's note about this mental reference. *Ibid*, p.211.

45 Runggaldier (1989).

46 Cf. Brentano, *DP*. Translated by Benito Müller. The Introduction, pp. xix-xx.

nality means that in every mental phenomenon, there would be something immanent within the psychic realm. This immanent object is something non-real or insubstantial and is of a mode of being where the thing has in consciousness. Correspondingly, a directing or reference relation can be constituted between the mental act and this intended object. But as to what is immanent, Brentano uses 'content' and 'object' indistinguishably.[47] In his later stage,[48] Brentano emphasizes that the peculiar characteristic of the mental activity is its reference to a thing by modifying the intended object from the presented, wanted, and denied object, and so forth, to something as *Reales* – the individual thing, entity or substance. Correspondingly, the intentional relation is a quasi-relation from the mental act to this individual thing, entity or substance.[49] It is a quasi-relation in that it merely requires the existence of the thinking subject.

Conclusion

With regard to the puzzles surrounding Brentano's notion of intentionality, that is to say, the distinction between mental and physical phenomena, how to interpret intentional in-existence, the non-existent object, and the implication of "in" in "in-existence", I come to a conclusion that the distinction between mental and physical phenomena primarily lies in that mental phenomena are characterized by intentional in-existence, which implies their intentional relation to the object, whereas physical phenomena are like sensible qualities (for example color or sound or so forth) which does not imply a relation. It turns out that Brentano does not necessarily

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47 According to Irena's deviation, he divides Brentano's theory into three stages and in the middle stage Brentano means the immanent object as content. See: note 11. I primarily divide it into two stages based on the diversion from the mental in-existence to the mental reference to a thing.

48 For Brentano's later stage, I mean especially his ideas found in the 1911 version of *PES*.

49 The intentional in-existence Brentano proposed is not just a conception about containment – but rather, the relational characteristic is quite obvious, in that it is revealed from the claim of the relation between mental act and intentional object. To be more concrete, this relation is a kind of directedness or reference driving from the mental act to the object, though it is still ambiguous with regard to what kind of intentional object to which Brentano refers.

have non-existent objects in mind when he describes the distinct character of mental phenomena, however, the non-existent object as the intentional object is hardly implausible given that it has real existence and can be infallibly perceived in mental act. Intentional in-existence theory indicates the immanence of the intended object in the psychic act. It is in this sense that the "in" has a locative implication. Brentano abandons his theory of intentional in-existence in his later stage by replacing an intentional reference as from mental act to the immanent object to an intentional reference to an individual thing, because of the confusion between content and object in his early theory.

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