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THE FUTURE OF PHILOSOPHY, PART TWO: WHAT HAPPENS TO THE INDIVIDUAL MAN OR OX?

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ABSTRACT

In an earlier piece, written for the on-line journal, *Geltung*, I argued that in the wake of two world wars the analytic-Continental divide has left us with two incomplete philosophical worlds, that a reconciliation is required for philosophy to become whole again. Here I propose to show that a further reconciliation is needed, that between the subjectively oriented philosophy of Descartes's *cogito* and the objectively oriented philosophy of ancient and medieval substantialism. Rather than seeing contemporary philosophy as evidence of progress in philosophy, somewhat as we see science and technology as having progressed over time, we ought rather to see contemporary philosophy, indeed much of philosophy since Descartes, as complementary to ancient and medieval philosophy. Each of these two philosophical worlds begins with one of the two possible philosophical starting points – outer reality or inner reality – and philosophy first becomes complete when these are properly distinguished and related. This is, of course, a very broad claim, and I certainly do not anticipate that it would be accepted without further ado. Thus, in order to make it at least somewhat manageable and plausible, I focus on Franz Brentano's later so-called reistic ontology which provides an example from the roots of contemporary philosophy of a kind of Cartesian Aristotelianism, i.e., a blend of substantialist outlook and phenomenological methods, which I think shows the need for greater clarity in the future about the ramifications of our starting points.

KEYWORDS

ARISTOTLE. DESCARTES. FRANZ BRENTANO. REISM. CATEGORIES. SUBSTANTIALISM. PHENOMENOLOGY.

RESUMO

Em um artigo anterior, escrito para a revista on-line *Geltung*, argumentei que, após duas guerras mundiais, a divisão entre a filosofia analítica e a continental nos deixou com dois mundos filosóficos incompletos, e que uma reconciliação é necessária para que a filosofia se torne inteira novamente. Aqui, proponho mostrar que uma nova reconciliação é necessária, entre a filosofia subjetivamente orientada do cogito de Descartes e a filosofia objetivamente orientada do substancialismo antigo e medieval. Em vez de ver a filosofia contemporânea como uma evidência de progresso na filosofia, assim como vemos a ciência e a tecnologia progredindo ao longo do tempo, deveríamos ver a filosofia contemporânea, de fato grande parte da filosofia desde Descartes, como complementar à filosofia antiga e medieval. Cada um desses dois mundos filosóficos começa com um dos dois pontos de partida filosóficos possíveis — a realidade externa ou a realidade interna — e a filosofia se torna completa quando esses aspectos são devidamente distinguidos e relacionados. Esta é, claro, uma afirmação muito ampla, e certamente não espero que seja aceita sem mais delongas. Assim, para torná-la pelo menos um pouco gerenciável e plausível, foco na chamada ontologia reística tardia de Franz Brentano, que fornece um exemplo das raízes da filosofia contemporânea de um tipo de aristotelismo cartesiano, ou seja, uma mistura de uma perspectiva substancialista e métodos fenomenológicos, que eu acredito mostrar a necessidade de maior clareza no futuro sobre as ramificações de nossos pontos de partida.

KEYWORDS

ARISTÓTELES. DESCARTES. FRANZ BRENTANO. REÍSMO. CATEGORIAS. SUBSTANCIALISMO. FENOMENOLOGIA.

INTRODUCTION

In an earlier piece I argued that in the wake of two world wars the analytic-Continental divide has left us with two incomplete philosophical worlds, that a reconciliation is required for philosophy to become whole again. Here I propose to show that a further reconciliation is needed, that between the subjectively oriented philosophy of Descartes's *cogito* and the objectively oriented philosophy of ancient and medieval substantialism. I think we ought to see contemporary philosophy, indeed much of philosophy since Descartes, not as transcending but rather as complementary to ancient and medieval philosophy. Each of these two philosophical worlds begins with one of the two possible philosophical starting points – outer reality or inner reality – and philosophy only becomes complete when these are properly distinguished and related. To this end, I focus first on Franz Brentano's later so-called reistic ontology which provides an example from the roots of contemporary philosophy of a kind of Cartesian Aristotelianism, i.e., a blend of substantialist outlook and phenomenological methods. Then I turn to a modern substantialist explanation of the nature of an individual substance, Aristotle's man or ox (Aristotle, 1970, 1a-4b19).[1] Finally, I attempt to indicate a way forward in philosophy, in which the advantages of the subjective outlook and of the objective outlook are both appreciated and realized.

1. BRENTANO'S REISM

There is an abiding dispute in Brentano studies as to whether he was fundamentally a modern thinker, imbued with modern science, or whether he was rather a kind of neo-Thomist, dedicated to the Aristotelian/Scholastic point of view.[2] The assumption, of course, is that these two are irreconcilably

[1] See Aristotle, *Categories* ". . .an individual man is not more truly substance than an individual ox." (2b27)

[2] For a comparison of Brentano's metaphysics with Scholastic metaphysics, see H. Windischer, "Franz Brentano und die Scholastik," in *Philosophie und Grenzwissenschaften*, vol. VI, no. 6, 1936,

different. I am not sure that they're irreconcilable, and I do not intend to resolve the dispute in Brentano studies. However, I do think that Brentano's reism is best understood through an Aristotelian lens modified by a kind of Cartesian refraction.[3]

The clearest source for Brentano's reism is to be found in *The Theory of Categories* (ThC, 1981b), a collection of posthumous writings edited by Brentano's student, Alfred Kastil. Many topics are covered in a number of late dictations by Brentano – from the critique of Aristotle's theory of categories, and of Leibniz and Kant on the topic of substance, all the way to a speculation about the true nature of the physical world (not at all what one would expect, by the way, but beyond the scope of this discussion[4]). I shall not attempt to enter into all these issues but intend rather to focus somewhat narrowly on the issue of the nature of substance according to part of a dictation from the period 1912-1913 entitled "Substance," (S)[5] and a dictation from 1916 entitled "The Third Draft of the Theory of Categories" (ThD).[6]

When introducing the concept of substance in S, Brentano uses a surprising example. Suppose, he suggests, that an atom could think. Then:

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in particular pp.45-57. For a recent argument see Werner Sauer to the effect that the Thomistic and Aristotelian reading of Brentano's intention is correct: "Erneuerung der *philosophia perennis*: Über die ersten vier Habilitationsthesen Brentanos," *Grazer Philosophische Studien*, vol. 58, pp. 119-149. But see also, Wolfgang Huemer, "Brentano's Conception of Philosophy as Rigorous Science," *Brentano Studien* XVI (2018) pp. 53-71. Huemer disagrees with Sauer, holding that Brentano's insistence on scientific method actually is revolutionary and opens up a whole new way of doing philosophy.

[3] For a discussion of the development of Brentano's reism see especially Arkadiusz Chrudzimski and Barry Smith,
"Brentano's ontology: from conceptualism to reism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Brentano*, ed. Dale Jacquette (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 197-219. For a discussion of logical problems in Brentano's reism, see Werner Sauer, "Brentano's Reism," in *The Routledge Handbook of Franz* Brentano and the Brentano School, ed. Uriah Kriegel (London: Routledge, 2117), pp. 133-143.

[4] See ThC, IV. Appendix: The Nature of the Physical World in the Light of the Theory of Categories, pp. 208-211. For example: "…one might go so far as to conjecture that the aggregate mass of matter constitutes a single stationary corporeal substance…" (p. 209).

[5] ThC, pp. 116-124. This includes sections C, "Substance and Accident," and D, "Substance, Self, and Self-Awareness," of "Preliminary Studies for the Theory of Categories," which is Part Two of ThC.

[6] ThC, pp. 188-207. This is Section III of Part Three of ThC, "The Final Three Drafts of the Theory of Categories."

> … the thinking atom would be a whole which, if the atom ceased to think, would be reduced to one of its parts. But one could not at all say that its thinking could be preserved if the atom ceased to exist… If another atom were to think the same thing, it would differ from the first not only *qua* atom but also *qua* thinking thing; as a thinking thing it would be individuated by the individuality of the atom. In such cases, the one part of the whole is said to subsist or to underlie the whole and thus to be its substance. (ThC, p. 115)

Although certainly heavily influenced by Aristotle, in particular by the claim that, "The most distinctive mark of substance appears to be that, while remaining numerically the same, it is capable of admitting contrary qualities" (Aristotle, 1970, 4a10), Brentano departs rather radically from Aristotle concerning the concept of substance in that he construes it in terms of the relationship between a whole, i.e., an accident, and its parts. For Aristotle a substance is, "that which is neither predicable of a subject nor present in a subject" (Ibid, 2a10). The explanatory device is linguistic (Of course, Aristotle provides other explanations as well). But for Brentano, the explanatory device is decidedly mereological; a substance is possibly a part of a whole and, at that, a part which is necessarily such that it can continue to exist while other parts have been removed from that part even if those other parts cannot likewise continue to exist apart from the whole. In R.M. Chisholm's formulation, roughly, a substance is a one-sidedly separable proper part of a whole.[7] In Brentano's words:

> Now it is perhaps incorrect to ascribe mental activity to an atom, but there is a non-spatial substance within ourselves. It is contained in us as the substantial part of the one-who-is-thinking, of the one-who-is-willing, of the one-who-is-seeing, the one-who-is hearing, and equally so in each case. This substantial part distinguishes our own hearing from the similar hearing of another person, and for each of us it unifies the one-who-hears, the one-who-sees, the one-who-thinks, and so on. (ThC, p. 116)

[7] See Roderick M. Chisholm, "Brentano's Conception of Substance and Accident," in *Grazer Philosophische Studien*, vol. 5 – 1978, pp. 197-210. Here is the definition of substance he provides in the spirit of Brentano's reism: "D4 – x exists in itself (*ist etwas für sich*) = df. x is possibly such that there is nothing of which it is a proper constituent." (p. 208)

The one who-is-now-willing can continue to exist apart from the willing, but the willing cannot likewise continue to exist apart from the one, and so forth *mutatis mutandum* for the one-who-is-seeing and the one-who-is-hearing. This one-sided separability is the mark of substance for Brentano. The whole, of which a substance can be a part, he calls an accident, and the relationship between substance and accident for Brentano is quite different from what it was for Aristotle, yet the inspiration for the Brentanian account is Aristotelian to this extent: anything that really exists is an individual (or a collection of individuals) for Brentano; and abstracta such as thought, vision, hearing and so forth do not exist independently apart from a substance, precisely what Aristotle had said about Plato's forms. However, Brentano's concept of substance also clearly owes a debt to Descartes' *res cogitans*, the thinking thing. The difficulty is that Aristotle's concept of substance and Descartes' concept of substance are thoroughly incompatible. While the so-called Copernican Revolution in philosophy is commonly attributed to Kant, there can be little doubt but that it has its roots in Descartes and his search for certainty, nor can it be doubted that Brentano, with his reliance on inner experience, philosophizes in the spirit of Descartes' *cogito*.

2. ARISTOTELIAN SUBSTANCE: A MODERN ACCOUNT

In order to understand Aristotle's concept of substance without laboriously explicating the Aristotelian texts, it is useful to appeal to a modern, scientific view of what a substance is in the Aristotelian sense. A good example of such an account is to be found in the 1988 work, *Substance and Modern Science* by Richard J. Connell (1922-2014). By contrast with contemporary materialistic and linguistic accounts of what we mean by a substance, including the possibility that we mean no particular, individual thing at all,[8] Connell shows how the Aristotelian concept sheds light on what exists in nature. He begins by

[8] I am thinking of those views that reduce individual entities to sets of properties, or that reduce organisms to machinery, i.e., to collections of mutually separable parts.

thinking of substance, not as something that *is* a part, but as something that *has* parts.[9] Substances have this in common with machines and aggregates in general, but are also distinct from them by virtue of the unique relation to their parts. For example, the parts of a machine are first fabricated and then assembled, whereas the parts of an organism – a prime example of a substance – are produced simultaneously with the organism itself (SMS, p.155). Further, however, whereas a Brentanian substance retains its identity while becoming part of various wholes (accidents) over time, without ever itself taking on or losing a part, an Aristotelian substance is quite capable of retaining its identity while it takes on and loses parts. To take the example of an organism again, this happens constantly through the processes of metabolism. In Connell's words, "a substance is that which exists in itself (by itself) and not in another as in a subject." As such, a substance is an entity *per se*, whereas machines are entities *per accidens* with parts "joined to make an incidental unit" (SMS, p.69). That is, the parts of a machine have been assembled and can be disassembled, their disassembly causing the machine to be "incomplete or defective" (SMS, p. 71) with respect to the sort of whole which it was intended to be. Remarkably, however, the substance which is a human being can lose a part, say, an arm and still be identically the same substance. The human being is a whole *per se*.

Even at the level of a less complex organization, substance exhibits unique features. Consider the chemicals sodium and chlorine. Each is a substance in its own right, yet when the two are combined, a new substance emerges, NaCl, salt, in which neither sodium nor chlorine continues to exist as

[9] This pertains to physical or natural substance, Connell's chief concern. This is Aristotle's chief concern, too, insofar as he divides speculative sciences into mathematics, physics, and theology. Mathematical things are immutable but not separable from matter (though they may be treated as such). The divine is both immutable and separable from matter. (See Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VI, 1026a10-30). But physics, philosophy of nature, deals with entities composed of matter and form, i.e., natural substances, and they are our concern here. Brentano's reism treats Aristotle's natural substances as separable from their accidents or properties, which is a departure from Aristotle's view. For a comprehensive presentation of Brentano's philosophical development from his early Aristotelian/Scholastic mode to his later reistic turn, see Ion Tănăsescu, *Psychologie, Seiendes, Phantasie bei Franz Brentano* (Berlin/Boston, De Gruyter, 2021), especially pp. 7-149.

such (SMS, p. 83). The Aristotelian concept of substance is thus applicable to natural alterations of various kinds, chemical and biological. In the area of physics, Connell quotes Sir Arthur Eddington to the effect that his desk, so far from being a "solid substance" is rather like "a swarm of gnats" according to science, and Connell comments that we are not required to choose between the two – ordinary experience and particle physics – as long as we remember that the desk is not a substance as such but rather a man-made aggregate of materials (SMS, pp. 98-99, 125-126). That is to say, the desk is what Connell calls an "artefact," whereas a substance in the proper sense of the term is a natural thing, produced without the aid of human intelligence and volition (SMS, pp. 25, 65-73). Further, we must bear in mind that both the desk we perceive and the physicist's desk are accessed by ordinary external perception, whether directly of the desk itself or indirectly by means of the equipment of modern physics. In no case is the desk we commonly deal with to be thought of as a mere appearance before the mind.

However, because it is useful to science, whether physics or chemistry or biology, to view natural objects as aggregates – whether the wooden surface of a desk, or a chemical, or an organ like the eye – it falls specifically to philosophy to draw the distinction and insist that there is a profound difference between an artificial assemblage of parts, on the one hand, and a genuine, natural substance – whether chemical or biological – on the other. The reason is that a substance belongs to a unique category of its own and is ontologically superior to an aggregate, in much the same way as Marcus Aurelius himself is ontologically superior to his statue on the quad.

3. INNER EXPERIENCE VS. OUTER EXPERIENCE

At this point, we have come a long way from Brentano's atom that could think. Brentano refers to "the non-spatial substance within ourselves," (ThC, p. 116) the one that thinks, and we might be inclined to conclude that the term 'substance' as used by Brentano (or Descartes) has just about nothing to do with

the term 'substance' as used by Connell (or Aristotle). Yet both would happily tell us that their philosophies are empirical, based on experience, and intended to account for what we experience. In *The Empirical Intelligence – The Human Empirical Mode* (EI. 1988a), Connell tells us that he

> … proposes to show how the mind comes to understand unobservables from observables, following which [he argues] that philosophy is first of all a systematic discipline that bears on the real world, and therefore it is as well a discipline that depends upon ordinary experience … (EI, p. ii)

Similarly, in discussing proofs of the existence of the unobservable *par excellence*, God, Brentano insists that the four proofs he accepts, "…share a *common method*. None of them proceeds *a priori*; rather all are based on experience" (EG, p. 152).[10] Let me suggest that the equivocal term here is not only 'substance,' rather it is 'experience' as well. Connell tells us,

> The word 'empirical,' which one might take to imply contact with extrinsic realities, now is commonly employed to mean something that is only psychological, something that appears internally but cannot be regarded as putting us in contact with realities of any sort. (EI, p. 2)

By contrast, as an avowed naïve realist (EI, p. 131), Connell is persuaded that we can indeed rely on our senses to deliver accurate information about the external world, and this is what he means when he says that we should adopt an empirical method.

Yet Brentano argues forcefully against naïve realism:

[10] This is the view of the Brentano of the lectures on God's existence, but later in his life he placed a heavier reliance on reason and logic which is especially pronounced in Brentano's late dictation, "The Train of Thought in the Proof of God's Existence," EG, 308-337. See Adrian Maître, "Brentanos Gedankengang beim Beweise für das Dasein Gottes (1915)," in *Brentano Studien* XIV, 2016, 79-126. Eberhard Tiefensee speculates that over time Brentano gradually abandoned his more empirical claims about the nature of philosophy, such that the early lectures on the existence of God are very deliberately empirically based whereas the late dictation is, one might say, more Platonic or Cartesian. See Tiefensee, *Philosophie und Religion bei Franz Brentano* (Tübingen and Basel, 1998). p. 149. I would suggest that this tendency is also evident earlier on, but that it is in keeping with Brentano's abiding emphasis on inner experience. As always with Brentano, we have a kind of ambiguity of the terms 'experience,' and 'empirical,' whether they denote the "inner," or "outer" kind.

> It is not correct to say that we are acted upon by the primary object of perception. The primary object is different from the cause of sensation though its appearance is simultaneous with its cause. Ordinarily in perceiving we are inclined to assume that something is the cause of the sensation and to identify this cause with the primary object. Even after experience has taught us, in the clearest way possible, that the primary objects cannot exist in reality in the way in which they appear to us, we have great difficulty in freeing ourselves from this illusion. (ThC., p.196)

While Connell correctly attributes this phenomenological outlook to Husserl, Brentano's student, and claims that Spiegelberg and others fail to establish the objectivity of it, (EI, pp. 53-56), Brentano himself takes the more modern path as indicated by Eddington's two desks, the "swarm of gnats" on the one hand and the familiar, solid table-like object on the other. Is the experiential basis of philosophy better provided by Brentano's emphasis on inner experience – how I'm quite sure the desk appears to me although I know that in reality it is different – or is it better provided by Connell's unreflective outer experience? Or does Connell have the edge epistemically because, as he points out:

> The regularity of our experience suffices for us to recognize the abnormal … Furthermore, the same 'illusion' appears regularly: sticks at a certain angle in the water always look bent; railway lines always appear to converge; the moon always appears to follow us, and at certain times it always looks bigger than the sun, etc. (EI, p. 134)

In short, "the regular is the standard against which we determine the abnormal," (EI, p. 144) where the "abnormal" is the allegedly illusory the occurrence of which casts doubt on our ability to perceive things as they are.

Nevertheless, Brentano insists that we cannot even be sure of the *existence* of an external object when we perceive, i.e., when we see or hear or touch something:

> It is certainly true of all our acts of thinking that their very nature is that of a *passio* and we might even say that this is universally characteristic of

> them. Since this would also hold true, for example, for seeing or hearing, which do not seem to stem from the mental; we could say that here, because a cause appears it seems to be certain that an external thing can be a cause. Yet, since this cause is presented with such a lack of certainty we can surmise only that it is a thing, but not that it is this thing or that thing, and thus we cannot say that it is some external thing nor that the cause might not be within ourselves. (1981a, p. 11)[11]

This represents an extreme of subjectivist thinking. Even Descartes, who arguably pioneered this mode, as I have suggested above, was never so skeptical about our knowledge of the external world.[12] Why does Brentano draw that conclusion about the external world, and why does somebody like Connell proceed with confidence regarding things outside of ourselves?

4. FORMAL AND FINAL CAUSALITY

Both the Brentanian phenomenologist and the Aristotelian realist claim to be empiricists, and both insist that everything that really exists is an individual (or collection of individuals). The world should look pretty much the same to them both. But it does not.

One way to get at the reasons for this difference is to look at causality, specifically, at the differentiation of causes according to Brentano and according to the Aristotelian, Connell. Both accept material and efficient (or agent) causality; there is action (efficient cause) and something acted upon (material cause). Where they differ is that Brentano rejects both formal and final causality. Why? Essentially because his reism can do without them. As he says:

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[11] See also ThC, p. 208: "But so-called outer perception presents us with nothing that appears the way it really is. The sensible qualities do not correspond in their structure to external objects, and we are subject to the most serious illusions with respect to rest and motion and to figure and size."

[12] See Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Third Edition, trans. Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993), Meditation Six. Here Descartes offers a counter to skepticism about the information gained by the senses: "I am of the opinion that I must not rashly admit everything that I seem to derive from the senses, but neither, for that matter, should I call everything into doubt… Moreover, I can nearly always make use of several of them [i.e., senses] in order to examine the same thing." (pp. 51, 58)

> The assumption of the formal cause is connected with the failure to recognize that, in the case of an accidental whole no second part is added to the subject and that only the accidental whole itself is opposed to the subject as part. The second, formal part was thought to be added to the subject; the subject was then viewed as a material part and the two together were thought to constitute a whole. The formal part, however, was a mere fiction … (ThC, p. 204)

The so-called form of an individual is really just a property (characteristic, accident) and a property (accident) is a whole with a one-sidedly separable part, the substance. Without the substance the form is nothing. Further,

> Like "formal cause," the expression "final cause" is a misnomer. The final cause was thought to be one of the external causes, and a cause of coming into being. But it consisted in nothing else but that which an intelligent efficient cause thinks of and loves and, believing it to be within its power, undertakes to bring about. (ThC, pp. 24-205)

Again, the purpose or finality is absorbed into the substance, the thinking thing. Like a property or accident, it is nothing distinct from its substance. This, ultimately, is what reism means in Brentano.

For Connell, on the contrary, both formal and final causality are essential to an understanding of nature. Regarding formal cause, he tells us that the properties of a substance are "rooted in the substance," (SMS, pp. 89-92, 193-200) and in a later work, *Nature's Causes* (NC), he tells us that "the existence of a principle in things which determines their species. . .is what we mean by form or formal cause" (Connell, 1995, p. 80). Further:

> Because in many or most species we cannot identify the principal operational capacities, our knowledge of formal causes of organisms is limited. In inanimate substances we must settle for the constant sets of properties by which we distinguish one from another together with their material causes. Wherever the set of properties varies, so does the species, which means that inanimate substances are less determinate in their nature and less knowable in themselves than biological species. We must say, then, that a formal cause is *that by which something is what it is*; and when we

> say *by which*, we indicate that the form is not *that which is* but rather an intrinsic determinant of the individual or stuff which exists. (NC, p. 103)

Thus it is due to form, to formal causality, that a kind or species of substance is what it is, and this holds all the way from the elements, hydrogen, oxygen, etc., to stuffs or substances such as metals, stone, water, etc., to living creatures such as insects, crustaceans, horses, humans, etc. Differences in species or kind indicate differences in structure or form.

Then ultimately, with regard to final causality:

> … it seems that we may truly say that only through ends or goals do we come to understand the whole existence of natural species, where "whole existence" includes not only the species but also variations in populations of individuals within a species … Such variations proportion populations to different environmental circumstances and so go beyond that which is common to and specifying of every member of the species… To say that an individual organism has such and such traits because it inherited them from its parents supplies little understanding of its individual traits: but an account in terms of ends or goals or adaptation employs the ultimate principle of intelligibility. (NC, p. 225)

So far from regarding the concept of final cause as a "misnomer," Connell sees in it the key to understanding nature, in fact, the cause of causes. (NC, p. 226) This is what substantialism means in Aristotle, in Thomas Aquinas, and more recently in Connell.

Why the huge difference in outlook between a thinker like Brentano and a thinker like Connell? Surely one's philosophical point of departure will make a significant difference in the end, the subjectivist point of departure in Brentano leading, albeit indirectly,[13] to his reism and the objectivist point of

[13] I have deliberately not dwelt upon Brentano's rejection of *entia irrealia* (such abstractions as 'humanity' or a 'thought-of horse') because I have wanted in this context to focus on his concept of substance as such. But it is true, as students of Brentano will know, that his thought developed along the lines ultimately of reism because he began to question the ontological status of what the tradition had known as *abstracta* or *entia rationis*. See for instance, Franz Brentano, *The True and the Evident*, ed. Oskar Kraus, English edition ed. Roderick M. Chisholm, trans. Chisholm, Politzer, Fischer (New York: Humanities Press, 1971), letter to Marty, 17 March 1905, pp. 77-79.

departure in Connell leading to his Aristotelian understanding of natural science.

5. WHO SHEDS LIGHT, AND WHERE?

There is a passage in St. Augustine's dialogue, *On Free Choice of the Will*, where Augustine asks Evodius how he knows that he exists, and then points out that even if he were somehow mistaken in thinking that he exists it would still be true that he exists and that he knows he exists (Augustine, 1993, p. 33). This reflection is clearly akin to Descartes' *cogito*, and is followed by a discussion of the five senses and the "inner sense" which is phenomenological in modern terms. In summary, however, Augustine says, "the bodily senses perceive material objects," and the inner sense "perceives material objects through the bodily senses" (Ibid., p. 34-37). I would say that here we see a philosopher operating both subjectively and objectively, i.e., both on the basis of inner experience and on the basis of outer experience. That is to say, instead of adopting one point of departure to the exclusion of the other, Augustine here employs both, each on its appropriate topic.[14]

What we see in Brentano's reism, however, is the adoption of the subjectivist point of departure to the exclusion of the other, the objectivist.[15]

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[14] I might add, Augustine "operates subjectively," so to speak, without any fear of incurring the charge of what we now call relativism or psychologism. In a similar vein, Mario Gonzáles Porta explores Gottlob Frege's "peculiar conception of subjectivity" in "Frege's Philosophy of Mind? The Conception of Subjectivity in Frege," *Geltung*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2021, pp. 1-35. As Porta says, "Now, Frege is the first to establish the 'immanence principle' as the ultimate presupposition of all psychologism and consequently, to deny it. I will understand by 'immanence principle' the Cartesian-Lockean thesis that the only direct and immediate objects of my knowledge are my own ideas. … The content of consciousness is just the means by which consciousness is directed to something that is not its content." pp. 20, 25. Thus are our ideas able to acquaint us with things that are not our ideas at all.

[15] Brentano had adopted the subjectivist outlook earlier on, of course, but perhaps not to the exclusion of the objectivist until his later reistic phase. For example: ". . . philosophy in the narrower sense is the science that deals with being and its attributes, insofar as that falls under concepts which are given in inner experience, whether they be acquired only by inner experience or else at least do not belong exclusively to outer experience." I thank Ion Tănăsescu for calling this passage to my attention. See Brentano, "Introduction to the Concept of the History of Philosophy," in *Brentano and the Positive Philosophy of Comte and Mill*, eds. Tănăsescu, Bejinariu, Gabriel, Stoenescu (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2022), p. 460, n. 8.

Substance, in Brentano's reistic interpretation is what we encounter through inner experience, what we necessarily know to be an existing entity capable of entertaining all kinds of thoughts while remaining itself one and persistent.[16] This leaves out of consideration substance in the objectivist sense, the object of external perception, the individual man or ox.

At the same time, in Connell's criticism of Husserlian phenomenology we see the objectivist point of departure employed to the exclusion of the subjectivist (though not to the exclusion of inner experience – more on this in what follows). In denying objectivity, i.e., truth, to the subjectivist outlook, it seems to me that Connell risks missing the kinds of insights that can come from the phenomenological project. One example is provided, interestingly, by Brentano's theodicy.[17] Reistic ontology actually sheds light on the problem of evil in the following way. The question of how the evils in the world may be justified or defeated leads to the question what, exactly, are the evils we are concerned with. They must, in every case, be creatures, i.e., things created by God, since the problem of evil only occurs in a theistic context. And of all the things created by God, the only ones that can be called evil are conscious beings; weather events and the like, that is, are only to be called evil insofar as they affect conscious beings. But a conscious being – think of Brentano's atom that can think, or thinking thing, *res cogitans* – is such that it is inherently good, considered in itself, according to Brentano. It may be a one-sidedly separable proper part of an accident that is evil – murderous rage, for instance – but considered in itself thought is good in itself, consciousness is good in itself.

[16] For a relatively early (1890-1891) account see Franz Brentano, *Descriptive Psychology*, ed. and trans. Benito Müller (London and New York: Routledge 1995): "Substance and inherence [as] relation between mutually pervading parts, of which one is regarded as [being] the principal one; [for example] looking at physical concreta [or] the I. (Maybe in this case particularly, since the individuality [of the substance continues to exist] whereas accidents [occur and disappear].)", p. 106; and "Everything psychical which we apperceive is composed. It is an accident which includes the substance of the soul, or a plurality of accidents of the same substance, each of which contains this substance," pp. 167-168.

[17] This was the title of my PhD dissertation at Brown University in 1980. I do not mean to suggest that there cannot be an objectivist theodicy such as that of Leibniz, but rather only that Brentano's subjectivist approach does shed its own light.

This yields a very interesting way to think about theodicy. The values that evil violates, so far from being negated or defeated thereby actually determine what evil is, namely, an ontological parasite, or, as Augustine put it, a privation.

Still one need not accept Brentano's or anyone's theodicy to note the intrinsic value of human beings which is consequent upon their being regarded as individual, conscious substances. Without using the term 'substance' in the same way as either Brentano or Connell does, Kant certainly arrives at the dignity, as opposed to price, of a human being by way of the noumenal center of consciousness.[18] The human being, in Kant's terms, is not reducible to a phenomenon or set of phenomena, but rather possesses the unity of consciousness which makes experience possible. This outlook seems to me to be entirely dependent upon a subjectivist point of departure, upon the Copernican Revolution inherited from Descartes and much elaborated by Kant.[19] Similarly, the claim by Levinas and others that *ethics* (rather than metaphysics) is first philosophy is prompted by the same subjectivist point of departure, and no doubt in the wake of two world wars the value of this way of seeing things cannot be denied. Much of Continental philosophy, from Heidegger – or perhaps from Nietzsche – onward adopts this outlook. One could say something similar about much of Anglo/American analytic philosophy, since the emphasis on symbolic logic and on language relies upon what is essentially a subjective starting point.[20]

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[18] See Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, third edition, trans. James W. Ellington (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981), especially p. 36, the Practical Imperative: "Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, always at the same time as an end and never simply as a means." The whole Second Section is relevant, pp. 19-48, "Transition from Popular Moral Philosophy to a Metaphysics of Morals."

[19] This is not to say that there cannot be an ethics based on an objectivist point of departure. For instance, topics such as virtue and the common good are probably best addressed in this way. But the intrinsic even infinite value of the individual human being is arrived at by inner experience and seems to me to be a necessary corrective to certain modern horrors.

[20] In fact, these observations tend to show that in some ways the Continental and analytic traditions have much in common despite their many differences. For an extensive elaboration of this idea, see Robert B. Brandom, *Tales of the Mighty Dead: Historical Essays in the Metaphysics of Intentionality* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2002). His essays on Spinoza, Leibniz, and Hegel, as well as those on Frege, Heidegger, and Sellars, bear this out in great and

By the same token, however, the objectivist point of departure also provides insights that cannot be obtained any other way. The locus classicus for this approach is perhaps to be found at *Summa Theologica*, I, Q85, a2, "Whether the intelligible species abstracted from phantasms are related to our intellect as that which is understood?" Aquinas's answer is no, in direct contradiction to the phenomenological outlook based on inner experience which essentially gives the "phantasms" pride of place epistemologically. Connell sides rather with the Angelic Doctor.

Consider the individual man or ox. Aristotle had asked, what makes an animal, composed of diverse parts, act as one entity? (1968, VIII, ch. 6, 1045a5-1045b25) Connell explores this issue by the light of modern biological discoveries (SMS, pp. 110-115). Living cells, for example, are capable of several unique activities: nutrition (assimilation of food); growth; and reproduction. When cells divide, the product is not two parts of a cell but rather two cells of the same kind, each capable of the same original activities. Further:

> … when we consider cell division we see that it cannot be classified either in the category of chemical change as bringing about a new kind of substance or in the category of physical change as producing only changes of qualities. A chemical reaction produces end products that differ from the reactants – different molecules or atoms – whereas mitosis produces individuals of the same *kind*. (SMS, p. 114)

The objectivist point of departure is essential to this insight; rather than doubting the reality of what appears to us to be happening out there, we investigate in order to account for it, taking care to be faithful to the perceived

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fascinating detail. For a discussion of the essentially objectivist character of Aristotelian logic by contrast with the essentially subjectivist character of modern symbolic logic, see Richard J. Connell, "Does Modern Symbolic Logic Contain Aristotelian Logic as a Part?", in *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association,* 1965, pp. 183-194. Even from an objectivist standpoint, as Connell points out, "logic is a tool and a means to an end," "logic deals with relations that exist only in the reason and which do not have a counterpart (except perhaps accidentally) outside the mind," and the relations logic deals with, "are not properties or attributes of things taken according to their existence in the real world; rather, they are attributes of concepts, or in other words, of objects taken according to their intentional existence or presence in the mind." (pp. 185-186)

facts. Natural science requires this, and so does philosophy to the extent that it aims to account for the external world of our experience.

I conclude that we need philosophy to address both the issues that arise from a subjectivist perspective and also those that arise from an objectivist perspective. The truth is, we have experience in both realms. At the same time, however, there is a priority to be acknowledged.

6. THE PRIORITY OF THE OBJECTIVIST VIEW

In his *Problems of Philosophy*, Bertrand Russell argues that the correspondence theory of truth provides the criterion of truth, whereas coherence by itself, although it provides a test of truth, cannot be thought to provide its criterion. As he points out, "…minds do not create truth or falsehood. They create beliefs" (Russell, [1912] 1997, pp. 119-130; 129). "Hence, although truth and falsehood are properties of beliefs, they are properties dependent upon the relations of the beliefs to other things, not upon any internal quality of the beliefs" (Ibid., p. 121).

My suggestion is that a similar priority holds between the objectivist and the subjectivist points of departure in philosophy.[21] The objectivist is prior in somewhat the way the correspondence theory of truth is prior to the coherence theory. Without correspondence there would be no truth. Likewise, without an objectivist starting point there would be no subjectivist approach. This is true genetically, so to speak, that is, in the development of the human mind, and also logically. To take the genetic aspect first, think how babies discover the external world. It consists among other things of their own feet! They play with their feet in the same way they play with (other) toys. I do not mean to say that they should advance to the *cogito* between feedings; quite the contrary, they are right to treat their own bodies like external objects because they are by

[21] It is worth noting here that Brentano himself essentially rejected the correspondence theory of truth. See Brentano, *The True and the Evident*, pp. 107-122. See also Susan Krantz, "Brentano's Revision of the Correspondence Theory," *Brentano Studien 3* (1990-1991), pp. 79-87.

nature oriented to the external world. Then as time passes, and they become philosophers of a sort, the external world remains the touchstone of a proper relationship with reality. We take a child by the hand, for instance, and admonish it to look both ways before crossing the street, not because a speeding bus might be just a "swarm of gnats," or worse, a figment of our imagination, but rather because we, too, by nature presuppose the existence *as we perceive them* of objects in the external world. And rightly so. Doubt comes later. Logically, any bracketing of the external world presupposes an external world to bracket.

In discussing Brentano's reism, R.M. Chisholm liked to point out that Brentano was a mereological essentialist whereas Aristotle was not (Cf. Aristotle, 1968, chs. 25-27, 1023b15-1024a30). In other words, for Brentano the parts are essential to the whole; change parts and you have a different whole, a different entity. Consider the well-known problem of the ship of Theseus concerning which we are asked to imagine that over time every single part of it is replaced, plank by plank. The question is, have we still got the ship of Theseus? Under mereological essentialism, the answer would be no. But in the case of an organism, which takes on and loses "parts" continually, we rightly claim that it is the same organism over time. The parts are not essential to the whole. Its identity consists in something else, namely, for Aristotle, its form. We could say, its formula. We might be tempted to say, its DNA, but an organism's unity and persistence are more subtle than any strand of material that can be extracted from it.

It seems to me that mereological essentialism is a necessary consequence of adopting the subjectivist view, leading to what I would call a *thin* concept of substance,[22] the reistic concept in which its accidents or qualities do not

[22] We see a similarly thin concept of substance in Locke. See John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. A.D. Woozley (New York: William Collins and Sons Ltd., 1964), p. 86: "[we] signify nothing by the word 'substance' but only an uncertain supposition of we know not what, i.e., something whereof we have no particular distinct positive idea, which we take to be the *substratum*, or support, of those ideas we do know."

properly belong to the substance. By contrast, mereological inessentialism is a necessary consequence of adopting the objectivist view, leading to what I would call a *robust* concept of substance according to which the substance is itself capable of acquiring various accidents because of its very nature, its form. That is to say, subjectively the substance, the thinking thing, appears simple, partless, a changeless participator in various wholes. But objectively the substance, the organism, appears complex, changing as it comprehends a host of possibilities over time. The difference between the two views is almost like the difference between looking through the wrong end of a telescope and looking through the right end, except that this illustration oversimplifies. First of all, there is no "right" vs. "wrong" outlook, rather there is a priority which allows for the legitimacy of both. Secondly, both outlooks are limiting to some extent; what you can see from the objectivist perspective does not include all of what you can see from the subjectivist perspective, and *vice versa*. We need both. Ironically, we need both in order to be properly objective. Consider Descartes' *cogito*, "I think, therefore I am." That is hardly a subjective claim in the pejorative sense. Rather its objectivity is unassailable. Yet it has this limitation, as we see in Brentano's reism: the individual man or ox gets lost as an accident in perception, it becomes one-who-sees-a-man, one-who-sees-an-ox.

Years ago, Burnham Terrell (1984, pp.73-75), one of the translators of the English edition of Brentano's *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, remarked in correspondence that Brentano "went down the rabbit hole of reism." So he did. If we follow him there, let us be sure also to find the way out. And if we find ourselves philosophically more attracted to the inner or to the outer view, let us not forget the lessons of the other.[23]

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