BRENTANO'S CONCEPTION OF SELF

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Abstract

This thesis examines various interpretations of the self in the works of Franz Brentano. Although a clear, well-formulated concept of the self is not part of Brentano' s writings, there exists a thread of consistency between what he considers the self to be for, practically, and what it actually is of- structurally. Thus somewhere between the way we know a self empirically in *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, and metaphysically in *The Theory of Categories*, Brentano provides his conception of the self. In examining Brentano's conception of the self and of selfhood, William James' theories provide interesting contrasts and similarities. The two philosophers embarked on a similar path towards a phenomenological concept of the self. The most important difference between Brentano and James revolves around the notion of the self as a substance. Between James' 'how-to know-the-self via experience, and Brentano's 'what-is-the-self-made-of via structure, important philosophical questions about epistemology and metaphysics arise. Can we have an empirical conception of the self while it remains a substantial entity? Today's philosophy has pushed the notion of an empirical self far beyond Brentano's and James' imagination. The question has extended not only to the self as a 'knowable' as a result of its empirical nature as an experiencing thing, but to how it is empirically known. How and with what methods do we interpret experiencing selves today?

Acknowledgements

I am happy to have this opportunity to thank all those involved in making this project an academic and personal success. The topic I chose was not an easy one—not only did it involve relatively uncharted territory, but it forced me to think rigorously about highly theoretical, speculative aspects of philosophy, the kind that really give a person a headache. I want to thank Dr. Jeffrey Mitscherling, not only for taking on the headache, but for being the kind of person who revels in it. I also have to thank him for putting up with what I call 'painful reading'. Thanks for hopping along with me. To my family and friends, especially my parents, who support me in anything I do, in particular for their liberal open-mindedness and understanding for this life of academia. A special thanks to Luciano Memmo, my one and only bright light, driving me back and forth from Toronto to Hamilton to Guelph and beyond that for being exactly the way he is—perfect. Without these people, this project may have been a miserable and uninspiring task. This thesis is dedicated to my original inspiration, Franz Brentano. His focus in philosophy provided me with the challenging task of articulating obscure ideas while trying to remain true to his theory.

Table of Contents

Introduction

A. Statement of the Problem

Brentano does not have a concept of the self; nevertheless selfhood may be derived from his various works. In order to elucidate the Brentanian concept of a self, I will focus mainly on his greatest work, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint,* as well as *The Theory of Categories*. In the former work, the chapters on "Inner Consciousness" and "The Unity of Consciousness" provide the most comprehensive resources for what and how to conceive of a Brentanian self. Brentano's theory of substance and accident provides insight into how a self is structured.

What is the self and how can we know it? I will examine these questions in more than one area of Brentano's philosophy. It is essential to better understand the experiencing subject of Brentano's innovative theories of philosophy as a science (psychology) and his metaphysics. Since the experiencing subject or self is the basis of Brentano's empirical theory, the notion of a self is subsumed in many of his theories. Yet there is a difficulty in mapping out one theory of self in Brentano, since several instances of selfhood may be drawn from various areas of his philosophy. For example, in the following chapters we will come across the self as a unity, a multiplicity, a function, a narration, etc. In some theories, Brentano appears to endorse a traditional conception of the self as a single entity that apprehends parts of an experience, such as a presentation, a judgement or a feeling. Unity is therefore viewed as a collective, a bearer of many parts. Unity provides the self with an identity. Self-identity is plausible as a result of self-sameness; it is one and the 'same' self that sees, hears and feels. Theories of the unity of

consciousness describe how we know the self. Brentano's metaphysics look at what the self really is.

Right up to the very last lectures he dictated before his death, Brentano grappled with the question of substance. His apparent irresolution has a direct bearing on the experiencing subject of his theories. Brentano's metaphysical theories in "substances and accidents" describe the self as a whole as well as a part. In this case, the self is a substance that possesses accidents, such as seeing and hearing. In order for accidents to exist, there must be a substance-self. But the self does not need a particular accident, such as its capability to see, in order to exist itself. In *The Theory of Categories,* Brentano initially discusses substance in an Aristotelian sense, eventually formulating his own concept of substances as having accidents, as well as accidents having their own accidents. Whatever entity there is--an accident, a substance, a part, etc.-- it always represents something; for Brentano an entity is always *of* or relates to something else. Brentano resurrects the mediaeval concept of intentionality later adopted by Husserl.[1] The thinking substance is thinking of something, just as a part is a part of something. In this respect selves, too, are relational things, they are about something.

Relational selves are entities that represent something. Here it is fruitful to compare Brentano's theory with Kant's. Although Brentano opposes Kantian idealism, his sense of unity in an experience, and inner sense as its proponent, are similar to Kant's unity of apperception. Yet the two theories result in very different ideas on the experiencing subject as it appears. For Kant, by unifying an act, consciousness may be

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[1] Intentionality is dealt with at greater length in section 1.4.

described solely as a function. Otherwise the self as a substance is an objective entity (out there); hence knowing the actual self as it appears is an impossibility. Brentano's substance-self is an observable phenomenon by virtue of inner consciousness. In this respect, Brentano's functional self is akin to William James' self-as-experienced-consciousness. Brentano would first see functional consciousness as a derivative of the metaphysical self. The functions that consciousness performs would be parts of the thing we call 'self'. For Brentano, the active part of the self is its consciousness or ego.

In earlier, spiritual interpretations of the self, Brentano describes an experiencing soul much in the spirit of Aristotle. Brentano never gives up the conviction that there is something ultimate to the experiencing subject. The perceiver is always a soul and beyond that there is nothing. "Soul refers to the substantial bearer of presentations (*Vorstellungen*), only perceivable through inner perception".[2] Brentano's intention is to build a science of the soul. Psychology, for him, is the study of properties and laws of the soul. "We discover [the properties] ourselves directly by means of inner perception, and which we infer, by analogy, to exist in others".[3]

The above mentioned 'instances' of selfhood will reveal single and multiple conceptions of selfhood in a unified experience. One way to conceive of this in postmodern theories is to imagine a narration over time as a relational anchor or support for possible experience, or simply as a practical function such as that of an ego. For these differing conceptual descriptions of the self, there must be a better appreciation of Brentano's 'what' and 'how' of an experience.

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[2] Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, 1874, 5.

Hermeneutic theory teaches us not only to recognize many interpretations of one seemingly unified notion, but also to appreciate that many ways to say something, for example 'self', enriches our original thought about it. Schrag's *The Self after Postmodernity,* Kerby's *Narrative and the Self* and Ricoeur's *Oneself As Another* all attest to the fact that modern and postmodern conceptions of the self provide multiple profiles of the self. In many ways Brentano is a forerunner in the modern to postmodern era. For the many ways we say 'self', Brentano offers a theory.

For the moment, when I speak of a 'self', I shall be referring to an entity that encompasses but is not restricted to the ego and consciousness. Consciousness will serve primarily as a functional characteristic in the outlining of a self. The self as it is described as a substance is closer to the metaphysical, all-encompassing self. Although terminology plays a part in describing the self in Brentano, his concept of 'self' in this study will not over-emphasize terminological distinctions. Present-day obsessions with language will not be the central focus of this work.

In each of the following chapters, a slightly different concept of the self is built out of the previous one. I urge the reader to be patient with the terminological differences as well as similarities. I have often had to step back and re-asses the former chapter's connection to the latter. One can easily recognize a coherent theory of substance-self from Chapter Two and functional/practical self from Chapter Three. The 'unity of consciousness', a theory that as I have already mentioned comprises Brentano's most complete and resourceful theory of self, may be injected into all areas of the present

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[3] Brentano, 5.

study. I have done my best at times to separate the theories in order to distinguish them and at other times to note the overlap.

B. Introductory comments

One of the more fascinating, charismatic and understated father figures of phenomenological philosophy is Franz Brentano. On January 16, 1838 in Marienberg on the Rhine, Franz Brentano was born into a family of prestigious romantic and religious thinkers and writers. Many biographical sketches detail the cultural influences in Brentano's family, from his aunt Bettina, the "Sibyl of romanticism", to his brother Lujo, winner of the Nobel Peace prize in 1927.[4] I shall here offer only a brief outline.

Brentano's earlier interests at school were varied. He excelled in classical studies and mathematics. He was raised a devout Catholic, and religion continued to play a large role throughout his life. He was a priest but later left the church as a result of various irreconcilable issues, which included his resistance in accepting Papal infallibility, various ambiguities in Church dogma, and his desire to marry. Nevertheless Brentano's religious convictions were never absent from his theories. For Brentano, as for so many of his predecessors,[5] God remained the ultimate uncaused metaphysical substance. Even in his attempt to distinguish philosophy as a scientific, 'self-evident' discipline, Brentano did not assume philosophy could deny that its principle roots were inseparable from

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[4] For more detail see Antos C. Rancurello, *A Study of Franz Brentano*, 1968 and Oskar Kraus, "Biographical Sketch of Franz Brentano" translated by Linda McAlister in *The Philosophy of Brentano*, 1976.

[5] Brentano's most important philosophical influence regarding God, Causation, and Acts is Aquinas.

theology. Philosophy is a quest to uncover psychological foundations that meet the condition of scientific knowledge. Brentano's passion was not only philosophy as 'theoretical wisdom' but philosophy as 'science'. It was his mission to bring to light the philosophical importance of metaphysics and psychology.

As one author suggests, Brentano's writings offer the prolegomena to the modern understanding of a variety of phenomenological theories.[6] Although Brentano stood apart from Husserl's transcendental-ideal phenomenology, he nevertheless introduced key themes that were later developed by Husserl and other phenomenologists – most notably, intentionality, psychology as a 'rigorous science' and consciousness as self-evident. It is on the last of these, consciousness as self-evident, that the present study will concentrate.

Brentano maintained correspondence with many philosophers and witnessed many changes in the philosophical climate of his day. He strongly disagreed with the German Idealist philosophy that was most popular at the time. Brentano's philosophy represented a sharp turn from the contemporary speculative variety to positive, empirical methods.

In a subsequent chapter, I shall examine Brentano's brief but highly influential correspondence with William James. James' theory of the self was greatly influenced by Brentano's early research into the bases of phenomenological self-identity. As we shall see, their similarities lie more with the function of the self as opposed to any form. James refutes any theory that assumes a concrete metaphysical form for selves. For James, what the self is *is* its function, while Brentano believes the self is some*thing*, not beside, but in

addition to its function. For Brentano how we know the self and its function cannot be separated from the 'thing' that it is, or how it is described metaphysically. Unlike Brentano's somewhat obscure, 'assumed' notion of selfhood, James' phenomenological self is clearly defined. James devotes entire chapters to the notion of the self, whereas Brentano's self is somewhat subsumed in more than one area of his theory. While their theories differed regarding the structure of the self (a more complete structure for selfhood was more James' project than Brentano's), they nevertheless agreed on the basic idea of *how* we conceive of a self the way we do.

The correspondence between Brentano and James, although brief, is quite interesting in the history of philosophy, as it demonstrated one of the first European-American influences on a popular theme. To study philosophy as an empirical science was fairly new territory. In terms of scope and magnitude, it may be said that a comparison of Husserlian and Jamesian selves would be more fruitful than one between Brentano and James. More than Brentano, Husserl actually studied James and had a greater opportunity to utilize his approach to philosophy. For this project I am exploring the pioneering efforts into the notion of possible selfhood by Brentano and James especially since Brentano never put a deliberate or overt effort to 'finding selfhood' in his subject. It is interesting to speculate on how the notion of a subject is incorporated in each philosopher's theory, especially since they wrote at roughly the same time.[7]

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[6] Herbert Spiegelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement*, 1960.

[7] Brentano's *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* was published in 1874. William James' *Principles of Psychology* was published in 1890. Brentano has more to say about the self as a substance in later lectures (1910).

It may be necessary to take a step back and comment on the philosophical situation at this time. The turn of the twentieth century also marked a crucial turning point in philosophy. Several authors have noted the appearance of a new movement that emerged as a result of numerous political and cultural factors, including The Great War, a renewed interest in classical literature and, in Austria and Germany, the teachings of Franz Brentano. Brentano was adamant about a change in philosophy. A revolution, a new way of thinking about ancient and mediaeval philosophy, was beginning to take shape. This new thinking was never fully realized until after Brentano was out of the philosophical limelight (if we can say that it has been 'fully' realized at all). As Barry Smith notes, Brentano's legacy had an enormous impact on the differing avenues descriptive phenomenology was to take. Although the real birth of phenomenology as a systematic theory is said to have taken place with Husserl's work, it was Brentano who planted the seeds for real phenomenological thought.[8]

Brentano's were unfinished theories, which attempted to reconcile his Cartesian, subjective tendencies with his respect for Aristotelian realism. Although Brentano may not have agreed with all of Husserl's later, more developed theories, they were in sync with the original intention to cross the gap between subjective and objective phenomenal experience. A new theory, one that used elements from mediaeval thought yet was original in its scope, disturbed the traditional demarcation lines between the experiencing

[8] Brentano's influence was immense. His many students used phenomenology in new and diverse ways. Some of these include Polish philosopher Twardowski's logical theories, von Ehrenfels' Gestalt psychology, Meinong's theory of objects, etc.

subject and the experienced object. The theory to merge subject and object begins with Brentano's intentional inexistence and continues with Husserl's conscious ego.

In his record of the phenomenological movement, "always moving with several parallel currents branching off into different directions",[9] Spiegelberg stresses that the main task of phenomenology is to investigate phenomena, objectively and subjectively, in fullest possible breadth and depth. This is certainly characteristic of Brentano's attempt to describe the nature of the existence of phenomena and our knowledge of this existence. Brentano would not be inclined to define phenomenology as a science of both objective and subjective inquires as separate and distinct endeavours. For Brentano, knowing phenomena is all subjective, mental work. The content of that work is subjectively objective. That is, each subject matter contains objects within it. For Brentano, direct intuition constitutes objective knowledge. Yet he still retains the Cartesian, essential qualities, or structures, within the 'ego cogito'.

Philosophers long before Brentano had used the term 'phenomenology'. Aside from classical usage, it is mentioned as an overarching term for different types of theories. Hegel's usage of phenomenology is quite unlike the intentions of Sir William Hamilton and Sir William Whewell, both of whom Brentano mentions in his work. Hamilton, especially, was a great influence on Brentano's philosophical psychology. Like Hamilton, Brentano regarded phenomenology as a descriptive, empirical approach to phenomena. Regardless of the influence these theories had on explicitly 'phenomenological' theories by students of Brentano, a phenomenological science of the

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[9] Spiegelberg, 2.

mind had not yet been fully articulated. Thus, as Spiegelberg says, with Brentano we are not yet *in* the phenomenological movement itself.

Spiegelberg quotes William James saying that phenomenology is a "new name for old ways of thought". But this is not all. Though phenomenology can be as elemental as its initial intention from Plato and Aristotle, today it has grown with its own roots. Phenomenology, as a result of Brentano and his students, has grown to mean much more to philosophy as well as to psychology. It describes life and the mind as it never did before and it includes aspects that are in tune with fairly recent ideas on pragmatics, empiricism and narration. In the midst of all this theory of old and new, the self in Brentano and in William James is described as a functional 'sub-sister' of events and phenomena. The self is an essential component in the 'new phenomenology' because it acts as the bridge between phenomena out there and knowledge within. It not only represents but also *is* a unity among multiple mental phenomena that include but are not restricted to self-assessment, self-made stories, ownership, feelings and spirit.

Spiegelberg presents a brief account of the reasons phenomenology emerged when it did and with which groups. I shall focus on Brentano's influence on later phenomenological minds and how the self may have been conceived as a result of his line of thought. It is interesting that Spiegelberg mentions Husserl's indebtedness to his teacher Brentano and to James in the same sentence. Brentano focussed on psychology as descriptive and empirical; worthy of a system of analysis in philosophy. James agreed with this approach but he is better remembered for his work on consciousness and its

phenomenological implications. Both the conscious ego and its phenomenological roots serve as the groundwork for Husserl's Ego.

Franz Brentano was advanced in terms of his revolutionary theories in philosophy. His relentless pursuit of the self-evidence of knowing one's self from inner perception is of particular interest to this study. Inner perception, the unity of consciousness and the substance- accident relation all figure into Brentano's theory of the self. He reformulates ancient and modern ways of thought into an empirical system of knowledge. For Brentano, to live is to think, and to cultivate thought is to philosophize. It was his intention to cultivate old ways of thought into a better understanding rather than to create a new 'system' of philosophy as had Kant.

Chapter 1:

Unity of Consciousness

This chapter describes the bases of Brentano's conception of self. Selves are subjects that are assumed in any act or experience of being 'one' as well as being a unity. Selves are also recognized in their capacity to compare a multitude of things such as simultaneous sense-experiences. Inner consciousness is at the core of Brentano's inner self; inner consciousness is the self as it experiences mental events. Here Brentano reintroduces the theory of intentionality. Inner consciousness is the subject's way of providing direct evidence of mental phenomena to itself. Unity in progress allows the self to act as an entity that is inherent to a totality of mental activity. Chapter Two continues the discussion of inhering and subsisting – the self not only 'acts' as an entity, it is one. The discussion of unity in Chapter One describes how a self is the way it is, where Chapter Two looks at what that self is in itself.

1.1 Being and Unity

The concept of Being in Brentano's doctoral dissertation *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*, has an immense effect on his later theories of unity of consciousness, substances and accidents as well as on his ethics. Two of the four Aristotelian variations on Being are of particular interest to Brentano's metaphysics: Being of dependent entities (accidents) and Being of substances (*ousia*). The particulars of substances and accidents

are discussed in Chapter Two. The present Chapter's concern with unity and Being concerns Brentano's idea of a thing and its relations to a thought. Brentano, following Aristotle, says that Being and unity are identical.[1] When a thing exists, it has Being, thus to say that it 'is', is redundant. For instance, Brentano implies that a thing called 'man' is a unity whose existence need not be repeated by 'a man existing'. Whatever unities there are--trees, persons, and so on--there are exactly as many existing things that correspond to them. The species of Being and unity of Being are one and the same.

Throughout his career, Brentano had much to say about unity of being and existing. In *The Theory of Categories*, a compilation of lectures he dictated near the end of his life, Brentano had a clear, categorical conception of Being and unity. He is concerned here with strict and extended usage of existing or 'is-ness'. Being in a strict sense is that which is an individual thing. Being in an extended sense includes a variety of notions from parts and wholes, temporal distinctions, and truth and falsity. Some of the particulars of these are discussed in the following chapters. The variations on Being have not shaken Brentano's conviction that existing and being are the same.

1.2 Unity as Oneness

Brentano believes there is such a thing as one substantive entity that remains the same for every given experience.[2] The ultimate substantive entity is the soul, bearer of all

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[1] Brentano, *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*, 1975, 7.

[2] Brentano later says that the concept of one and entity are not the same. Here he merely points out the importance of recognizing entities as potentially 'a single thing' as well as 'multitude of things'.

mental states, perceivable through inner perception.[3] Brentano appears to sympathize with those like Hume who can never attach their mental phenomena to one substantial bearer. Although Brentano says that psychology would go on without a conception of souls, we must agree that there are mental phenomena.[4] In order to establish philosophy as a science of the soul, Brentano has to place some importance on its existence, but often he puts priority on observable mental phenomena. Though Brentano may have religious convictions about a mystical soul-bearer, he rarely ascribes to one in his empirical theories. Brentano never intended to write a psychology 'without a soul' since that is the active, thinking subject of his philosophy.[5] Sameness in the soul or thinking thing is the 'one' that is represented by unity. Therefore, unlike Hume, Brentano believes there is one bearer of experiences. The bearer of experiences, the self, is a thing in and of itself. Thus the self can include many existing things, but in and of itself, it is unitary. In order for an attribute such as a mental state to originate, there must be a substantial bearer. Without one, substantial bearer Brentano says there would be no multiplicity. Therefore many attributes or parts can exist but only in one and the same thing. (I provide a more detailed discussion of parts and wholes in Chapter Two.)

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[3] At once, Brentano's soul is as immediate to the subject as Aristotle's but is perceived inwardly much in the spirit of Descartes.

[4] Brentano, *Psychology From An Empirical Standpoint*, 18. Brentano has an elaborate discussion concerning the differences between mental and physical phenomena in Book Two of the Psychology. Although I make references to both kinds of phenomena in the discussion on 'Presentations', I will not concentrate on their distinctions in this work. Smith refers to them as phenomena in inner and outer presentations, such as joy, memory, etc., and colour, warmth, etc.

[5] Rancurello, *A Study of Franz Brentano*, 42.

The unity of consciousness must be a unity *of* some thinking thing. The thinking thing, for Brentano, is a universal, necessary relation between the world and experience. Smith says that "Brentano took empiricism to be consistent with the view that we can grasp necessary relations (immanent universals) in what is given in experience".[6] The self knows because it experiences and if there were no commonality to that experience, there would be no thing called 'self'. Mental experiences that are common to a single bearer imply a necessary ownership. How do we experience something that is related to us, or better yet how do experiences of something tell me anything about myself?

The unity of consciousness involves mental acts that are represented with a double object.[7] When I see red, I see a red-thing as well as my seeing of a red-thing. At once, I am aware of myself and the object before me. My consciousness unites my experience of the red-thing with me as the seer of the red-thing. The red thing is what Brentano refers to as 'primary object'. The thinking subject of the red-thing is the secondary object of the mental act. In this example, I show myself to be the possessor of the mental act and its objects.

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[6] Smith, *Austrian Philosophy: The Legacy of Franz Brentano*, 32.

[7] Double experience of an object is somewhat similar to Merleau-Ponty's perception of the world. In his account, we have two kinds of experience with one object: an experience of the thing-in-itself on the one hand, and the subject with conscious memories, etc. on the other. Brentano's is an experience of a double object, with one experience.

1.3 Unity in Comparing

For Brentano, belongingness of mental acts to one, real thing demonstrates the ability for the self to have mental objects as its own and to be able to compare them to each other. Unity is possible when only a single consciousness compares his or her own mental acts. More than one mental act can be the cause of some complexity, for example, seeing, tasting as well as touching something. As long as the mental acts are simultaneously within one self, there is no threat to the unity of consciousness. Brentano says that in such a case, mental acts are mutually independent. One does not have to see a thing in order to hear it. In the case of desiring something, there must be a presentation of an object; therefore presenting and desiring are mutually dependent mental acts. Brentano uses the example of a blind man and a deaf man comparing sounds and colours to each other. There is no unitary act of consciousness between the two persons since a single cognition of seeing and hearing is not held simultaneously in either the blind man or the deaf man. Two people with sight who look at a painting see shades in variation to their own experience. Only I can compare a certain shade of pink with what I think about another shade of pink. Combining the blind man's cognition of sound with the deaf man's cognition of colour produces a collective and not a unitary mental act. Unity of consciousness requires one conscious person who has many mental acts. "Only if sound and colour are presented jointly, in one and the same reality, is it conceivable that they can be compared with one another".[8] Brentano calls many mental acts, attributes of the subject's manifold. If we undertook to distinguish the many mental acts we had without a

[8] Brentano, *Psychology*, 159.

self, Brentano says that we will come up with a multiplicity that belongs to nothing. A multiplicity of mental acts cannot be explained without a unity. What are mental acts for if not a unified self?

Simultaneity or temporal distinction can never be found in this or that perception precisely because one, real unity is the perceiver. Elements of consciousness that make up the unity are given in inner consciousness. Inner consciousness allows the subject to perceive inwardly unity of a mental act. If I cannot apprehend mental acts as my own, then they can be distinguished and reside alongside myself. Brentano discusses the apparent distinction of mental phenomena within a single, physical body such as a coral with several stems or a human body. In the case of humans, he says evil spirits may possess a self but they in no way unify consciousness.[9] Although it is not clear what the editor means in the footnote to this passage, "all pertinent phenomena belonging to the same substantive self", nevertheless non-pertinent phenomena appear to be those presented in a possessed state. I will return to 'many selves' phenomena in Chapter Three.

1.4 Inner Consciousness

Consciousness of mental activity in the subject by inner perception is inner consciousness. Brentano emphasizes the difference between inner perception and inner observation or introspection. Inner observation involves an object that is directly before

[9] Brentano chooses the word 'self' as the duplicate in the same body; "many selves in one body". Since we are building a unified conception of self, I prefer to use the term "many persons in one body" as opposed to selves. Brentano, *Psychology*, 164.

the subject. The object presents itself as objective and observable since it resides outside of the subject's consciousness. For instance, I can observe another person's reaction to something at a precise moment. I make an inner observation of something external to my consciousness. A subject's inner perception can never be observable since its objects reside internally. Inner perception is always knowledge in retrospect; there is no immediate observation because an object has already been 'taken in' as mental phenomenon. In other words, Brentano is saying that inner perception always has a bias, it is always already situating objects for the mind.[10] Brentano makes a careful distinction between mental phenomena and objects-in-themselves. We can never predict or assume knowledge based on objects as they really exist (objectively in themselves). Objects are taken into subjective consciousness in order for us to have direct knowledge of them. For Brentano, the 'stuff' of knowledge is already intellectualized before it is known.[11]

Inner consciousness is a faculty for empirical knowledge of presentations,

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[10] Here I refer to the term 'bias' as situating an object in the Gadamerian sense, not bias in the conventional sense; bias that may be susceptible to falsity. Brentano's inner evidence is as correct or true as Descartes inner certainty (see Chisholm's *Brentano and Intrinsic Value*, 1986, 3). Brentano believes the way objects are situated in the mind reveal themselves as they truly are, for every person in every possible world. Insight then, is a reliable faculty from which we are certain of inner objects.

[11] There may be some correlation here with William James' 'habit'. Brentano is saying that psychology is difficult in comparison with other sciences, since it does not provide immediate, observable facts. Mental states can, at best, be remembered in order to assess their manifestation as mental phenomena. Habits have a similar quality since they too have no observable, original state. Habits become what they are during a process of intellectualizing or 'fitting'. Inner consciousness 'fits' mental phenomena in a similar way. The main difference is Brentano's strict adherence to the infallibility of inner consciousness, whereas James appears to take a middle-of-the-road stance on the certainty of inner mental states.

judgements and feelings. Brentano says that we can know things with direct, experiential proof. Unlike memory's susceptibility for error, inner perception provides evidence in itself.[12] The famous intentionality thesis states that we can be sure of mental phenomena because they reside within us and we have direct access to their validity. All mental phenomena include objects within themselves. Mental objects for the mind are always about something, "... in presentation something is presented, in judgement something is affirmed or denied, etc."[13] The mediaeval thesis is resurrected with an Aristotelian twist. Mental objects are 'taken in' for the mind. The 'in-taker' is not unlike Aristotle's soul nourishing itself with objects that surround it.

There are three ways inner consciousness takes objects into its mental acts:

(a) Presentation is the most basic form of a conscious act. The subject is aware of an object and has yet to take any stand against it. An object is presented without any affirmation or denial, feeling of pleasure or displeasure. In this primary conscious act an *im*pression may be what Barry Smith calls inner or outer presentation. Inner presentations occur as a result of our imagination. Examples include seeing or hearing an object. Outer presentations occur as a result of our sense perception. Examples of these include actual

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[12] Whereas memory may reflect on some true thought, Brentano refers to immediate proof of knowledge that is certain. Brentano's inner perception may be correlated to Wittgenstein's 'certainty'. Both agree that the internal proof cannot itself be proven due to the object being bound to the presentation of it. According to Wittgenstein, 'sure' evidence is what we accept as sure and that at the foundation of belief is a belief that is not founded (see Gargani, *From Bolzano to Wittgenstein: The Tradition of Austrian Philosophy*, 1986, 189).

[13] Brentano, *Psychology*, 88.

sounds and colours. Thus, presentations may be classified as "intuitive or conceptual: we can have an object before our mind either in sensory experience or through concepts".[14] Smith goes on to say that presentations may be simple or complex. A simple presentation may be a single musical note whereas an entire melody is a complex presentation.

(b) Judgements often accompany presentations. Brentano contends that a presentation will almost always be affirmed or denied. Judgements are positive when they affirm the existence of a presentation. Negative judgements require the rejection or disbelief of a presentation.

(c) When some object is presented for the mind and it is believed to exist (it has a positive judgement), Brentano says that object is usually loved or hated. Feelings towards objects are similar to judgements towards objects since inner consciousness decides on the object in a 'two-fold' way. We have a pro or contra attitude to most of the objects presented in mental phenomena. Smith remarks that a pro or contra attitude towards objects in judgements and feelings is also analogous in that 'truth' and 'objective rightness' is assumed. Brentano's assessment of correct judgements and correct feelings is developed in his ethical theory in *The Origins of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong*.

"Presentations are the foundations for all other mental phenomena; nothing can be judged, desired, hoped for or feared, unless one has a presentation of that thing".[15] When Brentano discusses the presentation of an object for consciousness, he is not merely

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[14] Smith, 46.

[15] Brentano, *Psychology*, 80.

referring to the thing presented rather, the presenting of it. Presentation is to be understood more like an act, an *appearing of* something. The mental object must appear, present itself, either in the imagination, in sense-stimuli, etc. in order to take a stand against it. Brentano's notion of presenting is based on sensation of some physical or mental stimuli. It is not necessary to prolong Brentano's discussion of mental and physical stimuli, his main argument concerning the language of mental things is this: mental sensations that he calls phenomena are as indubitably correct as the physical stimuli they are based upon. "We do not say that we sense this or that phenomena in the foot with pain; we say that we feel pain in the foot".[16] In fact, the only things we can really know for certain are mental phenomena since they, internally reveal the truth of the object.

Brentano says that mental phenomena alone perceive things as they really appear; joy is what the word says it is, red is exactly as it appears. He also says that, "things which exist as objects of thought do not constitute a subspecies of genuine being".[17] Brentano may be misunderstood as a dualist in areas where he appears to grant the existence of objects of external perception. There is no justification, nor foundation for the belief in external perception of objects. For example, sounds, colours and feelings do not exist in and of themselves. Appearances of sounds, colours and feelings exist because they are intentional, they relate to the thinker. "Phenomena are signs of something real,

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[16] Brentano, *Psychology,* 84.

[17] Brentano, 1914, 18.

which, through their causal activity, produces presentations of them".[18] It may be superfluous for Brentano to introduce a possibility of real objects-in-themselves à la Kant, since he admittedly is unsure of any such thing. Brentano is certain of intentional reality since this is how we experience and know things. An allusion to an alternate, objectified reality existing 'out-there' is unnecessary in his theory. The problem results from an unjustified theory of correspondence. If intentional reality does not correspond with some other type of objective reality, there is a contradiction. Although Brentano does not believe in two-world theories,[19] he nevertheless discusses both mental and physical phenomena, sometimes confused with internal and external perception. Mental and physical phenomena refer to objects of thought (such as a feeling of anger or seeing-of-red, respectively), for knowing and experiencing reality but the difficulty arises when the objects that are referred to have only a probable existence in themselves.[20]

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[18] Brentano, *Psychology,* 19.

[19] Material and ideal worlds.

[20] Brentano has trouble overcoming the traditional, terminological tendency that assumes knowledge measures up or matches an external reality. William James' concept of reality as a 'feeling of familiarity' disavows correspondence between knowledge and reality and prioritizes experience as the only measure or standard of true knowledge. Again, Brentano is close but nowhere near as clear or succinct as James in accepting knowledge and truth as subjectively familiar experiences. James says that we want to believe mental objects of thought have an outside existence simply because so many of us seem to have thoughts on the same object. We suppose, and I would venture to say that Brentano supposes there exists an outer reality because there is sameness in a multiplicity of thoughts, perceptions and sensations. For James, sameness is a fundamental notion for thinking and identity. I will return to sameness and familiarity in Chapter Three.

Barry Smith rightly points out that any correspondence between intentional objects of thought and objects of the world are superficial since the former merely express a 'modifying' of the latter. In other words, Brentano is not a hard-core correspondence theorist, in that he firmly believes in intentional objects for the possibility

Here, Brentano could have a better formulation of mental inexistence of objects as immanent. In the intentionality thesis, Brentano is at once telling us objects are for us as well as in us. Objects are for us when they are presented as matter or content such as, *redness*. Objects are in us when they we impose a form on them, for example, this object is *judged* to be red. Any inclination towards materialism or idealism is dissolved in one method of experience. Intentional experience directs objects to the mind that modifies or forms them into what they actually are: a feeling, judgement, etc. In a realistic sense, objects-of-the-world exists in us already with added features of modification from inner consciousness so that we may experience what is immanent in various ways.[21] Brentano is implicitly using Aristotle's distinction between matter or content and form in order to describe what and how a thought is. The content of a thought such as redness, is immanent to its form, judging. The immanent object within form and content of thought is how we experience what a thought is like.[22]

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of experience. The basic correspondence theorist assumes there must be a correct match between thought and thing-outside-of-thought in order to have knowledge.

[21] Immanence may be understood in a simpler way by saying the same thing is inherent in what is presented, judged, and affected.

[22] If Brentano is inclined to formulate inner consciousness with Aristotelian ontology, he cannot maintain traditional representative theories such as correspondence at the same time. Although Brentano's modifying inner consciousness appears to adhere to Aristotle's form and matter on some level, (structures in inner consciousness such as judging and will are like forms; appearances are like content) it cannot mean both that and something that modifies objects of intentionality with reference to outer existence. It is as if Brentano wants to understand Being and existing in Aristotelian terms while appearing to substitute 'ideal' epistemological rules (corresponding appearances with 'really-existing-things') in order to attain the meaning of existence. The classical problem of relating form and matter revisits Brentano. Although it is not the subject of this work,

Brentano prefers to distinguish the three ways inner consciousness takes objects not only by referring to the objects as different in class--i.e., a presentation, judgement, or feeling--but by what he calls "difference in the fullness with which these objects are thought".[23] Brentano says the difference between presentations, judgements and feelings is primarily concerned with intensity. As stated above, presentations are like pristine impressions, whereas judgements include a combining feature in which some form of affirmation or denial is united with the presentation. Feelings of love or hate add a new dimension of intensity since more effort is given to the object. For Brentano, a further effort in knowing objects usually translates into some ethical/moral stance. He follows Thomas Aquinas who "teaches very clearly that just as thought is related to an object as knowable, so desire is related to an object as good".[24]

1.5 Unity in Progress

How do we know that the self that sees is the same self that hears, feels, judges, etc? Without splitting the self into an indefinite series of unities in mental experience, the question of what unifies has been and still is an important philosophical problem. "The same thing emerges when we consider the inner aspect of consciousness. When someone thinks of and desires something, or when he thinks of several primary objects at the same

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the reader can decide if Brentano resolves anything in his chapter on "Potential and Actual Being", *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*, 1975.

[23] Brentano, 204.

[24] Brentano, 242.

time, he is conscious not only of the different activities but also of their simultaneity".[25] Brentano asks, in which of the perceptions, seeing and hearing do we find simultaneity? The answer is in neither, since one entity is the perceiver of both. There can be no distinction between simultaneous mental phenomena when one person is the perceiver. Brentano says that the inner cognition of both seeing and hearing must belong to the same real unity. This serves as a proof for him when he rightly justifies real unity of an entity within a totality of mental activity. In a sense similar to a switchboard operator, the self has the capability to take several calls at the exact same time; if it were not for the switchboard existing, calls (in this case mental phenomena) would be unaccounted for and attributed to nothing at all.

Smith is correct in identifying Brentano's conception of unity as synchronic; "he is concerned with unity at a time".[26] Unity is a practical function in any 'present' experience. An experience of existing mental phenomena is possible only with the unity of consciousness. Unity of consciousness is not assuming an ulterior subsister for all experiences, past, present and future. Smith notes that such a conception could allow consciousness to be split into two or more parts, without harming the principle function of unity for a given experience. If we are to understand Brentano's theory of the unity of consciousness as a concept for the self, it is evident that whatever unifies and therefore constitutes a self is one thing that perceives many parts. One self is comprised of many subsisting mental phenomena, or parts. Although consciousness may be split into several parallel streams as it is for example, in multiple and disassociative personality disorders,

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[25] Brentano, 160.

the concept of unity *for* experience remains unitary. Brentano says, "the totality of our mental life, as complex as it may be, always forms a real unity – all mental phenomena, judging, loving, desiring, all belong to one unitary reality only if they are inwardly perceived as existing together".[27] Thus, it is possible for many mental lives to exist in a person's consciousness. One 'self' per consciousness means that 'unity' (as the defining feature of selfhood) is necessary in order to have a mental experience that is indistinguishable from another self's mental experience. Brentano says the only condition for unity of consciousness (again, a substantive self) to exist, consists in parts of mental phenomena belonging to one real unity. It follows then, to speak of the self as unity at a time within a particular mentality, and not a particular body.

On the progression of consciousness, Brentano says that even when there is a sudden change in mental life, it is evident there is a relation between the earlier and the later phases. Past selves may not represent the same experiences of today, but in many instances a link between the past and present will reveal itself. The revelation of continuity or discontinuity of selves is not exactly clear. Brentano resorts to memory, which "reveals a consciousness of the contrast between the new state and the preceding one".[28] Brentano does not openly acknowledge the possibility of false memory syndrome, assuming memories belong to a series of mental life when in fact they do not. He does say that memory has the potential for lacking evidence and more importantly, that the act

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[26] Smith, 51.

[27] Brentano, 164.

[28] Brentano, 168.

and content of memory is not the necessarily same. For example, I am remembering something, but what I am remembering may in fact be a false memory. Memory does not serve as immediate evidence (knowledge) of objects in inner consciousness. This is why Brentano's conception of unity is restricted to the present.

Brentano says, "it remains an open question whether the continued existence of the self is the persistence of one and the same unitary reality or simply a succession of different realities linked together in such a way that each subsequent reality takes the place of the reality which preceded it".[29] This statement confirms Brentano's adherence to unity of consciousness *for* an experience, not for unity as some substantial bearer of *all* experiences. For those who believe the self is corporeal, Brentano allows the possibility of selves-as-bodies as long as the 'organ' renews itself with obvious influences from the past. Although Brentano does not admit to a physical conception of self, he is demonstrating a correlation between mentally and physically influenced selves through time. A physical self may reveal a scar from a wound whereas a mental self may reveal a personal characteristic developed from some past event. Not unlike a chain with many links, each new self is wholly dependent on what it was in the past and what it can be in the future. Brentano's metaphor, "of a flowing stream in which one wave follows another and imitates its movement"[30] is better and more revealing of his thought on selves since it connotes sameness and movement at the same time. Brentano's self is closer to a

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[29] Brentano, 168.

[30] Brentano, 169.

Jamesian progression of mental events and processes as opposed to one fixed entity.[31] The imitating motion of the waves Brentano refers to shows that the conscious self always emerges out of something else that has a bearing on what it will be. There is no absolute demarcation between past, present and future selves. Physical death, although a fairly obvious ending, is not the only way for a self to die. Temporal progression in age, thought-patterns, medical disorders, even cultural-societal change all affect and produce new selves, therefore new unities.

Thus far, it is apparent that Brentano's 'self' is not a bodily thing. For him, selfhood, as it applies to unity, is found in the processes of the soul. The soul gives unity to consciousness; perhaps this is why Smith entitles his sub-chapter "The Unity of the Soul", as opposed to "The Unity of Consciousness".[32] In every instance of conscious experience, the soul determines unity. Recall that, for Brentano, unity *is* existence and whatever unity there is, is because of the unity of the soul. I have outlined instances of the unity in comparing one, immanent object for a variety of experiences. Unity is also proven in experiences that have parts that cannot be separated from each other. Brentano uses the example of an atom and motion. An atom is what it is apart from motion, but motion cannot be understood to exist apart from the atom that moves. This one-sided separability allows a thing to exist without a part, but the part cannot exist without the thing. Specific mental acts are to the soul what motion is to an atom. The phenomena of

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[31] In Chapter Three I supply more detail on James' conception of the self. For now it suffices to say that compared to James, Brentano's theory of the self is not nearly as descriptive as a process, or stream, etc. He is more concerned with proving the self as a unity for mental experiences.

mental acts may be split without threatening the unity of consciousness. For Brentano, the conscious self is a soul that has things as its parts, these can come into being or pass away whereas the soul remains constant. The self as a soul is the most important *substance* in Brentano's psychological theory.

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[32] Smith, 45.

Chapter 2:

The Relational Self

Brentano's 'self' does not shy away from metaphysical problems. His Aristotelian theory of substance and accident has an important impact on his concept of subjectivity. The self is one of the few substances Brentano's mentions in his list of things that require no specific determination or accident. A particular accident such as seeing, hearing or tasting does not define a self; it is a substantial self by virtue of *having* accidents but no particular accident constitutes the substance. The substance-self's relation to its accidents is constituted by one-sided detachability. Accidents require substances as their proper parts in order to exist whereas substance-parts such as selves can exist with other accidents. In his theory of parts and wholes, Brentano describes the self as a proper part of its accident-wholes. The accident has no other part than the self that subsists in it.

Accidents can have accidents of their own such that a substance-self as a 'thinker' can be further described as a 'judger'. The part-whole relation in conjunction with substance and accidents describe Brentano's self as 'relational'. The self is something that can at once be described as a substance bearing accidents as well as a particular accident that is recognized in the substance-part (the self as a see-er or thinker). The substantial self is a 'knowable' by virtue of its accidents. Thus Brentano's metaphysical self, as it is described in this chapter, attempts to prove that we can have direct, empirical knowledge of a metaphysical self. For Brentano, metaphysical selves are no longer Kantian 'things-in-themselves', or Lockean 'substance--I know not what'.

2.1 Parts and Wholes (*Subsistierend und Inhärenz*)[1]

Brentano's theory of the unity of consciousness examines *how* we experience ourselves. At this point, it is necessary to detail *what* the self is for Brentano. I have stated that the unity of consciousness includes one substantive entity for many mental states. In order to claim an identity, the one and the many depend on each other. Brentano says,"[it] is certain: without some real unities there would be no multiplicities, without things there would be no collectives".[2] A collective such as an army is a whole but it would not exist without proper parts such as soldiers within the army. A whole is not a part but it *contains* parts. For Brentano, parts of a whole (soldiers in an army) can have their own identity. That is, a part exists "as something in itself and [can be called] by its own name".[3] Thus different parts (soldiers) have an identity within a whole (an army). For example, a self can be experienced by virtue of its mental acts such as desiring or hearing. Desiring and hearing are 'real' parts of one whole self. These parts can exist without *that* whole, but that whole cannot exist without *those* parts.

> A real thing, which, together with other things, comprises a collective, is not identical with this collective nor with other things which belong to it – it would never occur to anyone to say that the army is a soldier or that one soldier is another soldier. Likewise, a divisive, which I *distinguish* as a part in a real thing, cannot be called identical with this thing and hence with the

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[1] "In the case of one-sided separability, which involve *entia realia*, the separable part is said to be the subsisting [*subsistierend*] part. But the whole to which it extends itself is called the accident or thing-that-inheres [*inhärenz*]" (Chisholm, *The Theory of Categories*, 114). In a footnote, Chisholm explains a common misunderstanding that suggests the substance contains accidents. Chisholm says the opposite is the case; the accident is the metaphysical whole, the substance is the part.

[2] Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, 156.

[3] Brentano, 157.

> other divisives which can be distinguished in it. A divisive never stands in a relation of real identity with another which has been distinguished from it, for if it did it would not be another divisive but the same one. But they do both belong to *one* real entity.[4]

Brentano says that, "even if mental phenomena are split into several quantitative parts, [this] would prove nothing contrary to the unity of consciousness, since it does not require either the simplicity or the indivisibility of consciousness".[5] Even when a single entity, a whole contains parts that are divisible into more parts there is no threat to the unity of one, same whole. The idea of an army as a whole remains the same regardless of 'soldier-parts' that come and go.

Brentano sees parts as concrete things that relate to one whole. The introduction to the *Descriptive Psychology,* outlines parts of human consciousness as related to one substance, the self. Mental acts such as desiring and hearing are part of the same thing, a conscious self. The self is therefore a desiring-thing or a hearing-thing. Brentano's part-whole relation, "tells us not that [a self and a desiring-thing] are parts of the same thing but that [a self is also a part of desiring thing]".[6] The self as a whole, partakes in the part that belongs to it even though it is not a part by itself. It is one of the ultimate, unified entities Brentano calls substances. As such the self exists regardless of certain parts that come into being or pass way. The self as a whole can be one of its parts whereas the part can never be the whole. In other words, the proper part of a whole is a part that is not

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[4] Brentano, 161.

[5] Brentano, 171.

[6] Muller, *Descriptive Psychology*, 1995, xviii.

identical with the whole. Chisholm illustrates this in the following way:

D1 x is a proper constituent of y = Df x is a constituent of y, and y is not a constituent of x.[7]

Wholes and part are related in such a way that they are essential to each other. The same can be demonstrated with substances and accidents.

Brentano discusses several kinds of parts and how they can be separated. I will discuss two of these. Parts of consciousness can separate in a reciprocal way, as in the case of seeing and hearing. One need not see in order to hear. One-sided separability "imposes a hierarchical structure"[8] where one needs to have 'a' in order to have 'b'. There must be a presentation of something in order to desire it. The presentation can exist on its own, but the desire cannot. This is analogous to the example in Chapter One: an atom and motion as its part, a soul and mental acts as its parts.[9]

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[7] Chisholm, *Brentano and Meinong Studies*, 1982, 11.

[8] Smith, 52.

[9] Briefly, Smith notes Brentano's description of mental energy as primary and secondary streams of consciousness. In the primary stream I am thinking about something, in the secondary stream I am thinking about the thought of thinking about something. This simply refers to consciousness as being on the 'side-of' thinking itself. This is somewhat similar to being on what James calls the 'fringes of thought'. Consciousness is there in the background but may be called into the foreground at any time. Smith says that although the primary and secondary streams of consciousness do not constitute any separable parts, it may be fair to compare these two kinds of direction towards different objects (the thinking and the thought) to two kinds of an object to two kinds of thinking about the same object (seeing and hearing). He says, seeing and hearing are mutual, real separable parts whereas primary and secondary streams of thought are mutually distinctional separability.

'Selves' are wholes that *are* in part mental states, qualities or perceptions. Parts are not identical to the whole – an angry disposition, being blind or feeling joy is not equal with a self, they in part make selves or belong to them. The self can be described as a substance-part that bears accidents-wholes. The self can also be described by some accident whole that inheres as well as determines it. For instance, I am a substance bearing accidents such as sight, curly hair, a comedic disposition, etc. I am also determined by such accidents that describe *me.* The substance self is the bearer of its accidents as well as their distinguisher. We can recognize joyfulness in a person who displays it. We experience sight because some self is capable of it. Accidents can also be known in and of themselves, apart from their substances. We can talk about sight and joy without a bearer.[10]

2.2 The Self as a Substance

Are all parts made up of other parts? "A part that subsists without itself containing any part that subsists, is called a substance".[11] Brentano's theory of parts and wholes is better understood by his theory of 'substances and accidents'.[12] Substances and accidents offer a view of the self as *relational.* The self is made up *of* things and is itself *a* thing at

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[10] See section 2.3.

[11] Brentano, *The Theory of Categories*, 114.

[12] Substances and accidents appear to turn the part-whole theory on its head since the accident that is described is the whole and the substance is the part. Parts and wholes are better understood by substances and accidents simply because the former theory is applied in the latter. The part-whole theory sets up an applied metaphysical form of the self as a relation in substances and accidents.

the same time. Brentano agrees with the Aristotelian concept of substance. In all that exists, there are some things that are subordinate to others. Species to genus, red to colour, attributes are all determined by a thing. Normally, parts or attributes need not refer to the thing that underlies them.[13] Underlying things can be defined as substances that are individuated by themselves. Substances hold accidents that must be individuated by a substance in order to experience them. The self as a substance is not known directly but for its accidents that are perceived by and through a substance.

> I perceive myself as seeing and as hearing, and I am certain that this self is a single-unitary thing and not a mere collective; but I do not perceive the mark which distinguishes this thing from any other thing that might have the same perception. We 'see' a tree and do not doubt that it is *one* tree, but we do not see that which distinguishes it from all similar trees.[14]

Selves as substances are implied in any unitary experience. They are known or determined to be known things only by their accidents.

Following Aristotle, Brentano says that a substance is a thing that can gain or lose accidents. As its main functions, a substance is the bearer and individuator of its accidents. For Brentano, examples of substances include but are not restricted to God, minds and bodies. Brentano refers to a collective such as a mind/body or a multiplicity such as many small countries as substances as well. In *The Theory of Categories*,

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[13] Instead of constantly describing something as 'red-thing' or 'big-thing', we simply refer to its part – 'it is red', 'it is big'.

[14] Brentano, (endnote) *The Theory of Categories*, 238.

Brentano offers a chronology of how the concept of substance became a blunder for various reasons from misinterpretations of Aristotle to incomprehensible correlations, (i.e.) substance as a thing-in-itself. Some of his complaints are worth noting since they may have a bearing on the self as a substance.

Brentano has two main problems with Descartes' interpretation of substances: it is a mistake to equate substances and accidents with (a) causes and effects, generals and specifics and (b) God as the only substance in the fullest sense. In Descartes' account, extension is an attribute of the substance 'body' and thinking is an attribute of the substance 'mind'. This makes substances into the general concept and accidents the specifications thereof which on Brentano's account, is an error that confuses a species to its genus with an accident to its substance.

For Descartes, the only thing that exists without a cause is God[15], but if the idea of God is supposed to be inherent in all of us then what does Descartes mean by something that is 'uncaused' as well as something as a 'substance'. To put it another way, if something exists without being caused (God), then how do we get an idea of Him? And if God is the sole cause of everything, does this mean He supports all of our accidents, bodily, mentally?[16] It is still a mystery how the idea of God is implanted in myself. (As for God being the cause of my temperament, curly hair or decision-making process, this is highly questionable and will not be dealt with here.)

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[15] Brentano mentions that the idea of God as the only uncaused thing makes Him the only ultimate substance (Spinoza's view).

[16] Brentano, *The Theory of Categories*, 105.

Brentano's criticisms of Locke and Kant are of greater importance to the problem of the self as a 'knowable'. Locke would call the substance-self a 'transcendent thing', I know not what. For Kant, the substance-self is noumenal.[17] In both accounts we know what the self as a substance does or what it is for, but not what it is in itself. This is a problem for Brentano because it assumes there is something that lies beyond experience that links things together. Inner perception is proof that we know the self as it experiences, functionally (being the bearer and individuator of accidents) and as it really is (a substantial unified thing).

Brentano's closest affiliation with any philosopher on the concept of the self as a substance is Leibniz. For Leibniz, the soul is an empirical substance and all substances are essentially mental things. But again there are some problems with the basic structure of Leibniz's substance. Brentano prefers a stronger connection between a substance as a concretum and an accident as an abstractum. If all abstracta were stripped from the concretum it would not exist, thus the interconnection and mutual necessity of the two should be proclaimed. In addition to this, Brentano wonders if Leibniz's substance is causal when it assumes a power of action like a 'tightly stretched bow'.[18] Brentano seems to argue against the substance as a catalyst for bringing about effects, in this example the shooting of bows, for Brentano the creation of accidents. Brentano could be clearer when he says that Leibniz has forgotten the Aristotelian thought of a single series of differences. Differences in a series can mean experiencing different effects from one

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[17] I here use Kant's 'thing-in-itself' and 'noumenon' interchangeably.

[18] Brentano, *The Theory of Categories*, 106.

substance or different substances producing one effect. Myself as a single substance might produce, Brentano would rather say be the bearer of a series of different effects or effects might be a result of two or more substances such as creating a life.

On the incorruptibility of substances in Leibniz, Brentano says that "there is no a priori reason to assume that the corruption of a substance must take place as result of the breaking up of its parts; nor is there any such reason for the corresponding converse assumption".[19] The converse assumes that a part is corrupted because of the breaking up of the substance. Brentano says the admission that substances never change allows Kant to create his notion of an unchanging, underlying substance. Although there are certain substances that are assumed to be incorruptible, most bearers of accidents are prone to change. For Brentano, inner experience proves that the changing of accidents produces a different substance. An unchanging substance in the Kantian sense, results not in an unknowable (unchanging substances can be known as a priori synthetic truths), but an inexperiencable substance. Thus for Kant, the self as a substance or thing that underlies experience is itself not experienced. For Brentano, the self as such can be experienced by its accidents. A substance-self is something we deal with directly. To put it in Kant's terms, for Brentano the thing-in-itself is something we can know directly with inner perception. There are no secondary appearances to the things-in-themselves that we experience. Substances are those mental things that appear just as they are to inner perception. Brentano says that when we feel something warm or look at something red we cannot take it for granted that there is actually something that is red or warm. We are

[19] Brentano, 107.

experiencing something just as it appears, not as it may be in some other "reality" that exists apart from our experience.

The deviation from Aristotle's sense of substance and Kant's is considerable. Brentano says that to deny that there are substances and accidents that can be distinguished from them is to misunderstand Aristotle's concept of substance. Aristotle does not imply that substances are merely there to underlie accidents, but that they too can change. Brentano wants to point out that a substance is not something that merely underlies something else without ever changing. The analogy between substances and accidents with Kantian noumena and phenomena changes the notion of the Aristotelian substance completely.[20]

One way Brentano demonstrates the changing substance is with the example of the one-who-sees and no longer hears or one-who-hears and no longer sees. The *individual* self who ceases to hear or see remains the same self even though some of its determinations have changed. Brentano says that determinations of a substance are relative, some may change while others continue; in any case we have the same,

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[20] Brentano says that, "if all our concepts are derivable from empirical intuition, there can be no such thing as a category in the Kantian sense" (Brentano, *The Theory of Categories*, 81). Aristotle challenged Plato's doctrine that various degrees of generality, i.e. accidents, lead up to the same, unchanging concept of being, i.e. substances. Aristotle said that ascending the series of a thing's (substance's) accidents does not necessarily imply the same substance. Thus a substantial concept, self, can change when we refer to different accidents that inhere in it. In mereology substances and accidents relate to each other such that some self is *of* such and such accident, and is determined by it. Conversely, some accident is *of* some self that subsists in it. Since substances and accidents are things that imply each other, Kant's substance cannot apply to this theory. The substance-self is not a 'thing-by-itself'. With his own inclusions and exclusions, Brentano uses Aristotle's substance because it allows him to explain it as an entity we can know.

individual self. Brentano concludes by saying that, "there is only one part of the predicate [substance] which is independent of all others with respect to their individuality; it is an entity, therefore, which underlies {subsistiere} the totality of determinations".[21] Therefore when we are discussing particular accidents that can be can be gained or lost, thus changing the particular substance, we still refer to same substance that is gaining or losing its accidents. The unity of consciousness is an entity that subsists in any *possible* determination a substance-self may have.[22]

J.S. Mill also influences Brentano's substance. Mill held that there are attributes that are substantial as well as accidental. Substantial determinations of things cannot be lost when the thing ceases to be. Chisholm uses the example of a man playing music. The man does not have to play music in order to exist. Accidental determinations of a thing can be lost while the thing continues to be. The man's music playing is an accident that belongs to him, thus when he stops playing that accident ceases to be.[23] Another music-player cannot take up that man's accident since each substance, in this case man, has its

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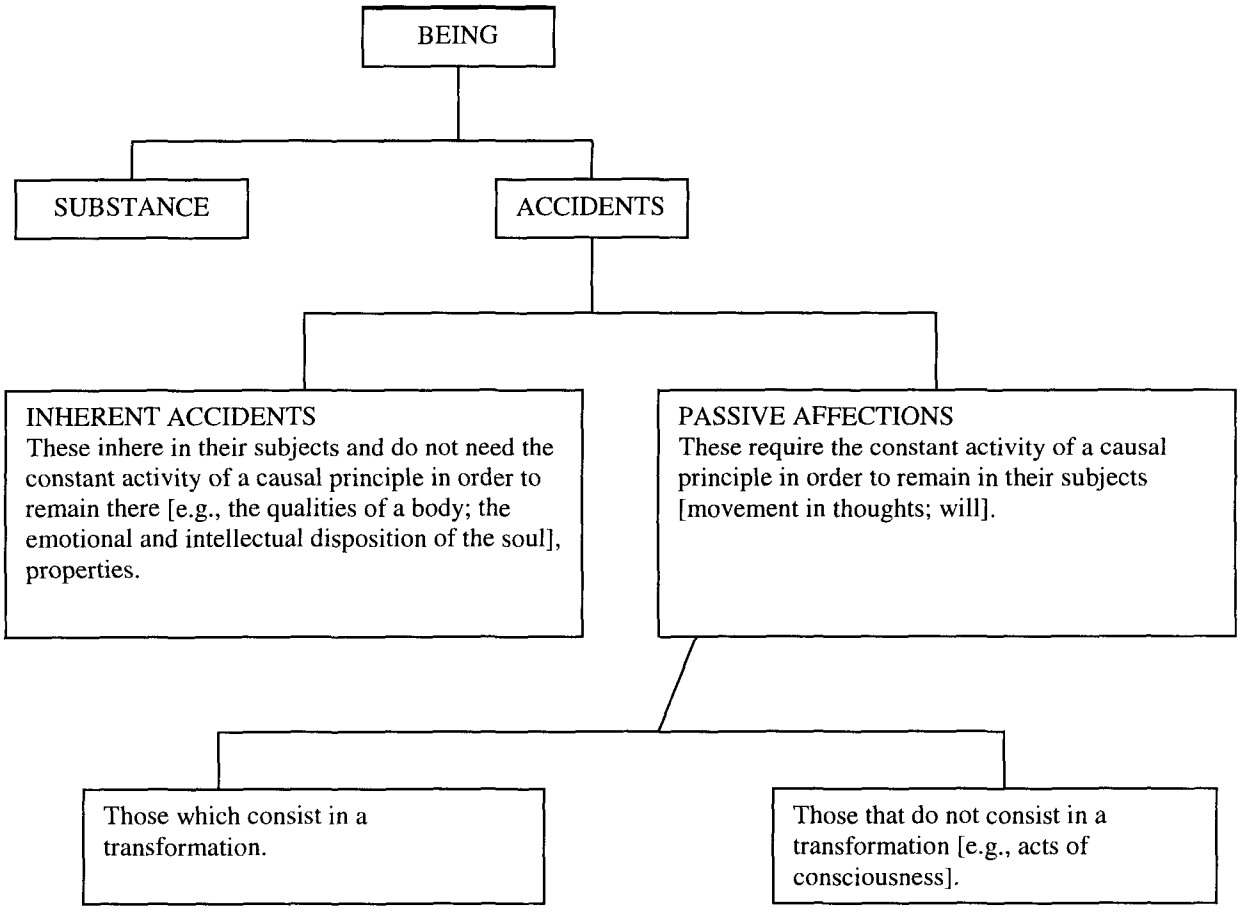
[21] Brentano, 89. Brentano is referring to relative determinations; accidents that come into being and pass away and thus do not change the substance.

[22] The substance is a predicate that must remain the same even if its determinations change. The substance itself can change when its accidents change but we are talking about the same *self* that is changing. See also section 2.4. It makes no sense to discuss a different substance for any accident whatsoever. 'Mereological inessentialism' allows any accident to be attributed to any substance. It is impossible to discuss a particular substance that changes with its accidents unless it is the same substance before the change.

[23] Chisholm, *Brentano and Meinong Studies*, 7.

own accidents. Chisholm points out that the intimate relationship between a substance and its accidents is not primarily one of identity, but of ontology. The conditions for substance and accident must be understood before we attribute them to an identity theory. In order for a substance to be, it must be the bearer of accidents. Similarly, in order for accidents to exist, they must inhere in a substance-part. The concept of self-identity results because of the necessary ontological relationship between substances and accidents.

BRENTANO'S TABLE OF CATEGORIES[24]



[24] With minor inclusions and exclusions this diagram is quoted by Chisholm from A. Kastil, *The Theory of Categories,* 148.

2.3 The Self as an Accident

Brentano's theory of accidents proves to be more interesting and novel with respect to his reformulation of Aristotle's conception of an accident. In his dissertation, Brentano says that accidents belong to substances in a non-necessary, non-universal way. We do not say of a triangle that its having three interior angles that equal 180 degrees is an accident of it. It is a necessary truth that triangles have three interior angles. It is not a necessary truth that accidents define the whole of their substances. Accidents can 'happen' so to speak, to any substance. I could have been tall or short, happy or sad. Accidents relate to their substances by virtue of the substances' being or existing. To say I am tall or happy precludes a necessary 'is-ness' to me as a substance in the first place. Not only with the self, everything that is, is a part or whole of something. For these purposes, Brentano's metaphysical theory of substances and accident demonstrate a self that can be at once a whole and a part. The priority for being is the substance; "nothing which has being is prior to that which is in itself".[25] In other words, accidents have substances as parts that are *in* them but accidents cannot exist without the substance as a part.

Brentano says that seeing and hearing are examples of accidents of the self as a substance. The self has accidents that exist independently of each other, but not independently of the self. "They are accidents and the self is the substance of those accidents".[26] Accidents stand in some relation to their substances. A red-thing is at once a

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[25] Brentano, *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*, 1975, 10.

[26] Chisholm, 4.

coloured-thing and at the same time a thing which is red. Brentano says that some accidents are properties while some are passive affections or undergoings.[27]

Usually whatever is common to a thing, qualifies as its property; having a stomach for humans, being a coloured thing for red, etc. Properties can also range from sensible qualities mentioned above, to habits we become familiar with as humans, skills, dispositions, etc. Passive affections are those accidents that require some type of action as well as a substance-self to experience them. "[For] all seeing, hearing, sensing, desiring; we think a thing only as long as we are moved to the thinking".[28] We are thus affected by an accident that requires something more than just existing inherently as with property-type accidents. The accidents that Brentano describes as affections or undergoings are of two kinds: transformation and sensations.

Brentano does not provide great detail about accidents as undergoings.[29] By transformation of accidents, he refers to thinking that involves some 'mental movement'. For example, if I am motivated or inspired by something there is something active about my thought as opposed to the property-accident that is merely observable as some quality. Undergoings that involve transformations of thought are of a personal, or specific nature whereas sensations are accidents are caused by something common or general,

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[27] Brentano, *The Theory of Categories*, 195.

[28] Brentano, 195.

[29] Chisholm elaborates on 'undergoings' in, *Person and Object.* "In such sentences as 'I feel depressed', the verb is used to refer to a certain *undergoing*. The adjective is used to qualify the verb and thus to specify further the *kind* of undergoing to which the verb refers" (Chisholm, 49).

sounds for hearing, light that reflects in a certain way for seeing, etc.

Unlike Aristotle, Brentano says accidents as absolute determinations of something can have accidents of their own. An absolute accident of something can be demonstrated with the individual's ability to know, judge or think of something.[30] The accident 'a thought' can have its own accident, 'a happy thought'. For Brentano, characterizations of accidents are themselves accidents. For Aristotle, an accident of an accident is really just an accident of the substance. Although Brentano says we can *speak of* accidents as having their own accidents, they still have a substance-part that subsists, otherwise the accident of the accident does not actually exist.

Traditionally we understand accidents as parts of the whole. In Brentano's metaphysics, substances are just as much *a part* of the whole as accidents. For Brentano, instead of saying parts exist in a whole, he says wholes exist *in* their parts. Parts remain things that belong to another thing (a substance) even though the thing that owns them is part of them as well. Herein lies the concept of mereological essentialism.

2.4 Mereological Essentialism

The main principle of mereological essentialism says that parts are essential to their wholes. This, in turn means that substances cannot exist without their accidents. Chisholm's example considers a whole such as a table, built out of a stump and board. That table would not exist except for that particular stump and board. He says, "the particular table is *necessarily* made up of that particular stump and that particular

[30] Chisholm, 10.

board".[31] Similarly a person 'z', who exhibits qualities of 'x' and 'y' has 'x' and 'y' as necessary parts of 'z'. It can be argued, Chisholm says, that parts need not belong to the same whole in every possible world.

What happens for instance, when smaller parts of something change- do we have the same whole? Any whole that loses a part becomes a new whole. Mereological essentialism says that particular parts make a particular whole, thus any change or passing away of parts will create a new whole. When a substance-self loses an eye or even some memory, he or she is not the same substance.[32] Chisholm also considers an alternative to mereological essentialism. He proceeds to defend mereological essentialism by refuting its opposite; mereological inessentialism which states that *any* part can belong to a whole. This seems ridiculous since it assumes any whole is made up of an arbitrary part; a person made up of marbles, tables made up of Grand Central Station.

Barry Smith points out an interesting twist in the Brentanian accident with reference to one-sided separability. He says that for Brentano, everything must depend on time. That is, "time can exist without space, but not vice versa".[33] Smith says that this implies that selves, places, qualities, seeings and hatings are all one-sidedly dependent on time. Only the substance can bear and more importantly individuate the accident; time

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[31] Chisholm, *On Metaphysics*, 1989, 66. ** This text has a small chapter on "The Self in Austrian Philosophy". Much of it is in reference to early conceptions of substances according to Bolzano. Brentano adopts most of those conceptions. Chisholm also refers to the self as having 'moments' in Austrian philosophy, its prominence, its being ignored.

[32] Refer to footnote #22.

[33] Smith, 81.

would stay the same for both. Time is, as Brentano admits an ambiguous thing. Smith makes it seem as though selves, places, etc. are relative to time, that time might actually *mean* existence. While the latter may be true,[34] it is not a convincing argument, especially since Brentano admits his ambiguity on the subject. In keeping with Brentano's 'metaphysical ontology' time, as the relative factor, is in the accidents it determines. Although I wonder why Smith uses selves and places in the same argument, it can be said that selves and obviously places represent a particular standpoint or determination. For Brentano, time is the free-floater; time brings spatial things into existence.

2.5 Self-awareness

Although the notion of one unity is not yet a certainty, Brentano says that in every part, type or class of knowledge, we are in the process of knowing ourselves. "Every observation may be said to be, in a certain sense, an observation of ourselves".[35] Inner perception is for Brentano the 'is-ness' for any activity that is directly apprehended. As thinking subjects, Brentano believes that we can know directly or by analogy if the thing does not present itself to our inner perception. As we have seen, phenomena that present themselves to our consciousness are always about something. Brentano believes that in this intentional structure of experience, selves are also 'knowables'. When I hear something, I hear that thing and myself as one who hears. Brentano says that even if

[34] Brentano mentions mediaeval thinker Bonaventura, who declared that "a thing's time is its existence" (Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, 360).

[35] (See Chisholm, *The Philosophy of Brentano* ed. McAlister, 1976, 99).

Hume says he stumbles upon this bundle of perceptions or that, it is still *he* who is stumbling. Since the self is a substance for Brentano, he says that we can derive the idea of a self from any impression whatsoever, therefore we can derive the concept of a substance.[36] Brentano's project in the "Psychology" is to derive the self or *soul* as a substance; bearers of impressions he calls mental phenomena. The impressions themselves, as states of the substance-self, are also ways to be self-aware. "What ties these items together is the fact that the same self apprehends them all".[37]

In later lectures on 'Substance', Brentano provides a glimpse into what he considers selves and self-awareness to be. He says that "every cognition is an accident and whatever has a cognition is a substance".[38] As stated above, the cognizer is aware of himself as well as the thing he cognizes. Therefore the substance is given in any perception whatsoever. The cognition of an accident is not restricted to the one substance-self. Other selves can observe the same objects and themselves observing them. Such a conception of the substance-self as a knowable thing from experience has much in common with James' theory of the conscious self. For both philosophers, any kind of self-awareness whether it is entity-like in Brentano's formulation or stream-like in James', has for its content of knowledge of the self, experience and experience alone.

Brentano distinguishes between distinct and indistinct forms of awareness. In indistinct awareness we know there is an accident, a pain, a thought, a sighting but we are

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[36] Chisholm, 99.

[37] Chisholm, *Person and Object*, 52.

[38] Brentano, *The Theory of Categories*, 116.

not fully aware of ourselves as the agents of the accidents. Distinct awareness of the subject means we are aware of the underlying thing that thinks or feels pain or sees. Brentano says that often with change (going from one accident to another), selves are made aware of themselves as the thing that underlies accidents. Change from one accident to another may involve different impressions or thoughts. Brentano says that self-awareness is a special kind of thinking where the 'self' persists when cognitions pertain to themselves.[39] Persistence of one thing that knows itself requires attention and will.

Persons who are aware of themselves can pay attention to their 'Being' at a particular time, such as the present, or over time such as in the past or future. In Chapter One, selves are described as 'known as a unity at a particular time' – that is, as synchronic. But unity of selfhood can be described as diachronic as well. We are aware of our self-identity as it is created at a time and as it continues to overlap over time. If I start and stop thinking about something, I am still the same self; I do not become a new unity every time I undertake some mental activity. I can in other words, be aware of myself as this thinker-now, and thinker-of-that-thought-then. Continuous self-identity as

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[39] Brentano, 118. Brentano's theory on self-awareness is more detailed in the third draft of *The Theory of Categories.* Here he specifies the difference between clear and not so clear perceptions of the self with reference to what he calls *modo recto* and *modo obliquo*. For instance, when we consider the thinker as one who thinks, this occurs in *modo recto*. The object that was originally thought of, such as a concept, is in *modo obliquo*. Brentano considers *modo recto* and *modo obliquo* intentional relations. With these relations, we are thinking about the thinker of something and thinking of the thinking.

overlapping of mental acts, allows the self to be aware of itself diachronically.[40]

Finally, Brentano says that we can know ourselves as substances that are individuated. Only one thing can immediately perceive impressions with inner evidence.[41] The self cannot be a collective of parts; it is a single, *mental* substance that underlies all other mental activities in inner perception. This substance is what Brentano calls self or ego.[42] It seems that for Brentano, it is most important to realize that even when we assume we know *something* about ourselves in our habitual and mundane encounters with our accidents (properties, judgements, etc.), we are in fact knowing ourselves as substances too. And as Rancurello notes,[43] being aware of how, in a psychological/philosophical way, the self knows, thinks and reasons with itself allows us to understand 'mental facts'; we go from why do we behave a certain way to how is experience so?

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[40] Brentano does not explicitly endorse this view.

[41] See section 1.3 "Unity in Comparing".

[42] I shall return to the discussion of egos in Chapter Three.

[43] Rancurello, 124.

Chapter 3:

The Functional Self

How does the idea of 'substance' function in the theory of self? This chapter explores Brentano's philosophical alliances and refutations concerning the notion of substance. It is important to understand Brentano's conception of substance as an experiential entity. He attempts to articulate an 'ideal intuition' of the self, something that is implicit as a structure in any given experience. Brentano shares William James' refutation of the substance-self as a necessary, *conditional* feature of experience.[1]

Although Brentano views ideal structures such as selves, as implicit in an experience, he accentuates the need *for* experience in order to know what is in fact implicit. In other words Brentano tries to 'fill in' the content of a substantial self with experiences. What a self means; what it is and how it is, can be known only through experience. Brentano does not assume there is a self before experiences yet, he confirms its metaphysical structure as a result of experiences. The closest James ever comes to defining a self is when he describes the ongoing flow of experience as a feeling of familiarity that, for practical purposes we call self. This chapter demonstrates that the reference to self-sameness or feeling of familiarity still refers to a thing. Brentano and

[1] Brentano's theories are riddled with unfortunate choices of words. For instance, his reference to 'ideal intuitions' conjures up images of Kantian necessary conditions. Brentano's 'intuition' is akin to Descartes' inner self. For Brentano, inner evidence provides direct, empirical proof of ideal intuitions therefore, he is not discussing features of the self that are strictly a priori.

James appear to diverge on whether or not this 'thing' is of metaphysical significance.

James discusses the question of selfhood with a pragmatic approach –that is, he looks for the cash-value of the notion of 'self'. For James, the self is not an *it*; it appears to be determined by a function or use. Between Brentano and James, the unity of consciousness *within* the self functions much in the same way. Critics such as Hans Linschoten say that James' self cannot be fully phenomenological because of its refusal to refer to a real object that includes a function. Here we have to ask, Does James attempt to articulate a phenomenological self or does he simply want to describe the self as acting consciousness, an observable disposition as opposed to an essential structure?

Another question that can be put to Brentano and James is, Which theory of self stands up to the phenomenon of split consciousness? James argues that any interruption to the feeling of selfhood is a pathological disturbance. Yet selfhood as a behavioural disposition or mere psychological feeling, cannot sufficiently account for what is being disturbed in something like multiple personality disorder. It is unclear whether a split into several social selves would produce in an infinite or over-population of selves, or whether the unity of 'I' would remain the same. Brentano's theory of substance and accident may provide an answer – substances are of accidents that may include what appear to be many 'social selves' or personas.

Although Brentano wanted a new psychology that described philosophical problems such as minds and persons empirically, he did not give up the conviction that empiricism was based on fundamental principles he called 'ideal intuitions'. None of Brentano's earlier published writings give a clear indication as to what he meant by a

priori or ideal intuition. Posthumous publications of lectures and dictations concerning the theory of substance and accident reveal an essential structure for empirical psychology. The experiencing self, or unity of consciousness is substantiated by its metaphysical form as substance and accident. James' theory of consciousness and self-awareness offers one of the closest proximations to Brentano's empirical psychology. What James lacks is a knowable substance that subsists in the continuum of experience. Thus James only asks "how is a self so-and-so?" as opposed to Brentano's "how is a self so-and-so?" and "what do we attribute it to, or (intentionally) what is it about?"

3.1 Brentano and Kant

In Chapter One, I alluded to the functional characteristic of the self as unity. The present chapter discusses the self, or 'self-consciousness' as function. Brentano appears to adhere to Kant's usage of terms such as 'unity' and 'inner sense', but in their application he clearly opposes Kant on the most fundamental parts of his theory. For Brentano, the self represents itself to itself by immediate evidence provided by inner sense. Inner sense plays an active and immediate role in proving that experience has taken place and that the self really exists as the bearer of that experience. For Kant, "inner sense represents to consciousness our own selves only as we appear to ourselves, not as we are in ourselves".[2] Brentano renounces any dualism that posits appearance on the one hand and reality or the 'in-itself' on the other. Impressions and appearances we come across represent who *and* what we are. Brentano opposes Kantian idealism even though

[2] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. Norman Kemp Smith, 1929, 166.

his unifying feature of consciousness, inner perception, is similar to the unity of apperception in Kant. The two are only similar with respect to their 'combining' ability. The synthesis Kant describes is a manifold in which an act of knowing objects and the self who knows the objects occurs in one combination. Much like the unity of apperception, the unity of consciousness performs the same function. It combines the knower of a thing with the thing known. The crucial difference for Brentano is that the knower and thing known are exactly as they appear. We perceive reality as it is presented to us.

Unlike Kant, Brentano does not make a clear distinction between the appearance and the reality of things. We already experience the appearance of reality in intentional experience. In direct opposition to Kant, Brentano wants to unite, with concrete experience, the traditional concepts of subjective and objective experience into one kind of activity. He thinks that subjective and objective knowledge of objects or events is really the same thing. Brentano does not believe the self has a conditional feature such as unity of apperception, in order to have experience of knowledge. Brentano's empirical self is not transcendental in any Kantian sense. The experiencing self is in reality – there is no transcendental condition that precludes its ability to experience.

3.2 Brentano and William James

William James has similar feelings concerning Kant's unity of apperception as a condition for experience. He says that the transcendental ego is not an a priori 'meaning-analysis'. In other words, James feels we do not need a concept of the unity function in

order to state it as a fact of actual experience. Selves are not conditions for experience-they are recognized as a result of experience. James does not think experience relies on a set of conditions that are necessary for the existence of empirical selves. For James, experience of something proves that there is a self only after the act of experience while James' thoughts on consciousness are strikingly similar to Brentano's; we will see an important difference emerging not on how the self is experienced but on what it in fact is.

Brentano and James have important similarities as well as notable differences where selves are concerned. Both share the view, fundamental to their theories, that psychology is just as important an empirical science as any of the natural sciences, if not the most important. Although Brentano and James did cross paths and correspond with one another, it was Husserl who had the greatest opportunity to utilize James' and Brentano's insights to a greater degree. James and Brentano were not formally 'phenomenologists', but their approach to philosophy--specifically, their accounts of experience as reality--lay the foundation for many phenomenologists who came after them, most notably Husserl.

Among those who recognize James' impact on phenomenology are James Edie and Hans Linschoten. Edie says James' 'discovery' of intentional existence goes beyond Brentano because it describes intentionality as the identification and objectification of 'objects' which can be *identically the same* for a multiplicity of different of acts of consciousness, and that it is an active and selective achievement of our consciousness rather than a merely passive or static directedness to objects already constituted in their

specificity independent of acts which grasp them as objects.[3] James in fact adopts a version of Brentano's conception of the structure of inner consciousness. He prefers to call Brentano's 'presentations' pure experience, impressions or that which exists in *naif* immediacy. Presentations, and likewise the pure experiences, are not yet acted upon with any belief, judgement, affirmation or denial. Brentano's 'judgements' are akin to James' beliefs, and 'feelings of will' are akin to attention or interests.[4] An identical object occurs in each of these acts of consciousness. James follows Brentano in saying that we cannot believe something before it has been presented to us. Brentano's 'conviction' in judgements is similar in principle to James' consent. Here the two diverge in terms of articulating what belief is and how it is important. James' theory of choices and interests in acts of consciousness is far more developed on this point. Yet, we can say that both Brentano's 'feelings of will' and James' 'attention and interests' lead to different and interesting ethical theories.

Kersten notes that James has a further difference in articulating how presentations are *of kinds*. Instead of digressing on that point here, it is necessary to address Edie's second argument in the passage above. Although it may appear true that James' theory of intentional experience is more descriptive and detailed concerning selective consciousness and directedness towards a particular thing as an end, it is wrong to

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[3] Edie (from Spiegelberg), *William James and Phenomenology*, 1987, 25.

[4] Fred Kersten makes excellent points regarding these similarities in "Franz Brentano and William James" *Journal of the History of Philosophy* v.7, 1969. It can be argued that James' feelings of will' as 'interests' provide a background for his pragmatic theory of truth.

assume that Brentano's conception of intentionality is merely passive or that the direction of intent is somehow static. Brentano's intentional object of thought is just as directed to the actual object as it is of James. Brentano is not merely describing an approach to thoughts and their objects, but he is saying that in fact objects *are* the things we think of. "Someone who is thinking of a stone is not thinking of it as a thought-of stone, but as a stone".[5] Brentano's intentionality thesis has an end in mind as well: the object! His intentional reference to objects attempts to combine both the subject and the object of experience. Any reference James makes to intentional experiences ultimately comes down to the same type of relationship between subjective and objective parts of experiences. But whenever James refers to intentionality, he is merely pointing out that consciousness is the meaning *of* some object, not *of* some self. This points to a crucial difference between these two thinkers: Brentano finds a 'self' in experience, whereas James refers to consciousness as an external relation that does not entail a special stuff or way of being.[6] James agrees with Brentano that there are mental objects for mental acts, but he does not conclude with Brentano that mental objects with mental acts denote a substantial carrier or reality called 'self'. James says thoughts are of familiar things in the mind, but what are they familiar to? How can objects become familiar if not for a substantial thing that makes them familiar?

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[5] Brentano, 321.

[6] James, "Does Consciousness Exist?" – from *The Writings of William James*, 1904, 178.

As much as James' concept of familiarity attempts to explain our tendencies, the most important of which, regarding knowledge and reality, being the tendency to assume that things exist as they really are and not merely as we experience them. James, too, feels uncertain about knowledge as a relation between knower and things known. In as much as intentional relations narrow the gap that correspondence theorists maintain, two things remain--minds and the world. Unlike Brentano, James insists that all we can do is hope a concrete science of the mind and reality by explaining raw experience as facts. James says we call certain things facts I order to organize perceptual experience into discrete metaphysical concepts. Brentano, on the other hand, is not as discouraged by some 'metaphysics creeping in'. Given his theory of parts and wholes, mental states, and therefore mental experience, are always related and immanent to some real unity. While the unity of the self, for Brentano, is a substance that exists, James sees it merely as a name for something that functions in a relational way. The self is a name that we give to a common stream of related experiences. "The Empirical Self of each of us is all that he is tempted to call by the name *me*".[7] In the famous chapter ten, "The Consciousness of Self", James offers a lengthy discussion of the self as owning parts, feelings and actions. More relevant for our present purposes, however, are his views regarding what kind of 'substantial' thing the self is, and whether or not there exists such a thing.[8]

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[7] James, *The Principles of Psychology*, 1890, 291.

[8] James has a long discussion on kinds of selves (social, physical) and how we experience them. These are not my central concern here. What is important is his conclusion that he can only think of himself as a self by some feeling of self-identity.

For James, selfhood is a form of thought or concept (not a pre-existing conditional concept like Kant's) that attempts to make sense of experience; it makes experience define it. Thus James' self is purely empirical; not a trace of causation or inherent constitution for experience, is part of his conception. After experience, the self is whatever feeling I have, what role I represent, it is what others say about me, what I own, what I *can* be. For James, any attempt to think of ourselves as thinkers, as things that have parts and souls, etc., is by reflection. Selves are not pre-given things, nor are they substances that are the initial causes of things such as mental states. Indeed, for James, "the words me and self, so far as they arouse feeling and connote emotional worth, are objective designations meaning all the things which have the power to produce in a stream of consciousness excitement of a peculiar sort".[9]

James thinks the self is 'feeling' that resides alongside the thing known. We call it a self as if it is a thing that can be understood in some intellectual way, but in fact it is the active element of experience. For James, the stream of consciousness is, at best, felt in the head in a bodily sort of way.[10] James does not deny *any* agency that may be attributed to experiences, as does Hume. Rather, he champions the *belief* in a self-identity that can be described as existing *with* experiences, not for experiences. The belief in selfhood

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[9] James, 319.

[10] It is unnecessary to detail James' peculiar head to throat motions or eyeballs turning in order to feel his self-existence. Suffice it to say that knowing the self, for James, is a physical reality that has nothing to do with essential substances, parts or wholes of any kind.

allows experience to feel as though it is owned by someone. James thinks there is a certain 'warmth and intimacy' associated with my feelings, mental states, personal qualities, etc. In mental life, sameness and ownership are perceived as feelings or senses not as synthetic-type things. Brentano views the feeling of sameness in a self as a proof that only a single unity can compare mental phenomena to one another. Sameness, for him, is not just a sense or belief, but an actual quality of the unity of consciousness. For Brentano, the unity of the self is known directly because the same self continues to experience mental life simultaneously.[11] Recall that the ability to see and hear at the same time must refer to the same substantive self. Otherwise simultaneity, as a concept, cannot refer to anything at all.

The feeling of the same self, for James, means more than simultaneity and continuity. He says we are a series of perceptions, and like any other phenomena, many of those perceptions tend to resemble one another. The feeling of resemblance or sameness designates our sense of personal identity. "Resemblance among the parts of a continuum of feelings (especially bodily feelings) experienced along with things widely different in all other regards, thus constitutes the real and verifiable 'personal identity' which we feel".[12] Thus, for James, self-identity comes from actual experience, in which the concept 'same' exists like some sort of necessary truth we grasp as a result of experience. But how would we know we are the same things without a concept of

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[11] See section 1.3.

[12] James, 336.

sameness? Edie suggests that looking for sameness in selves may be an absurd project, since the idea of sameness exists in some transcendental mode.[13] Edie says that

> sameness is phenomenologically certain and must, therefore, figure in any phenomenology of thought as fundamental datum ... the fact that we cannot find a *criterion* of the sameness of meaning outside of consciousness may lead us to conclude not that there is no such thing as sameness but rather that the search for an empirical criterion of sameness of meaning is itself an absurd quest.[14]

For James, sameness happens – it occurs as a result of the temporal stream of experience. Within the stream of experience similar mental objects reoccur. Like any mental object for the mind, phenomena that constitute selves are merely a compilation of conclusions based on the same phenomena that keep coming up over time. The same phenomena are repeated, thus we have seemingly familiar mental states. These mental states have objects before them that provide the content of an experience. Without the mental objects that describe a self, such as feelings, judgements, etc., selves do not exist.

James offers an interesting remark about sameness in "The Stream of Thought" (Brentano was undoubtedly familiar with this chapter from the *Principles).* Here he says that "sameness in a multiplicity of objective appearances is thus the basis of our belief in realities outside of thought".[15] James is a dedicated believer in the mind's sense of

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[13] Edie, "The Genesis of a Phenomenological Theory of Experience of Personal Identity: William James on Consciousness and the Self", *Man and World,* v.6, 1973.

[14] Edie, 324.

[15] James, "The Stream of Thought", *The Writings of William James*, 60.

sameness. He thinks personal identity is a result of this sense of sameness that connotes feelings of warmth and intimacy, especially with memories, nostalgia, etc. But again, in referring to the notion of sameness, James in no way affirms it as a real structure for the self. It is inevitable that we ask why James commits to sameness as a feeling with no substantive bearer; we have to ask, sameness of what? In his attempt to provide a psychological account for philosophical notions, James backs us into a behaviourist observation that reveals nothing about selves and what they are.[16] The sense of sameness in fact constitutes the basis of the identity of a real thing.[17] Nevertheless, the original statement is true; sameness does have the tendency to motivate a representative theorist to believe that there are real things outside of our thought. I will remind the reader again that to believe there is a self *inside* of thought does not contradict James' conclusions. James does not have to accept a two-world theory by admitting there is a self *in* (self of selves) and *for* (functional consciousness) thoughts.[18]

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[16] See the first section of "Conception", chapter 12, *Principles* v.1.

[17] Linschoten, *On the Way Toward a Phenomenological Psychology*, 1968, 178.

[18] I will reiterate the point in the conclusion but it is enough to say that James can attempt a philosophical (not merely *spiritual*) account of selves without threatening his psychological account. One writer notes that if James' 'attention' to human tendency is followed through too closely, it will be behaviour and not experience that constitutes reality. While I agree that in some of his writings, James adheres to a strict behaviourist account--for example, in "Does Consciousness Exist?"--in his ultimate scheme of things, James does not go as far as eradicating the self as a concept or structure, especially in "The Will to Believe". Linschoten believes it is nonsense for psychology to deny the very thing they need for thought. He is closer to Brentano in saying that we have a thought of an object as well as a thought of ourselves as the mentally active subjects of that thought.

For James, all it does to call a self a self is to name a function that unites the continuous flow of experience. This function we like to call *Self* is as useful to the 'taking in' of mental objects for thoughts as breathing is for the 'taking in' of oxygen for life. 'I' is a noun we give in an experience where my position is here and now. One's 'self of selves' is one's 'I' (a unity-function for experience), and to call oneself by that name is merely an objective designation. The capability to produce a stream of experience is justified by the name 'I' or 'self'.[19] Edie points out that James works out a distinction between consciousness and selves. What is 'me' is experienced consciousness; all that is observable and public. 'Me's are our experiential selves, whereas 'I's refer to what James calls warm and intimate ideas of selves.[20] A temporal connection towards the same thing is felt. "When James speaks about a 'community of self' that is not broken by sleep, this figure might easily suggest that he accepts a substantial Self".[21] But 'I's' (James' self of selves) are nominal existences that serve to distinguish this self or that. James insists that the experiencing consciousness cannot be thought of as a stable entity, for it changes. In the following section, we will see just how much consciousness can change in its ability to split into several parallel and recognizable 'social selves'.

James' notion of continuity is *felt* – no matter how James would like to call it a thing, continuity does not refer to some*thing* that is continuous. Linschoten gives a

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[19] James, 319.

[20] For an interesting comparison on the 'I' and the 'Me', consult George Herbert Mead in *Mind, Self and Society.*

[21] Linschoten, 144.

generous account of James' debt to Brentano, especially where continuity, unity and existence are concerned. "Although he does not say so, that chapter ["On the Unity of Consciousness"] is the foundation on which he established his theory of the stream of experience, his theory of the Self, and of the perception of time".[22] Even when James' concept of unity is only felt or sensed, he agrees with Brentano's argument that "even after the most severe and sudden changes there is a connection between the earlier and subsequent parts of consciousness--unity is always guaranteed".[23] Throughout this chapter we come across James' interesting ways of dodging entities. With personal identity he says that what we feel in the stream of subjective consciousness is knit together with resemblance and verifiability. Without the ability to knit, to identify the connection between earlier and subsequent selves that Brentano talks about, the sense of unity departs. On verifiability and unity that is guaranteed by inner evidence, James shies away from the conclusion that only a real entity can compare and unite phenomena.[24]

What is most important about James' concept of the self is his reluctance to call it an entity that exists *within* experience. James' reluctance to recognize a substantial, entity-like self is due to his concern that it may distinguish itself as something apart from experience. He too abhors any Kantian distinction between things-known and transcendental egos that hover above them. Thus, for James, any talk of conscious selves as entities necessarily precludes an experiential world of mental objects with a world of

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[22] Linschoten, 144.

[23] Linschoten, 144.

[24] See section 1.3.

agents that stand apart from them. In a moment, I will explain the last point further, keeping in mind that for Brentano, the conscious self, even as an entity does not stand apart from its experiential objects. Unlike Kant, neither James nor Brentano, believes there is a transcendental ego that precludes experience. "Thus, for these belated drinkers at the Kantian spring, we should have to admit consciousness as an 'epistemological' necessity, even if we had no direct evidence of its being there".[25]

James admits he has mistrusted the conception of consciousness as an entity, and he offers his 'processsive' explanation of consciousness in the *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. "Let me immediately explain that I mean only to deny that the word stands for an entity, but to insist most emphatically that it does stand for a function".[26] In his famous essay, "Does Consciousness Exist?" James finally abolishes any illusions of the existence of a metaphysical entity we refer to as 'self'. Consciousness, for James, becomes something that is entirely different from the 'I'-self, the self of selves he was trying to describe in the *Principles*. Consciousness is not a thing or an object of experience similar to the mental objects we take into experience; it is an activity that functions to unite mental objects and can only be recognized after the act of unifying. "Nothing can be known about it [consciousness], till it be dead and gone".[27] James feels that the substantial soul, subject, agent, or self can never be experienced as such before

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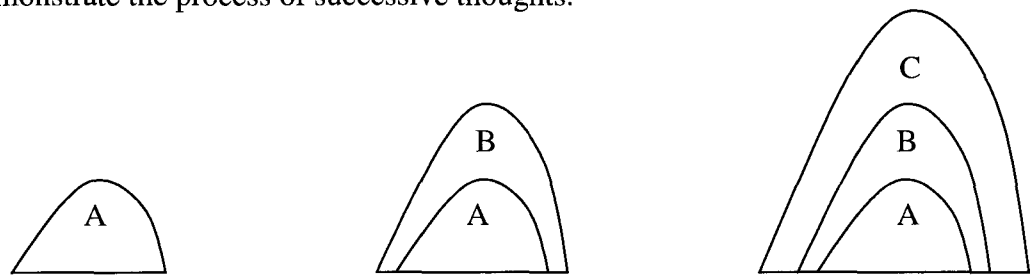
[25] James, "Does Consciousness Exist?"--from *The Writings of William James*, 1904, 171.

[26] James, 170.

[27] James, 341.

and while we are experiencing. He provides an interesting illustration that attempts to demonstrate the process of successive thoughts.



Yet, even the lines that encapsulate the thought-objects are lines of some agent that is present and experiencing itself at the *same* time as it is experiencing mental objects. Edie comments on the 'noetic freedom' of such a theory of the self as process and not a stagnant thing. James is right that a convenient name for selves is not enough to establish them as real entities. The language of the self does seduce us into thinking up real concepts for phenomena. Words do not reveal the actual state of things; in reality they are impotent, James says. Although naming ourselves 'substantial souls' does not enlighten us as to what we are made up of, the very process of knowledge acquisition through experience does reveal a self that should be recognized as a knowable *thing* that exists *as* a thing *with* experience to determine it. It is Brentano who recognizes selves as entities *within* their mental objects. Selves are in fact the essential parts to the whole of experiential life.

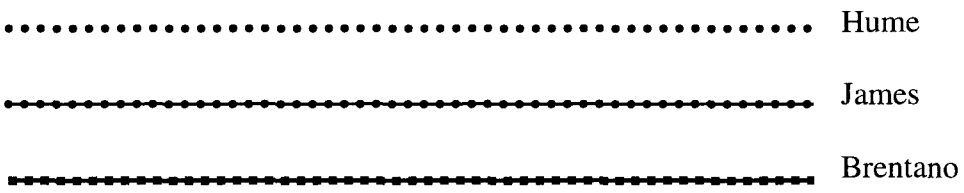
It has been noted that Brentano's chapter "On the Unity of Consciousness" did in fact influence as well as impress James immensely. Some commentators- Linschoten, for example- say there are sections in the *Principles* that are parallel in wording with

passages in Brentano. "The influence of Brentano is evident but the way James further developed the concept [of the stream of consciousness], his own way of incorporating and applying it, are his own".[28] Metaphorically, James' 'stream or flow' of consciousness is a process that always refers to an object. He cannot grasp the person as a thing, but only as a function whose ability is to experience objects. James' pragmatic conception of the self is precisely the relative unity of a thing *we call* self for a similar set of experiences. Brentano's 'chain-like' conscious self is not only a process, but also a knowable thing, self-aware *as a* self with parts that can be likened to links on a chain. Brentano is not discussing the self as just a function or practical name we use for conscious processes. James has no metaphysical account of selves as parts or wholes, so a comparison on this front is not fair. The two accounts of the self diverge significantly. A brief Jamesian observation of parts and wholes may conclude that a metaphysical account of selves is the product of an objective designation or a dreaming up of stagnant qualities for the purpose of harmonizing experiential selves with real 'conceptual' selves. This would just be a roundabout way of saying that there is no need for metaphysics in order to validate the processes of experience. For James, 'real' selves--or, as Brentano prefers to call them, real unites--*are* experiential selves; there would be no purpose in introducing the business of 'what is this self made up of'! For both Brentano and James, the self is knowable by and through experience, but this experience leaves the former with the affirmation of a substantive entity, while the latter is left with just another experiential relation. Similarly, where the mind is a substance for Brentano, James simply

[28] Linschoten, 63.

attributes our concept of mind to our ability to think of the same objects of thought in various ways, at various times.

To be sure, in both Brentano's and James' version of intentional experience, the thought-of-thing must have a self thinking it – even a process or function must have an agent, otherwise we fall into a nonsensical skepticism. If the reader will allow me a visual interpretation: Hume lays out sporadic dots that represent perceptions, sensations and all the other various mental acts. James admits a stream, a common linear relation between the mental acts. Brentano agrees with the linear conception of experienced selves, but maintains that the line, as well as the dots, indicates the existence of a real agent. It is important to understand that Brentano's substantial agent is not necessarily something over and above experience; it is not something *more* than experience- it is entirely *immanent to* experience.



Linschoten's observation that James' self cannot be considered fully phenomenological is accurate. In all of James' 'given' experience, he does not consider a being that is given to someone. James' experiencing self is a spatio-temporal, external relation. The activity of cognizing objects takes place in the outer world of experience. In other words, experience, for James, takes up space, it is spatially and temporally actual.

Putting aside whatever problems that might pose, Linschoten's point is that phenomenological selves are *in* experience; they are as philosophically attributive to experience as they are psychologically constitutive.[29]

Brentano is convinced that consciousness is not only a relation between two things- knower and thing-known, or subject and object of experiences- but exists as a thing regardless of its object. In his introduction to the 1924 edition of the *Psychology*, Kraus says "accordingly, the existence (being, subsistence) of the object of consciousness is essentially irrelevant to the concept of consciousness".[30] Now we see that for Brentano, consciousness is a relative determination. It is one those accidents that can come into being or pass away without threatening the existence of the substance.[31] Consciousness is a concrete part that can be detached from the whole of the *normal* self. Strange as it may seem, this is Brentano's particular version of a 'functional self'. Consciousness as a relative determination can actually split from the self. It can split by some disassociation,

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[29] I want to avoid a lengthy discussion of why James may or may not be a phenomenologist. Suffice it to say that his insights, along with Brentano's, did anticipate the development of phenomenology in Husserl (see my introduction). Many writers want to say that Jamesian psychology has clear traces of phenomenology especially since James respects and at times incorporates the work of Brentano, whose writings function as a precursor to the modern movement. Nevertheless there are tenets of phenomenology that do not sit well with James- for example, the notion of immanence. James does not endorse any view that appears to designate a distinction between inner and outer relations of objects. James' behaviourist tendencies reject any dualism found in inner and outer forms of taking in objects.

[30] Kraus, (Introduction) *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, 1924, 375. Brentano and others may have made a gross error in disregarding the object of experience in consciousness.

[31] See footnote #18 to Chapter Two.

memory-loss, creating multiple personalities, etc. James admits there are as many consciousnesses as there are people to recognize them. For both interpretations, self-awareness is achieved with the experience of mental objects for mental acts. Thus, for James as well as for Brentano, experience is the only method of revealing ourselves to ourselves, even though for Brentano the self as a substance can exist without the relative determination of consciousness. Selves and consciousness are usually understood to be the same thing; here we see that Brentano maintains the idea of the same self in each recognizable consciousness and James says that there can be as many consciousnesses as there are experiences of them. James has no concept of the same self idea within each of the identifiable consciousnesses. Intimate and warm relations or feelings do not cut it as concepts of what the self actually is.[32]

3.3 Split Consciousness – *One Practical Self*

Much has been said about the *creation* of split consciousness as a result of some psychological trauma a person experiences, especially early in life. Without delving into the details and history of such a phenomenon, it suffices to say that immanent objectivity of experience is still possible in each *individual* consciousness.[33] Inner consciousness, as

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[32] I shall return to this in the conclusion.

[33] Within the fringes of phenomenology, James Mensch offers an appropriate description of split selves in *After Modernity: Husserlian Reflections on a Philosophical Tradition*, chapter 14. Here he refers to Freud's view that split consciousness is based on abuse of the term. He feels that split persons are not dealing with reality, therefore there is a rift in the ego. This is not the place to detail all of Freud's theories on what consciousness is, but I find it interesting that the only non-medical courses Freud took at university were Brentano's on psychology and philosophy. Freud's 'discoveries' on

described in Chapter One, remains the window to any kind of experience, but now more than one consciousness resides in the same substantial self. How can this self remain one with separate consciousnesses residing in it? The answer is not as difficult as it may appear. Nothing is sacrificed in Brentano's theory of inner experience via intentional inexistence of objects. Unity of consciousness as one entity experiencing a variety of mental phenomena need not change, nor does the unity of being crumble. Although consciousness splits into discrete, separable streams, the principle of oneness is among each of them. For instance, there would be no real five personalities in a multiple personality disorder patient unless each personality were to display the capability to unify experiences in its own *singular* inner consciousness. In order to have a distinct consciousness, the same mental object must be inherent in all acts of consciousness: presentation, judgements, and feelings of will. That particular consciousness or ego must be able to compare acts of consciousness with one another. Within the same psyche, an*other* consciousness can have experiences that follow the same rules.

Brentano's stipulations for the unity of consciousness (unity as oneness, unity in comparing) are not broken down by having more than one ego experience the nature of unity. It is useful not only to ask what this split is, but how it comes about. Although I have mentioned that these are not considerations for this work, needless to say that split consciousnesses do somehow invoke the self's practical nature by forcing it to augment itself in order to cope with some experience. With experience we come back to James

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unconscious thoughts are well after his initial interest in conscious-selves, an interest that was no doubt sparked by his connection to Brentano.

again. The self's augmenting, coping, adapting to an experience is consciousness that is constantly fitting or harmonizing various raw experiences into something that makes sense. Split consciousness is one self's way to adapt itself to the experiential environment. Two or more egos (the original, secondary, etc.) appear to have their own personal organization of experience. Each ego has its own thoughts, memories, names, so that phenomena that occur reiterates James' argument that experience tends to personal form. Split egos are 'fitting' experiences into an organized (probably bearable) structure in order to continue being.[34] But even in their splitting, James again confronts the notion of the self as something other than the body that binds experience.

The position that James elaborates is not without problems in this respect. We can ask James how selves are 'felt' by physical head to throat motions when even the feeling of sameness is no longer present in a situation where an ego is split? James would respond that the active 'me' of consciousness is altered, whereas the unity of 'I' in the self of selves is not disrupted. He says that sudden alterations of the empirical 'me' are pathological disturbances of self-consciousness. It appears that James is inadvertently alluding to a substantial self that can be restored with the recognition of past habits and tendencies after the alteration or pathology of splitting egos has passed. He also refers to the pathology of split egos as the failure to combine a system of ideas that usually

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[34] Here the concept of continuity may be questioned. Continuity of consciousness is not broken by sleep or fits of disassociation until or unless the present self-consciousness can in no way remember or relate to the same consciousness that existed before sleeping or a fit. If there is no solidarity with the original consciousness then we can say the conscious ego has split.

resemble each other. This again alludes to a thing that exists, otherwise what are we to combine a system of ideas to?

Smith says that Brentano could allow consciousness to be split, since he is only interested in unity at a particular time, 'at one moment'. The synchronic self, described at the end of Chapter One, can know itself only at a particular time. Over time consciousness can change so much that it becomes a new, distinct consciousness. As long as the self recognizes itself as the subject and cognizer of mental events at a particular time, Brentano's theory of the unity of consciousness is safe, and he leaves it an open question whether successive unities of consciousness may reside in the same thing. Beyond each ego's unity and inner perception, there is no evidence of an overarching Self that owns many selves or stands behind distinct appearances of consciousness. Another question to ask may be whether there is one Self that starts and stops in experiential life or a succession of different selves, "of which the one would connect itself to the other and as it were take its place".[35] This appears to address selves that feel different over time, not multiple selves that are experienced in a back and forth manner, in which experience of one self is immediately succeeded by another and back again. Brentano's main argument would be to emphasize the necessity of the unity of one and the same consciousness for any one experience.

The synchronic view of the self has important implications for split egos. When the notion of a real, unified substance-self is combined with the notion of unity of consciousness at a time, we are left with the former being a separable part. Thus the

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[35] Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, 168.

substantial self can be separated from the function of the unity of consciousness *at a particular* time. But the separability is not mutual; in order to have a unity of consciousness there must be a substantial self, acting as the fundamental metaphysical part to any experience within the unity of consciousness. To sum up this last point, the substance-self is a separable part from the whole of time. But time cannot be separated from any self that experiences itself within the structure of the unity of consciousness (the unity of consciousness is wholly dependent on unity at a time).

In a slightly different context, Mensch describes the splitting of the self as a function that becomes fragmented. The function of unity in the self is teleological, or goal-driven.

> [The] overarching goal [of the self] is the unity, the coherent sense of the world we experience. What we face in MPD is the fragmentation of this highest goal. Each fragmentation now bears its own sense of the world as an anticipatory unity, a schema into which experiences are fitted as experiences *of* a given world fragment.[36]

The self continues with two or more distinct goals (two or more senses of unity) that are focused upon by the teleological unity of consciousness. Mensch not only describes unity at a time (unity for *an* experience, like Brentano's), but he considers the self over time. He considers the self as it interprets itself by more than one consciousness that is particular to its distinct goal. Thus Mensch, who is describing Husserl's theory of consciousness, preserves the notion of temporalization in the unity of consciousness, later known as 'the now'. In the concluding chapter of this study, I shall return to the notion of

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[36] Mensch, 213.

temporalization in the unity of consciousness and how it affects self-awareness in its *interpretative* function.

3.4 Self-awareness for James

The main focus of the present Chapter is the difference between how James and Brentano respectively *know* the self. In its most naïve sense, conscious self-awareness, for James, is the immediate notice of an object.[37] We can ask, "who is this object for, what is it about?" but this is not an issue yet. A deeper meaning of self-awareness is consciousness' ability to recognize itself as cognizer. In a sense James says we play psychologist with ourselves. Not necessarily a third meaning, but an even deeper self-awareness may be of use when persons make voluntary decisions. In any effort to reason and use our will, self-awareness is not just a bodily-brain process. What kind of thinking is this? Is it thinking of a substantial entity, soul with a conscience? James' stand on substantial selves is as ambiguous here as it is in his theory of the-feeling-of-spiritual selves.[38]

James' contribution to the theory of self-awareness is summed up by recognizing that we are to our*selves* mere reflections after the function of consciousness in the stream of experiences has already taken place. In this formulation, self-awareness has no causal explanation, for it occurs after experience and it is only in the world of experience that

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[37] The following 'meanings' of self-awareness are summarized from Hans Linschoten, 56.

[38] See *Principles*, 296.

selves are aware of themselves. For James, experience is the reason for any self-awareness. Brentano would not disagree totally with James' analysis of self-awareness. In his account, self-awareness exists in any experiential observation we have, in sights, perceptions and feelings. But in his agreement, Brentano would not deny the fact that the knowledge of this self in this experience or that consists in knowing ourselves *as* selves that exist with experience, simultaneously. Conscious selves are cognizers of objects as well as of themselves as subjects. When we have a perception of something we have a perception of ourselves at the same time. And thus Brentano derives his concept of a substance-self as a bearer of the conscious cognition.[39] For Brentano, being aware of ourselves as the underlying entity in an experience such as pain requires distinct awareness. Only in indistinct forms of awareness can we say that we were not fully aware of ourselves as agents. Recall from Chapter Two that indistinct forms of awareness refer to accidents of a substance-self in which the self is aware of accidents, but not of itself as the barer of accidents. In this instance James' reflective concept of the self may be analogous. James acknowledges forms of awareness, such as pains, thoughts and sightings, but he does not attribute a distinct form of agency that recognizes itself as a thing among them.

Self-awareness can be achieved in other, secondary ways that are not as profound as recognizing ourselves as 'entities' as opposed to 'processes'. In describing the 'how' of a thought process, Brentano and James share a similarity. Here James' theory of substantive and transitive experience is somewhat familiar. But for the moment let us

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[39] See section 2.5.

skip to Brentano. Brentano categorizes passive affections as kinds of accidents that include transformation and sensation. 'Affective' accidents in transformation refer to thoughts or mental processes *in action.*[40] The active mental process requires the subject to react to a mental object. Sensations are those affections that refer to general affection by a common source- for example, we receive the same source of affection for sight and hearing, such as light or sound. James says the resting place for the process of conscious thought is substantive, whereas the places of flight (movement in the chain of thought from A to B to C ...) is transitive. Thought tries to produce a result by finding its way from one substantive to another. James' complaint about introspective psychology is directed at its inability to recognize this transitive process. One cannot 'find' consciousness while it is in the flow of thinking, seeing or tasting. The proof of consciousness that introspection provides is the result: a thought, sighting or taste. James insists that these 'resting places' of thought are but a small feature of what goes on in thought.

Thus James, with his endless flow of thought-consciousness and experience as cause, may have been inspired by Brentano's feature of an accident as transformation. Note also that James refers to the notion of transition in thought as 'feeling' and Brentano names transformation in an accident 'affection'. It appears the two agree that although thoughts in their flow cannot be observed in an objective, explicit way, nevertheless they are intuited and known by inner evidence for Brentano and, similarly, by acquaintance

[40] See section 2.3.

and impression for James.[41] Yet even in this example, selves as entities as opposed to processes remains an issue. Brentano is describing transformation of accidents *of* a substance, whereas James is referring to transitive and substantive thought within the realm of experiential relation only. Neither substantive nor transitive thoughts are accidents of any kind of substance. Nevertheless it is worth noticing their agreement where thoughts as processes are concerned.

[41] Linschoten, 152.

Chapter 4:

Concluding Remarks

From the onset I stated that my task was to elucidate *the* Brentanian conception of self, even though more than one interpretation arises from his various works. The metaphysical structure he borrows from Aristotle, outlined in Chapter Two, complements his concept of unity of consciousness in Chapter One. How we experience unity has a direct bearing on what unity is about, namely a substance. Accidental forms of self-awareness seem to complement James' reflective approach to selfhood- that is, selves are known as a result of their personas or ways to be (social, spiritual, etc.). James' self clearly offers the most interesting foil to Brentano's self with respect to their historical conception and inter-relation. Both thinkers were ready to reject the then-popular, traditional, speculative assumptions about knowledge.

In all the ways we experience unity in consciousness (as oneness, in progress and comparing), and in unity's structure (substance and accident), Brentano's conception of the self is cumulative and inter-related. This study has outlined various complementary interpretations of Brentano's concept of the self. One of these interpretations in "On the Unity of Consciousness" has a specific section that describes the self as a process. Unity in progress describes a singular agent of sights, sounds, feelings, etc. Brentano's main acknowledgement of selves concerns the sameness of a thing-like entity that emerges for simultaneous mental phenomena. Sameness of a self is more of an issue when we try to account for concurrent experiences of mental phenomena. But whether mental

phenomena provide experiences that are concurrent or consecutive is irrelevant when considering the self to which they must be related. Brentano is not describing a *feeling* of sameness or familiarity; he is actually saying it is the same substantial thing that experiences both consecutive and, especially, concurrent events. I will return to the inadequacy of the feeling of selfhood when concluding my discussion of William James' theory.

The relational nature of Brentano's self is revealed in his theory of substances and accidents and how they relate to parts and wholes. The self as a substance is a continuous entity with several accidents that reveals the self to itself. This is due to Brentano's argument that parts are *in* their wholes. Thus, the substance-self is the most important *part* of its accidents. The self as a part is injected into each of its 'accident-wholes'. Brentano sees accidents as things in themselves such that although they need a substance to adhere to, they can nevertheless be described apart from the substance-part, which for these purposes is the self. On Brentano's account, accidents can be further described by additional denominations, accidents of accidents. The relational self is therefore a part of something that is not necessarily greater that it, as is traditionally assumed by relational theorists. The substantial self is a part of many different wholes. My 'self' is a part that needs no other part to exist, but the many things I am made up of are 'accident-wholes' whose existence and meaning can be detached from me at any time. Although we can speak of accidents apart from the substance-self, they are in a sense subordinate to the self that is a part of them. The self is unique in that it is one and the same thing among many intersubjective and common accidents. In their mutual dependence, Brentano's

mereological essentialism describes parts and wholes as necessary to each other. In other words, particular substances consist in particular accidents. Any change to the substance-self (death, memory-loss, etc.) will create new accidents.

Substances and accidents describe the self as a bundle. One substance is a bundle of accidents that are at times continuous, overlapping and/or intersubjective. Brentano's most important contribution to the relational self is his adherence to a thing within the bundle. In Chapter Three I depicted Brentano's continuous self with a solid line, meaning that events and experiences of an ego do in fact refer to a real self. As I also explained in Chapter Three, James feels that any reference to the self as a thing inevitably places it on a perch looking over its experience from the outside. I depicted James' self on a continuous line as well, but this was not a solid line since he believes continuous life-experiences that belong to a substantial self are merely feelings of sameness. The problem is that James subtracts personal identity from an entity-like self. Within the 'self', personal identity is not *another* discrete concept created in order to unite the many into one. The plurality of the self, the many ways a self can be, is conceivable in Brentano's theory of substance and accident. Social, political, spiritual, even split selves refer to a unified substantial bearer. In any way Brentano describes the self- as collective consciousness, identity, or ego the assumption is that it (the self) is *in* every particular perceptual phenomenon that constitutes personal identity.

The empirical method Brentano uses to know the self is quite similar to that employed by James. Both are attempting to know the self directly with experience, and therefore with inescapable proof. For Brentano, the unity of the self is apparent in every

perception it has, especially when he concludes that it must be the same thing that compares sights, sounds and feelings. Comparing sense perceptions to each other must involve the same agent, and in these comparisons, the agent is aware of itself as the one who is comparing. Individuality as oneness, the substance-self, is the person who experiences. For James, the question of 'who?' also becomes the question of 'what?'. What do we attribute a feeling of self-sameness to?

It should be noted that although it appears that Brentano and James share similarities in terms of their experiential proof for psychology, the approach to the problem of knowing is initiated by different concerns. James' 'knowledge' builds, in a linear fashion from pure experiences to common experiences to what appear to be rational explanations for things. Brentano would not disagree with this but experience for him helps to prove rational principles or forms of thoughts that are *already there.* Brentano thinks universal principles can be demonstrated with experience whereas James says they are formed after experience. Thus both agree on how knowledge can be proven by experience, but Brentano is juggling back and forth between experiential proof and foundational knowledge.

Brentano and James probably had a great amount of respect for each other's work. The two can be read in a remarkably similar fashion in terms of the body of their arguments. The traditions they came out of initialize concerns and final conclusions that may differ as a result of their disciplinary backgrounds. For instance, James may be looking at philosophy with biological lenses, whereas Brentano tends to think with logical, mathematical principles in mind. In saying this, James' self is a disposition.

Identity itself is a way to be, to behave, and to conduct mental experiences. Brentano is not quite as much a reductionist. Although it may be more difficult to prove selves as substances, nevertheless there are real things that must exist in order to have experiences in the first place.

William James, true to his 'radical' empiricism, resorts to the body as the center of consciousness. All action and interest are *of* a particular bodily self that is as experiential as the phenomena it comes across. James says that 'I' is the pronoun for a position of the body. 'Mine' is an emphasis we place on particular interests and perceptions. James is saying that bodies are equal to the habitual name 'self'. But what he does not realize is that his body, ego, wife, children and work are accidents of a substance. Even his material, social and spiritual selves refer to a substance that form a part of various interpretations of selves.

If we understand selfhood solely as the fundamental unifying function that allows experience to become a known, then Brentano and James have much in common. Both believe in a consciousness that is continuous and regenerative. That is, consciousness renews itself or overlaps when there is a significant interruption in experience, as in the case of hallucinations, fits of disassociation and even physical death. In Chapter One I demonstrated how Brentano's 'Unity of Consciousness' functions in order for persons to have subjective experience. In most of Brentano's works, especially *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, consciousness is a function much in the spirit of James. In Brentano's metaphysics, *The Theory of Categories*, a substantial entity emerges much in the spirit of Descartes but with the logical/ontological structure of Aristotle; Brentano

attempts to 'empiricize' Descartes' foundational 'I'. He does not think 'I' is an entity over and above experience yet at the same time he does not do away with its substantial universality.[1]

Beyond Brentano – On Self-Interpreting Selves

Brentano and James base knowledge of the self in experiential proof. As a result, the question "who is this self?" never has a final answer, and the answers we do provide come with various interpretations. Recently philosophers have placed great emphasis on these various interpretations. I am referring to the method of awareness, the 'who' of the self.[2] With narration as its model and language as its tool, selves are described by and

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[1] For an interesting comparison of idealistic versus realistic tendencies in Brentano's self, consult Edgar Sheffield Brightman's article "The Finite Self" from *Contemporary Idealism in America*, 1932. Brightman argues that although Brentano's psychology stands in opposition to idealism, his descriptive psychology is based on Cartesian ideal structures with a marked interest in Aristotelian classification. He also notes the problem (Brightman thought it was a virtue) Brentano creates by not using his theory of substance with his theory of a consciousness (Brentano had clearer and more concise arguments on substance after the publication of *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint).*

Brightman poses some problems of his own- for example, he uses the terms 'self' and 'consciousness' interchangeably, as if they are exactly the same things. He calls Brentano a metaphysical idealist which even if it is true 'idealism' in the traditional sense would have to be reformulated or else a different word used, after all Brentano is an empiricist. Brightman also mistakes early phenomenological undercurrents in Brentano for idealism. "Personalistic or self psychology combines our subjective natures to the immediacy of consciousness" (Brightman, 187). Here the self in phenomenology is overlapped with an ideal self. Husserl's 'ego' develops this further.

[2] The 'who' as opposed to the 'what' question of selves has been examined in various ways. Anthony Paul Kerby, in *Narrative and the Self*, describes the 'what' as qualitative and attributive. For example, this self is "a brain surgeon, engineer, brave, thoughtful, intuitive, etc." (Kerby, 35). Kerby is more interested in and gives priority to the 'who' of the self according to the story of its life.

through their experiences. An entity called 'self' is *not* a pristine or mysterious pre-given in any such interpretation. The 'substance-self' is a part of interpretations that may be called 'the story of our lives'. A particular story of identity describes the experience of a particular substance-self.

Kerby describes the self as the dramatic telling of a series of temporal events that is much like a traditional plot. Personal identity depends on temporal events that create a sense of history as well as future ambitions.[3] Time is experienced as a principle part of the experience of identity.[4] For Brentano, even when a thing changes completely from time (1) to time (2), there exists continuity, a process that links t1 and t2. In addition to their link, every intermittent moment between t1 and t2 relies on the one before it, thus the overlapping and renewing of a unity of consciousness. Is it the *same* self at t1 and t2? This is a tricky question. To agree with James, the feeling of sameness must accompany a feeling of identity. But a definition of the self according to Brentano stretches out – the self as it is described is a substance-part at t1... t2... t3... . One can conceive of a notion of self-identity at any time and allow it the freedom to change, at times in dramatic ways. Throughout the preceding chapters I have tried to make it apparent that the notion or feeling of self-identity and sameness is not exactly the same as the substance-self. Brentano's self stretches out because it is a self that is logically and ontologically implied

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[3] Brentano's theories of time bear some relation to the self, interpreting itself in the present. For Brentano, the continuity of consciousness depends on past and future events. As I explain in Chapter Two, time is the principle accident in any phenomenon.

[4] In addition to selves and substances, Brentano would say that time is another example of a universal that can be proved with experience.

in *each and every* occasion that we consider *a* self-identity. Within Brentano's unity of consciousness, there is always a thing– a self that can be acknowledged in its interpretations. Although Brentano does not discuss the self as a narrative, his arguments complement it as a narrative product. As he says, "self-awareness taken in its widest sense, is always incomplete".[5]

It is a relatively postmodern preoccupation that describes the self as a story, with selective events and selective language. There is an obvious temporal deviation between Brentano's and James' experiencing self and the postmodern narrative self. The narrative self is always playing 'catch up' with true experience. Within the narrative, language determines the 'truth' of the experience.[6] The sense of self-identity, the 'who' is achieved with the narrative structure. But, let us not forget about Brentano's 'what'. A substance-self need not contradict the changing self. As we saw in Chapter Two, substances change within the accidents they bear. Although the self exists through its own narrative accounts and by experiences that alter it, what we talking about is a real thing. From primordial experience to cultured narrative, there is A SELF.

If narrative is demanded because we are a story-telling society,[7] if the mystery of the self is somehow unearthed because experience is tangible, this is fine. I admit self-

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[5] Brentano, *The Theory of Categories*, 123.

[6] Hermeneutics teaches us that the 'truth' of experience within language is always situated in some respect (see Gadamer, *Truth and Method).*

[7] Here I am referring to the incredible importance of stories for understanding. It has been said that the self lives twice, once in experience and a second time in narration. Depending on who gives the narration and at what point in history, selves can live many lives, some 'truer' than others.

consciousness is a felt experience.[8] But to proclaim the sole existence of selves as 'a sense of selfhood' is a shortcut. After all, what is selfhood about? There are endless interpretations of the interpretations we give to selves. All refer to an *idea* or sense of unity and sameness that is based on something real. How is the idea of the unity of selves (the what-ness) real? For Brentano we actually experience the kind of self that Kant describes as a thing-in-itself. We have direct awareness of experiences and ourselves at the same time.[9]

The problem with the postmodern views, which I have not fully detailed by any means, is what David Jopling calls the 'over-population of selves'.[10] Self and self-concept are molded into one kind of thing that presents a host of problems. I will not deal with these at length, but to clarify briefly, self-concepts may be misleading if they pursue the wrong direction (as with a false narrative), or they may be conflicting (especially where there are two or more concepts of self-identity). The existence of a sense of self-concept or self-identity can be called into question precisely because it is an interpretation. A sense of self can be fallible as a result of a dream, MPD, amnesia, death.[11] Brentano's is a self whose existence cannot break down because of its part/whole

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[8] James would agree that the human consciousness has subtle ways that recognize patterns. Stories offer the structure for such recognition. Selves have something in common and we understand them as beginnings and endings.

[9] See section 2.5.

[10] Jopling, "A Self of Selves?", from *The Conceptual Self in Context: culture, experience, self-understanding*, 1997.

[11] Although I group these together, I realize they disrupt self-concepts in very different ways and in varying degrees.

relation. That parts be essential to their wholes ensures a substantial self, regardless of time or phenomenal events therein.[12]

Narratives are representations of experiences and experiences are about a metaphysical self.[13] The narrative self is not traditionally metaphysical because it is described with thoroughgoing empirical evidence. The 'storied' self attempts to describe events that, whether they are true or not, are experientially possible. The self as a substantial part of the storied life does not have to remain mysterious. Brentano's 'self' is as experiential in narrative interpretation as it is in primary experience (experience before it is narrated). Brentano's philosophical psychology gives us the beginnings of a phenomenological self. His most important contribution to Husserl's phenomenological self is its intentionality. The self has an interpretative intention in every experience it has. The object of that experience is intentional when the interpretation of the content of experience is successful.[14] The interpretative function of intentionality becomes more important in the works of Husserl and later phenomenologists. A definition of the self moves away from what the self is or metaphysics, to whom we *take* the self to be. This brings up issues concerning agency and world-mediation that are dealt with long after Brentano.

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[12] Note that Brentano's part/whole theory preempts many Gestalt principles – see Barry Smith's chapter on von Ehrenfels in *Austrian Philosophy*.

[13] Pace, Roland Barthes' criticism that narratives are only representative of the languages they employ (see Kerby, 93).

[14] Mensch, 214.

Mensch rightly says that the interpretative function (of intentionality) does not dissolve as a result of any split self. Incompatible unities do not threaten the teleological function; two or more senses of self continue to interpret objects of experience. The necessity of a thing called 'self' is apparent in a singular sense or a collection of senses of selves.[15] The case of split selves demonstrates a slide from 'senses of selfhood' to 'selves'. Experiential senses of selves and forms of selves (substances) are part of each another. The one and the many are not the same in this case- one substantial self, although it forms a part of every sense of self, is not the same as each of them.

Throughout his works Chisholm argues that defective intuitions about philosophical notions in general conflict with valid ones. Such is the case with selfhood as merely a sense of a thing over and against selves as things.[16] Is it fair to assume that we are talking about two kinds of things (selves and selfhood)? In the above I mentioned that to understand selves as things, involves an interpretative, story-telling method. Our capability goes as far as describing one and the same thing, as it really exists with experience and language. Hermeneutics is thus an inescapable part of every*thing* existing as something. The self as a substantial part of every interpretation, stands in some relation to each and every sense of self even though it is not identical to them.

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[15] Parallel or concurrent senses of self are similar to Brentano's description of a coral where countless animals live in one stem.

[16] See Chisholm's introduction in *Person and Object: A Metaphysical Study*, 1976.

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