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DOI
10.4324/9781315776460-33

Publication date
2017

Document Version
Author accepted manuscript

Published in
The Routledge Handbook of Franz Brentano and the Brentano School

Link to publication

Citation for published version (APA):
Betti, A. (2017). Twardowski and Brentano. In U. Kriegel (Ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Franz Brentano and the Brentano School* (pp. 305-311). (Routledge Handbooks in Philosophy). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315776460-33

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Download date:08 Nov 2026

Twardowski and Brentano

Arianna Betti

1. Introduction

A student of Franz Brentano's in 1886-1895, Kazimierz Twardowski (1866–1938) was born in Vienna to a Polish family. His Polish roots and Brentano's teaching determined Twardowski's plans and future career virtually in full. When in 1895 Twardowski took up a position in Lvov – now Lviv, Ukraine, then a Polish-speaking university city in the Habsburg empire – he 'felt a calling' to export Brentano's teaching onto Polish soil (Twardowski 1926: 26). Indeed, notwithstanding the value of Twardowski's original contribution as a philosopher (Betti and Raspa 2016: x), his most impressive achievement is uncontroversially considered to be his legacy as an organizer and educator in Poland, the establishment of the Lvov-Warsaw School (see CHAP. 38)

At present, Twardowski's ideas and Brentano's influence upon them are undergoing a reassessment in the light of new translations and editions of works by both (Brentano EL 80, Twardowski 1894/95a, Twardowski, 1894/95b, Twardowski 2014). This newly available material shows that despite the important and disruptive changes Twardowski brought to Brentano's doctrines, some of which were of substantial influence upon other Brentanians, such as Meinong (Findlay 1963) and Husserl (Cavallin 1997), his intellectual debts to Brentano remain enormous. Moreover, it has been argued, some of Twardowski's

main innovations, including the famous content/object distinction, were geared towards solving pressing difficulties arising from within Brentano's own framework (Betti 2013).

In this chapter I highlight Twardowski's intellectual debts to Brentano's ideas in terms of his (dis)agreements with the latter. An important thing to keep in mind is that whenever I refer, in this chapter, to 'Brentano' and 'Brentano's ideas', I am talking about Brentano and his ideas in 1880s-1890s – those ideas that Twardowski absorbed in his Vienna years.[1]

2. The agreements with Brentano

Throughout his life, Twardowski mostly shared Brentano's framework, that is, the range of problems, methods, fundamental assumptions, and conceptual parameters set by Brentano before 1904. Four general elements of this framework are briefly discussed in this section. There are additional general traits that Brentano and Twardowski have in common, such as realism, respect for a broadly construed Aristotelian metaphysics,[2] and a preference for scientifically oriented philosophy (clear, precise, rationalistic, anti-speculative in its method), over German idealism. However, these traits should rather be attributed to a shared intellectual *milieu*: they are often seen as characteristic marks of 19th-century Austrian, Catholic academic philosophy and opposed to 19th-century German Protestant, post-Kantian academic philosophy (Huemer and Landerer 2010: 92 n. 21; Smith 1994: 127-8; Tassone 2012: 39 and ff.). This opposition is arguably a little unsophisticated (see Smith *ibid.*) but it will serve me well enough here, for all I want to stress is that the three elements mentioned are by no means particularly distinctive of Brentano's own position, they are also common to that of e.g. Bernard Bolzano, another influential Austrian thinker upon Twardowski (Twardowski 1926: 24).

A fourth common trait to both Brentano and Twardowski is the correspondence theory of truth: trivially so, for practically no alternative was on the market at that time. That makes the circumstance that both philosophers defended correspondentism rather uninteresting. What is interesting however is that Twardowski, as a direct consequence of his tweaking of Brentano's intentionality theory, inaugurated a distinctively modern variant of correspondentism involving states of affairs (cf. TW4 in §3).

(Agr.i) (*Descriptive*) *psychology is the fundamental science*. As known, Brentano distinguishes between descriptive psychology ('psychognosy', or pure psychology) and genetic psychology; whereas the latter is a science based on experiments and inductive generalisations, the former is a pure *a priori*, apodictic science that is to serve as a basis for a *characteristica universalis* (Brentano 1895b: 34; Schaar 2015: 19; CHAP. 3). One way to understand Brentano's talk of *characteristica universalis* is the following. For Brentano, descriptive psychology plays a foundational role with respect to other sciences, including all philosophical ones (among which metaphysics and logic), and it does so by providing all these sciences with a stock of basic concepts – such as *mental phenomenon*, *intentionality*, *presentation*, *judgement*, *inner perception*, and so on – and fundamental relations among them (Mulligan and Smith 1985: §1.1). Twardowski followed Brentano closely in taking psychology to be foundational in this sense (for logic in particular, see Betti and Raspa 2016: ix), although as we shall see in later phases of his thought the way he saw the relationship between logic and psychology was to change.

(Agr.ii) *Descriptive analysis is the method of descriptive psychology*. Brentano holds that the way we come to the basic concepts of (descriptive) psychology – and thus to the ontology of basic, essential components of our mental life that these

concepts capture – is by descriptive analysis, a method resting on Brentano's technical concept of *inner perception*. 'Descriptive' here is opposed to 'normative', and refers to describing (mental) phenomena as they are actually given in consciousness; 'analysis' is strictly linked to the idea of such (mental) phenomena as wholes to be decomposed into parts. Brentano's descriptive analysis is a non-inductive mental process consisting in the introspective application of formal, part-whole principles and patterns of reasoning to one's own complex mental phenomena given in inner perception. The aim of descriptive analysis is to distil from a single albeit complex (i.e. not mereologically simple) mental phenomenon given in consciousness the (essential, universal, necessary) simple (i.e. basic, partless) building blocks of our mental life and their relations (see e.g. Mulligan and Smith *Ibid.*) by some kind of intuition or '*ideale Anschauung*' (Brentano 1874: xv, quoted in Bell 1990), and ultimately in order to come to general, universal truths such as 'every mental phenomenon is either a presentation or is based on a presentation' (cf. BR1 below). An example of this method is the application of mereological concepts such as, say, *two-sided separability* (*of parts in a whole*) to phenomena of seeing and hearing in Brentano 1982. Twardowski's adherence to the method of descriptive analysis can be seen from numerous examples of its applications in Twardowski's work (see e.g. Twardowski 1903).

(Agr.iii) *Descriptive psychology is primary with respect to genetic or experimental psychology*. Notwithstanding Brentano's appreciation of experimental psychology and laboratory work (Huemer and Landerer 2010: 85; Brentano 1895b: 36), descriptive psychology was for him primary (Brentano 1895b: 35), while experimental psychology was to be considered auxiliary, and in fact to be conducted by philosophers or trained descriptive psychologists (Huemer and Landerer 2010: 86; Brentano 1895b: 35). Twardowski's attitude tended to remain quite similar to Brentano's (cf. Rzepa 2015: 240-44; Schaar 2015: 22).

(Agr.iv) *Ethics has cognitive content based on emotional experience*. Twardowski followed Brentano in seeing moral judgements as having non-reducible cognitive content based on emotional experience (Brożek 2015: 163 n. 10; CHAP. 22). To be sure, there is a deviation as to the third kind of acts, those of love and hate, that are fundamental to ethics, insofar as Twardowski rejected Brentano's identification of volitions and emotions (though not accepting a *fourth* kind of mental phenomena instead of three, *pace* Schaar 2015: 90, siding here with von Ehrenfels 1887: 18-9, see Twardowski 1903/04: 32). For Twardowski, phenomena of love and hate are *parts* of acts of desire or volition (Twardowski 1903/04: 29).

3. The disagreements with Brentano

(Dis.i) *Non-existing objects*. The fundamentals of Brentano's intentionality-based psychology can be fixed as follows:

BR1: Every mental phenomenon has a content or object towards which it is directed (Brentano 1874: Ch. 1 §5, 124 and ff.)

BR2: Mental acts are presentations or have presentations at their basis (Brentano 1874: Book II, Ch. 1, §3, 112).

BR3: A judgement is not a combination of presentations, but a *sui generis* mental act which accepts or rejects an object (Hillebrand 1891: 26-7).

BR4: All judgements can be aptly expressed in the existential form 'A is' (positive judgment) or 'A is not' (negative judgment) (alternatively, 'A exists' or 'A does not exist'). In both cases, the judgment has a so-called 'immanent' object, given by the presentation, which is simply A. A judgement 'A exists' is true iff A exists (Brentano 1874: Book II, Ch. 7, §5, 49).

BR5: Not every mental act has an outer object corresponding to its immanent object (Rollinger 2009: 7; Brentano, EL 80/13016).

BR1 is famously ambiguous. In conjunction with BR2-BR5, its ambiguity was the source of animated discussions from 1888-9 onwards that opposed Brentano himself and orthodox Brentanians like Marty and Hillebrand, on the one side, and Kantians such as Sigwart and Windelband, on the other side (Betti 2013). Chrudzimski 2001 suggests on the basis of Brentano EL 80 that Brentano's intended disambiguation of BR1 was this:

BR1*: Every mental phenomenon has a content and an object, and is directed towards its content, not towards its object.

It can be shown that, if intentionality is interpreted as a genuine relation, namely as an entity (or even a quasi-entity) having objects as genuine relata, the conjunction of BR1*-BR4 raises serious difficulties.[3] A major difficulty is accounting for (true) negative existentials, i.e. judgements such as 'the aether does not exist'. Twardowski addressed the difficulty by rejecting BR5 and BR1*, and tweaking BR1 as follows:

TW1: Every mental phenomenon has a content and an object, and it is directed towards its object, not towards its content (Twardowski 1894, §1, 4; §2, 9).

The cluster TW1+BR2+BR3+BR4 can account for negative existentials by assuming non-existents, including contradictory objects, to be the *objects* that are rejected (through a *content*) in such judgements. Although Brentano was never tempted by this option, TW1 can be shown to be the only consistent alternative open to someone who wished to change as little as possible of Brentano's original framework.

(Dis. ii) *Form, and object of judgements*. Difficulties are also posed by true predications about non-existents such as 'the round square is round'. In 1894/95a, Twardowski accounted for such judgements by tweaking BR4 as follows (Betti and Raspa 2016: xxxi):

TW4: All judgements can be aptly expressed either in the existential form 'A is' or in the relational form 'A has b' (for positive judgments; 'A is not'/'A does not have b' for negative judgements). The object of an existential judgment is (a simple or complex) A, and such judgements are true iff A exists; the object of a relational judgement is the relationship (*Verhältnis*) of having (quality) b by A, and such judgements are true iff the relationship in question subsists.

Despite the fact that Twardowski sometimes presents TW4 as being fundamentally in the spirit of BR4, Twardowski's relationships are special objects that have been straightforwardly identified with a state of affairs (Betti and Raspa 2016), and that subsist even though their objects may all be non-existing (such as the having roundness by a round square). Brentano would never have accepted such objects (see CHAP. 13), nor would he have accepted two kinds of being (existing/subsisting).

(Dis. iii) Brentano took truth-bearers to be judgement-*types*, and truth to be time-dependent (Brentano 1930 Ch.1). By contrast, Twardowski took truth-bearers to be judgement-*tokens* and truth to be absolute (Betti 2006b: 378-9, especially n. 20).

To these points of divergence, the following should also be added. While Twardowski's ideas seem to have been rather stable on Agr. iii (see §1), those on

Agr. i-ii underwent development. In 1894, Twardowski agrees with Brentano in describing logic as dependent on psychology and classified as a *practical* doctrine or theory (*Lehre*), not as a science (Twardowski 1894-95a: 12; cf. Brentano EL 80: 12.960[12], 12.962[1]); in 1899, he describes logic – like ethics or aesthetics – as a *theoretical-practical* science (*nauka*) (Twardowski 1899, sh. 1). In a text from 1908, however, Twardowski classifies logic as the '*theoretical* study of the veracity of judgements' (Twardowski 1908: 134, my emphasis), and he deems the view that logic is based on psychology ('psychologism') 'untenable' (Twardowski 1908: 134). Along this line, in 1910 Twardowski clarifies that *both* logic and psychology are the basic branches of philosophy, representing two methods of philosophy, a priori and *empirical* (Twardowski, 1910a: 55; see also Twardowski 1910b: 64). Finally, in 1911, Twardowski publishes his new theory of actions and products, which is said to have 'already contributed enormously to liberating logic from psychological accretions' (Twardowski 1911: 132). Twardowski defends his new 'anti-psychologistic' position with the following arguments: (A) logic emerged and developed independently from psychology (Twardowski 1908: 134); (B) the laws of psychology are a posteriori generalizations of experiential data and thus are only probable, whereas the laws of logic, like those of mathematics, are *a priori* and certain (Twardowski 1908: 135); (C) psychology and logic have different objects of inquiry, namely (real) mental functions and (abstract) products of thinking insofar as they are true or false (similarly, physiology studies sweating while chemistry studies sweat, Twardowski 1908: 135). While (C) anticipated Twardowski 1911, (B) has debts to both Łukasiewicz and the first volume of Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen* (cf. Betti 2006a, Twardowski 1926: 31).

4. Conclusion

Much of Twardowski's contribution is still in manuscript form; something similar can be said of Brentano. What I have reported so far suggests that new editions

and translations are bound to further our understanding of the ideas of both philosophers, and our knowledge of a crucial period of development of logic and psychology in their relationship with philosophy. Such advances will likely reveal a more original and interesting thinker in Twardowski than ever suspected; however, it is no less likely that such undetarkings will confirm Twardowski to be a rather loyal Brentanian, despite any deviation from the thought of the master we might happen to find.

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[1] On this period of Twardowski's life, see Brożek 2012. A more extensive introduction to Twardowski's thought is Betti 2016.

[2] As to metaphysics – long-standing methodological use of mereological conceptualizations since antiquity aside – one typical theme at the time was the immortality of the soul, on which both lectured. Both Brentano and Twardowski deny that the soul is just a sum of mental phenomena (see CHAP. 14). Thus, Twardowski writes: "I am, I exist, not as a group of mental phenomena, but as a subject from which those phenomena arise" (Twardowski 1895: 202 n. 1); compare: "Soul refers to the substantial bearer of presentations (*Vorstellungen*), only perceivable through inner perception" (Brentano 1874: 4).

[3] For most of (Dis. i) I follow Betti 2013.