

LINGUAGEM E COGNIÇÃO EM BRENTANO¹

Language and Cognition in Brentano

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RESUMO

O principal objetivo do artigo é oferecer orientação sobre a questão do papel que a linguagem desempenha na teoria da cognição e da intencionalidade no pensamento de Franz Brentano. Os principais intérpretes e estudiosos de Brentano presumiram que a linguagem não desempenhava nenhum papel fundamental, pois para ele a fala é apenas um sinal do pensamento. No entanto, Brentano sempre mostra em seu trabalho um foco na análise de termos e conceitos usados na linguagem. Além disso, em suas palestras sobre lógica, uma parte importante é dedicada à teoria dos nomes de Stuart Mill. Para modificar, portanto, a ideia de que a linguagem não desempenha nenhum papel na cognição na filosofia de Brentano, este trabalho tentará mostrar que a relação entre nomear, significar e pensar é, para Brentano, uma relação contínua, pois os três termos estão sempre conectados. O conceito central é o da *apresentação simbólica* e seu papel na cognição empírica. O artigo reconstrói parcialmente a questão do conhecimento simbólico e estabelece a diferença entre a teoria do conteúdo da apresentação de Brentano e a de Twardowski.

Palavras-chave: Franz Brentano. Intencionalidade. Apresentação Simbólica. Referência.

ABSTRACT

The main goal of this work is to offer a fresh view on the role of language in the theory of cognition and intentionality in Franz Brentano's philosophy. Brentano's major interpreters and scholars have assumed that language plays no fundamental role since for Brentano speech is only a sign of thought. However, Brentano always demonstrates in his work a focus on the analysis of the terms and concepts employed in language. In his lectures on logic, moreover, an important part is devoted to Stuart Mill's theory of names. In order to modify, therefore, the idea that language plays no significant role in Brentano's philosophy, the present work attempts to show that the relation between naming, signifying and thinking is, for Brentano, a continuous relation in that the three terms are always connected. Symbolic presentation and its role in empirical knowledge is the central concept of this contribution that partially reconstructs the issue of symbolic knowledge in Brentano and

¹ <https://doi.org/10.51359/2357-9986.2023.259933>

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establishes the difference between Brentano's and Twardowski's content theory of presentation.

Key-words: Franz Brentano. Intentionality. Semantic Reference. Symbolic Presentation.

INTRODUCTION

For Brentano, the relationship between language, thought, and reality seems to be of little novelty, at least as far as the role of language is concerned. Language seems to be a mere means for thought to access reality. In fact, the role of language in his philosophy has never aroused much interest among his interpreters. As far as I know, only a few articles have been published on the subject. The first, by Franziska Mayer-Hillebrand, is a short study from 1955, which is correct in itself, but not original. The second contribution, devoted to language in relation to moral philosophy, is D. B. Terrell's dissertation from 1956, which is unfortunately difficult to access. The first real studies about the role of language in Brentano's philosophy are therefore rather late, notably in the articles of J.T.J. Szrednicki (SRZEDNICKI, 1966) and Rudolf Haller (HALLER, 1979), in the work of Liliana Albertazzi (ALBERTAZZI, 1989; 1990) and, more recently, in the Brentano School (DEWALQUE et al., 2021). The most comprehensive contribution is Taieb's (TAIEB, 2020). Apart from these cases, most interpreters believe that by linking thought and reality through intentional reference, Brentano would have wanted to neutralize the cognitive role of language and meaning in favor of psychology. Mental reference is the groundbreaking philosophical concept in Brentano's philosophy, semantic reference plays no important role. Thus, it is a common opinion that language does not play a significant role in Brentano's philosophy of mind.

My main aim is to suggest a different picture. There are two main points to which Brentano refers for his ideas on language: John Stuart Mill's theory of names and Aristotle's theory of meaning (cf. *De Interpretatione* 16 a 3-8). Mill's importance is directly evidenced by Brentano's course on logic, while the presence of Aristotle's ideas on language is more indirect, but sufficiently absorbed in most of his work. There is also another theory

that develops in his later reflections, contained in the *Theory of Categories* (cf. BRENTANO, 1933), which had already had a timid beginning in his first work *On the Multiple Sense of Being in Aristotle* (cf. BRENTANO, 1862): a theory of definition and essence linked to the name, where one can discern an obvious reminiscence of *Metaphysics* Book Z linked to the idea of science exposed in the *Second Analytics*, which Brentano takes up to modify the doctrine of substance and relation. This last theory shows how Brentano relates concerns about the representational role of language to the problem of individuation. I shall limit myself in the present paper to analyzing only the empirical layer of meaning in Brentano, leaving for other work the analysis of the metaphysical layer.

2. BRENTANO AND MILL

Brentano's theory of names, although derived from the theory of the British philosopher John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), is not a genuine theory of language, but rather a theory of concepts, which are the structural elements of his theory of meaning and his intentional theory of mental acts. On the one hand, Stuart Mill's analysis leads to a theory of predication as a synthesis of two elements, thus identifying the judgment (*proposition*) through the attribution of a predicate to a subject. For Brentano, on the other hand, meaning is clarified by a theory of substance and accident. Brentano's resumption of the Aristotelian theory of language addresses the problem of the univocity of nouns as a necessary condition for the unity of meaning and, consequently, for the unity of the proposition, which leads him to link meaning to ontology, in the sense that both the meaning of a name and the mental presentation are based on our perception of what actually exists as an individual.

There is a close relationship between words, things, and presentations. First, it is not things that are replicas of our thoughts, but our thoughts that are formed from things, just as words are formed from thoughts. Second, in contrast to Aristotle and Stuart Mill, Brentano interprets judgment as a thetical rather than a synthetic act, so that perception is no longer modeled in the form of categorical predication. For Brentano, like Hume and Kant,

existence is not a predicate. The consequence of his reform of the theory of judgment is not simply a matter of a psychological reading of the predicative act. Brentano's reform of logic has consequences for epistemology, for the correspondence between thought and the world, and for the method of describing the world. The thetical theory of judgement relates to the concept of essence and to the theory of existence; it relates to the concept of essence and to the question of « knowledge by definition », which is, according to Aristotle, always true (cf. *Metaph.* Θ 10). There is thus a stratification of meaning, we can carefully distinguish between the two levels of semantic reference without making the mistake of confusing or mixing them. I shall call the first « empirical » and the second « metaphysical ». Both are present in Brentano's work, even if the empirical layer seems to be more visible in the early reflections of the Viennese years. In his later years, it is replaced by the metaphysical layer, which is much closer to late Brentano's philosophical interest, as he once again shows himself to be an original interpreter of Aristotle's theory of substance.

3. BRENTANO, MILL, AND EMPIRICAL LAYER OF MEANING

Is Brentano's theory of reference a descriptivist theory? To answer this question we need to understand how Brentano introduces the problem of the meaning of names and propositions (cf. BRENTANO, EL 80; EL 81). Brentano accepts Mill's classic distinction between denotation and connotation: while names denote objects, and thus refer to things in the world, they can also connote specific properties of those objects (MILL, 1843, p.31). Identifying the connotation of a word or phrase means knowing the conditions necessary to determine whether a given object satisfies a given denotation. That is, connotation determines the conditions for denoting an object. Denotation determines the relation between language and reality, while connotation determines the relation between language and thought (considering the properties and attributes of an object, also all the presentations that we can associate or ascribe to such an object). The intentional relation, on the other hand, marks the relation between mind and reality. Thus, connotation, denotation, and intentionality are interrelated; mental reference

is not a detached act of our experience, although the latter plays a primary role in the foundation of psychology as a science. The claim that these three basic elements of our experience are interconnected is demonstrated by the fact that, in his lectures on logic in the 1970s, Brentano begins his analysis with a *Sprachkritik*, following Stuart Mill (and also Aristotle). Mill's theory of names is undoubtedly one of Brentano's most direct sources of inspiration, as is Arnauld's and Nicole's *Logique ou l'Art de penser* (1662) and Locke's theory of names³. In his *A System of Logic*, denotation has the same function as reference (*Bedeutung*) in Frege's philosophy of language, although Mill does not recognize connotation for the singular terms. According to Mill, a singular term, i.e. a proper name, is pure denotation. Connotation, on the other hand, is something very similar to Frege's *Sinn*, which fixes the reference to the object, and unlike Mill, proper names have connotation in Frege's philosophy. When Russell developed his theory of definite descriptions, he remembered Mill's distinction between connotation and denotation and its similarity to Frege's theory, with a substantive difference between Millian denotation and Russellian reference concerning a special relation between a singular term and atomic facts. But Brentano's logic is not simply a copy or commentary of Mill's book. If language expresses thoughts because it is a sign of human thought, then thoughts are not fully resolved in language⁴.

It is impossible to replace the analysis of linguistic expressions with the analysis of mental processes. Language is made up of parts, and not all parts designate thoughts. Sometimes certain sounds must be combined with other sounds to have meaning. Names and sentences are the categorematic or autosemantic parts of an utterance, while the syncategorematic or sinsemantic parts are logical connectives, syllables, particles, oblique cases, deictics, and so on. The categorematic parts *name objects by means of concepts*. The names indicate that the concepts are thoughts and evoke them for the

³ Locke is the other main source of Brentano's empiricism in language. Brentano gave lectures on Locke's theory of names (Cf. BRENTANO 1987, p. 28-41). See also as general sources for Brentano's view on Locke and empiricism (SCHWEGLER, 1848, pp. 125-136); (UEBERWEG, 1863, p. 77-89).

⁴ "After all, language is, in its essential meaning, the sign of thought" (*Die Sprache ist ja in ihrer wesentlichen Bedeutung das Zeichen des Denkens*) (BRENTANO, EL 80; Cf. also BRENTANO, 1965).

listener. If the function of a name is to evoke or *present* a concept, it can be said that « to be thought of » means to *be present in the mind*. Consequently, grammatical form alone cannot guarantee logical consistency; a word is often a name from a grammatical point of view, but not from a logical point of view, because it does not connote a concept. Logical names are the complete expression of a presentation (*Vorstellung*), whereas grammatical nouns are empty and, as we would say, insaturated elements of language. According to Brentano, language completes mental acts, therefore thoughts without expression in language are incomplete acts.

Brentano calls this relationship designation of *signification*. When a concept is presented by a name and has a meaning, it is explained. A concept is thus a name with a meaning, and the logical discourse is then determined by the relations between the meanings. The idea expressed is quite simple: a name has a double effect: it *refers* [*bezeichnet*] to a thing and it causes a presentation to the mind. However, despite the simplicity of the content, two points should be noted:

- (1) a name directly *designates* the thing and not the idea of the thing and that
- (2) a name causes a presentation

The first point is not as predictable as it seems, considering that a dogma of classical empiricism was the relation between names and ideas as a primary reference relation. One can also note that, in this case, Brentano is much closer to Thomas Reid's empiricism than to Hume's or Locke's, according to which words are simply signs of ideas, the only true objects of the mind, which have no relation of resemblance or formal similarity to things. On the other hand, according to Reid, a sign does not have to represent anything to the thinker, just as perception has nothing to do with images of things, but with objects in the external world, according to Reid's direct theory of perception (BOCCACCINI, 2021).

Brentano's position on this point is much more complex: one should turn attention to his lessons on logic, where there is a clear distinction

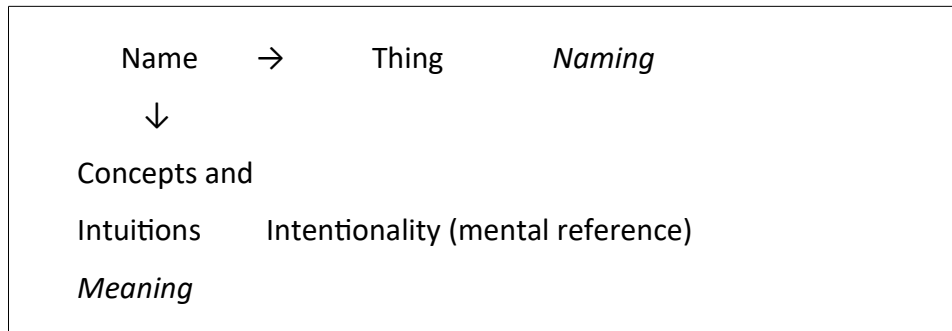
between speaking and thinking, and where we can rediscover a more precise theory of signification and better understand the scope of his analysis.

The problem of naming a name recalls a parallel relationship between a semiotic context and a semantic context of reference, i.e. two lines, one passing through the field of the sign and the other through the field of signification. Hobbes' theory of the signs and Mill's theory of names are both cited by Brentano. In his *System of Logic*, Mill argues against Hobbes and his idea of logic as calculus, because Hobbes understood a name as a mark, i.e., a sign of thought. In the *System*, however, Mill wonders whether names are, properly speaking, the names of things or the names of the ideas we have of things. The question is obviously rhetorical, since for Mill names designate objects, even though language speaks of them through our sensations. When I use a name, Mill asks himself, to express a belief, it is the belief in the thing, and not the belief in my idea of the thing, that I want to speak of. So, does a name refer to things or to ideas?

Brentano's strategy for answering this question is to distinguish three functions of the name: (1) a name has a relation to the act ; (2) has a relation to the content of the presentation, and (3) has a relation to the object presented to the mind. In relation to the first function, the name *announces* something; in relation to the second, the name *signifies* something; and in relation to the third, the name *names* the object (cf. BRENTANO, 1956, § 18). Both are correct, Brentano notes, because Hobbes speaks of what the name signifies, while Mill speaks of what it names (BRENTANO, 1956, §18). Note that Brentano's distinction between the act of naming and the act of signifying marks the difference between concept and object. A conceptual relation is an act of signification; a concept is, therefore, something that has a meaning [*Bedeutung*] (cf. BRENTANO, 1956, p. 229)⁵. On the other hand, the designation of an object is an act of naming. Meaning and naming are two simple modes of reference, while intentional reference seems to be a relation between a concept and a thing. Here there is a stratification of phenomenal experience and at the same time a unity and multiplicity of levels.

⁵ We have already established in what sense it is allowed to call the meaning of a name its concept » [Wir haben bereits festgelegt, in welchem Sinne es erlaubt ist, die Bedeutung eines Namens seinen Begriff zu nennen]. (My translation)

The relationship between meaning, naming, and mental reference to an object is a complex structure.



The theme of stratification is evident in paragraphs 1-16 of the *Logic*. Brentano defines logic as « the art of judgment or the art of knowledge (epistemology) » (*Kunst des Urteilens oder Kunst der Erkenntnis*) (BRENTANO, EL80). Names, in general, express presentations, name objects, and signify concepts. Presentation and judgment are described by psychology, concept and proposition by logic, name and statement by grammar, and the different forms of object by ontology. One can say that one is the complete *subject matter* of the intentional field, while the various relations between them, that is, the relations between presentation and concept, concept and object, and presentation and object, are the *form*. For this reason, in later years, Brentano will also distinguish presentation from the point of view of subject matter: there are conceptual and intuitive presentations.

Brentano's analysis in his course on logic is entirely formal, and can only be so, since the difference between a concept and a presentation is given only by the form. The symbolic processes (i.e., only by means of signs) that involve the name-concept relation and the symbolic presentation are part of Brentano's work on the origins of rationalism. Leibniz distinguishes between « symbolic and intuitive ideas » in *Meditationes de cognitione, veritate et ideis* (1684). Symbolic ideas are blind, because the symbols act as representatives of something (x). They are only signs for calculation. This theme has been further developed by Husserl in the second part of his book *Philosophy of Arithmetic*, where he quotes Brentano on proper presentations and on improper or symbolic presentations. The struc-

tured relationship between objects, presentations, and words is also present in the Brentano school.

4. BRENTANO AND TWARDOWSKI ON MEANING AND CONTENT

The question of the relation between a name and a thing is the semantic counterpart of the psychological relation between content and object. Twardowski uses the examples of a definite description, as well as Brentano does in his lecture on logic, when he introduces the notion of switching-presentations (*Wechselvorstellungen*) in order to prove the distinction between content and object (TWARDOWSKI, 1893, p. 84).

An example of switching-presentations given by Twardowski is two different presentations of Salzburg, « the city situated on the site of the Roman city of Juvavum » and « the birthplace of Mozart ». Salzburg is the object of both, but the content presented is different. In fact, as Twardowski himself points out, he makes use of Benno Kerry's (1858-1889) notion of content (BETTI, 2006).

Kerry was Frege's opponent and also a friend of Alois Höfler, who played a key role in the writing of Meinong's *Logic* (HÖFLER, 1890). Frege developed his definition of concept and the clear separation between concept and object in response to Kerry's criticism of *Die Grundlagen der Arithmetik* (1884). It is noteworthy that Twardowski mentions Kerry and identifies his use of content with Kerry's notion of concept in his series of eight articles entitled *Über Anschauung und ihre psychische Verarbeitung* (KERRY, 1885-1891). But what is the relationship between content and object? According to Twardowski, the object is presented by means of a content that corresponding to it, i.e., the content is an intermediary between the act and the object of presentation. To define the object (TWARDOWSKI, 1893, §7), Twardowski uses the expression « that which is presented by means of a presentation », and to understand what an object is, he takes the notion of object in general (and consequently of presentation in general). At this point he turns to Kant, not to Brentano, and introduces the concept of the object in general (*Gegenstand überhaupt*) « as the highest concept by

which transcendental philosophy gets its origin » (TWARDOWSKI, 1893, §7). This passage is quite significant, first because Twardowski places a Kantian element at the center of a crucial distinction for Brentano's theory of intentional reference, and second because he defines an object in terms of a presentation. If an object is everything that can be presented to the mind, then everything can be an object of presentation. But this was not the idea of Brentano, who never claimed that everything can be an object of thought. Moreover, I argue that the consequence of this interpretation and the recourse to ontological generality in the Kantian tradition radically alters the notion of *Vorstellung*, causing a semantic shift, from a concept belonging to the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition to a concept belonging to the modern tradition, such as idea or representation. Indeed, one cannot have a presentation of an object in general, while one can have a representation of an *x* as an object in general.

Twardowski's semantic shift paves the way for Meinong's object theory. But what must interest us here is that, as far as the theory of signification is concerned, it is derived from this notion of content. Twardowski devoted §3 to the relation between names and presentations (names and ideas in the Lockean sense). For Twardowski, content is simply the meaning of a name. In §4, where he quotes and corrects Drobisch on this point, he defends the idea that « the name signifies the concept (the content of a representation) » and, thanks to the concept, one can name the corresponding object, according to a scheme of the type :

Name -----> Meaning = Concept > Object

This model of meaning is an indirect reference model, and it can also be called « descriptivism ». But Twardowski's scheme is only partly modeled on Mill's theory of names, although he cites it. According to Twardowski, names have three functions: (1) to make known an act of presentation; (2) to recall a content; (3) to designate an object. This tripartition is only partially derived from Brentano's lectures on logic. In fact, Brentano himself adopts Mill's theory of names. According to Mill, to use a proper name is to identify the object it names by a direct mental association be-

tween the name and the object. Saul Kripke also drew on Mill's theory of names on the question of direct reference, to criticize the Fregean dogma of the priority of sense as interpreted by Russell. As we know, for Kripke proper names are cases of pure reference. Leaving Kripke aside, however, the issue remains important, since Brentano, in his logic, takes up Mill's theory of names, to which Twardowski inadequately cites. Brentano, like Twardowski, claimed that categorical parts name objects by means of concepts, but not in the way Twardowski interprets this relation. The point is to understand what a name is. For Brentano, a name is what completes a presentation. Names designate or signify concepts, and language completes the act of thinking. Therefore, a thought that is not expressed by language is an incomplete act. Brentano calls this relation the designation of signification (*Bedeutung*). The difference with Twardowski's scheme of the three functions of the name is remarkable. For Brentano, concepts are not senses, but *something that has* a meaning, just as names are something that has a designation. Unlike Twardowski, here naming (*nennen*) and meaning (*bedeuten*) are two separate acts. The object is not identified by the concept or mental content. Brentano therefore reconciles Mill and Hobbes by defending both, since they assert different things. As we have seen, for Brentano names name things and signify ideas, while for Twardowski, names name things by means of concepts.

But if not from Brentano, where did Twardowski get this theory?

Twardowski thinks that the propositions « the founder of ethics » and « a son who offended his father » are names. A definite name and an indefinite name. But we do not find these examples in Brentano. In fact, he gets the idea from Anton Marty (1847-1914), from whom he derives these examples. A name that defines the object can complete the expression. This idea is very close to Frege's conception of sense and reference, if we think of an argument as what completes a function. Marty's example is the name Aristotle, « master of Alexander the Great » and « founder of the Peripatetic School ». These sentences present what Marty calls *Unvollständigkeit*, incompleteness. Marty's theory is anti-Kripkean, or anti-Millian. He argues that nouns name objects « *mediantibus conceptibus* », where concepts are this kind of incomplete expression of a thought (cf. MARTY, 1908). In his

1896 review of *Content and Object*, Husserl criticizes Twardowski on this very point, and thus implicitly also criticizes Marty's idea of content. Husserl takes up the three functions of the name from paragraph 3 of *Content and Object*:

1. To recognize that the speaker is presenting something;
2. The act gives rise to a specific psychological *content* which constitutes its meaning.
3. By signification, one names an object.

According to Husserl, Twardowski's mistake was to identify the signifier of a name with the content of its corresponding presentation. Husserl's observation can be summarized as follows: the meaning of two names can be the same, but the content cannot. The crux of Husserl's critique is that Twardowski fails to distinguish between content and meaning, identifying meaning with the description of the object (as in "the master of Alexander"). According to Husserl, content is something observable, while meaning cannot be. It is ideal. Therefore, it can never be expressed or exemplified by means of a name or any other statement. Content is an individual mental act, while meaning is neither real nor individual. Moreover, the content of a name may vary, but the meaning never varies. In fact, the meaning of the name Aristotle is not what each of us can associate with that name, but something fixed. The content may be a definite description, like "the master of Alexander", or what each of us thinks of when we hear the name Aristotle, a certain image, a certain aspect of Aristotle. But this is not the meaning of Aristotle. His meaning exists, but it does not have a fixed form in a statement, according to what would later become the theory of the ideality of meaning. From this point of view, his notion of meaning as ideality is very close to Russell's notion of *proposition*, Frege's notion of *Sinn*, and Bolzano's notion of *proposition in itself*. They are all non-empirical objects. I think that in this sense content as an ideal meaning here takes on a different use from the Brentanian one we are examining here. However, in his in-

terpretation of Brentano, Husserl is definitely responsible for the false picture he gives us, namely a philosophy of the internal object in which the distinction between content and object remains blurred. In fact, Husserl claims that content is actually present in a presentation, while ideal meaning is only functionally present. For Husserl, content is a psychological term that condemns Twardowski's intentionalism identifying it as a form of psychologism. Meaning is not a fraction or part of a presentation, it is a *function* of a presentation. Thus, according to Husserl, one should distinguish, within presentation: real psychological content, which is distinguished by act and content (*Inhalt*); and ideal logical content (*Gehalt*), which is distinguished by meaning and object. What should interest us here is the fact that Husserl, in an attempt to correct Twardowski, casts a shadow over Brentano by presenting descriptive psychology as psychological phenomenology, contrasting Brentano's reliance on intuition with the need for an a priori formal legality capable of giving form to logical *Gehalt*, that is, to what does not yet have a form but *must* have one. It is interesting to note that for Husserl meaning is not something conceptual, but something ideal. It exists, but it does not have a definite form. To understand this object, however, one needs a non-empirical consciousness that takes phenomenology beyond the cautious limits of Brentano's empirical consciousness. But as far as language is concerned, we return to the question of symbolic presentations, that is, those presentations that do not and cannot have an intuitive (real) content based on experience. The content of such presentations is what links the Kantian school to the early phenomenological tradition and the Brentano school.

5. INTUITION AND SYMBOLIC PRESENTATION

In the case of symbolic presentations, a concept is simply a part of a judgment, and Brentano takes Kant's theory of concepts as his model. It would be better to say that he takes from Kant what Kant takes from Locke and Leibniz. It is difficult to reconstruct this passage, but the opposition between intuition and concept can be translated by the opposition between intuitive knowledge and symbolic knowledge, which enters German philosophy through Leibniz, probably by a theological vocabulary (REIS-

NER, 1932). As we know, much of the problem of the nature of ideas and the transition from Lockean empiricism to German rationalism and criticism centers on the nature of mathematical knowledge. The nature of algebra and arithmetic is a form of symbolic knowledge, as Leibniz points out (LEIBNIZ, 1684), and it is what Wolff directly calls symbolic knowledge (*cognitio symbolica*) (WOLFF, 1732). Baumgartner's formulation of symbolic knowledge is noteworthy: one can have symbolic knowledge "when sign and designated object are connected in understanding and when the perception of the sign is greater than that of the designated object" (« *wenn Zeichen und Bezeichnetes im Begreifen verbunden werden und wenn die Perzeption des Zeichens grösser ist als die des Bezeichneten* »); while intuitive knowledge is defined differently: when the representation of the designated object is greater than that of the sign (« *wenn die Repräsentation des Bezeichneten grösser ist als die des Zeichens* ») (BAUMGARTEN, 1739, § 620).

According to Baumgarten, the German Aristotle, as Herder calls him, metaphysics is the science of the first principles of human science, and these first principles of knowledge include the most abstract concepts, but they do not include concepts of the senses. Therefore, they are, say, non-sensory concepts. Such concepts are symbolic presentations and are the basis of mathematical and theological knowledge. The Leibnizian tradition makes no distinction between word and symbol, and intuition is opposed to symbol, whereas for Kant the relationship between intuition and symbol is different. Indeed, in his lectures on *Anthropology*, he states that symbolic knowledge is not to be opposed to intuitive knowledge, but to discursive knowledge (« *Das symbolische Erkenntnis ist also nicht der intuitiven (durch sinnliche Entehung) sondern der intellektuellen (durch Begriffe) entgegengesetzt* ») (KANT, 2006). That is why symbols are only a means of the understanding to give meaning to the concept by presenting it with an object, but a symbol is only an indirect means, which uses *analogy* with certain intuitions to which the concept can be applied.

By contrasting symbolic knowledge with discursive knowledge, Kant is asserting that the symbolic is outside of judgment, that it is a lower form of thinking that almost does not belong to knowledge. There is a pas-

sage in the *Anthropology* that echoes a famous passage in the *Critique of Judgment* (§59, *On Beauty as a Symbol of Morality*), where Kant also states: «The new logicians admit a use of the word symbolic which is absurd and inaccurate when contrasted with the intuitive mode of representation; symbolic representation is really only a mode of intuitive representation » (KANT, 2000). For Kant, intuition is what we get from the form of things. According to Kant, the forms of things (intuitions), in so far as they serve only as means for representation by concept, are symbols. The knowledge that occurs through them is called *symbolic* or figurative (*speciosa*). Therefore, according to Kant, symbols have a sensitive and immediate character, they are a form of indirect intuition. The symbolic is something that refers to something else, as if in the symbolic form there were a kind of double intuition or double structure of intuition. The intuitions that fill an empirical concept are examples; the schemata are processes that provide the concept with its image (PHILONENKO, 2001, p. 98; and cf. GARRONI, 1968; 1976). The symbol, then, serves to represent a concept of reason for which no intuition (in the sense of a sensible image) can be considered adequate. Obviously, Kant's notion of the symbol has a conceptual density unknown to Leibnizian scholasticism, which understood the symbol in the sense of a sign or, like Hobbes, simple sign of calculus. But for Kant, the question of symbolic knowledge concerns what he calls the hypotyposis of a concept, that is, the representation of a concept by intuition⁶.

If we dwell on the symbolic in our analysis of the relation between intuitions and concepts, it is because the question is not far removed from what Husserl analyzes at the beginning of his *Logical Investigations*, when in the *First Investigation* he addresses the distinction between sign and signification: for the former, there is no relation to fulfillment, while for the latter, according to Husserl, the latter explains the structure of intuitive versus categorical fulfillment in the *Sixth Investigation*. Categorical fulfillment is the conceptual core and at the same time the main philosophical issue of the *Logical Investigations*, whose challenge is to show the relation between sensibility and intellect. He had already attempted to demonstrate this relation-

⁶ It is impossible to summarize here the controversial question of symbolic knowledge and Kant's notion of symbol. See (FERRARIN, 1995).

ship in his first work dedicated to Brentano, *Philosophy of Arithmetic* (1896) (HUSSERL, 2003). What Husserl calls symbolic presentations, Brentano had called improper presentation in his lectures on logic⁷. An improper presentation is a presentation by signs. The content of this presentation is indirect, i.e., not intuitive. According to Brentano, a symbolic presentation is not simply a conceptual presentation, because a given object can be symbolized as well as an object of thought. According to Brentano « we represent in an improper sense that of which we have no precise corresponding presentation, and often that of which we can have no representation at all » (BRENTANO, 1956, p. 244). For example, our presentation of God by analogy is an improper presentation, that attempts to present the infinite by the finite. Brentano explains that with the word « God » we designate what our analogies intend. But what God *is* escapes our presentation. We do not really know what the word God means, and we do not understand the ultimate meaning of this name. Thus, Brentano conceived the idea of God as necessary, that is, its negation would be immediately absurd. But we readily say « God exists », without, however, immediately understanding the truth of this proposition. A blind man can speak of color in a similar way. And this happens even when we name objects whose individual characteristics we can well understand, but which we can no longer present because of their complexity. Imaginary numbers like $\sqrt{-2}$, for example. Unlike Husserl, who seeks a fulfillment for the concept of this object, Brentano believes that improper presentations are only *abstract names*, i.e., names that *are not meaningful and are subsistent per se*. Some of his writings from 1908 are entitled *Ontologische Frage* (BRENTANO, 1933, p.32 ; pp. 43-48 ; pp. 48-58). However, this ontological problem, or question about entities, is precisely more than just a theory that takes its metaphysical path to its end. It concerns the representability of these concepts and our ability to be able to talk about them, that is, how we, as thinking beings, we think, speak and act when we refer to general or individual symbolic objects. In other words, how we present these objects to consciousness.

⁷ (Cf. HUSSERL, 2003, ch. 11, n.1) The courses on improper presentations played a significant role in the Brentano School, see also (MEINONG, 1882, pp. 86-88).

In order to fully understand the role played by the doctrine of intentional reference, it is necessary to bear in mind that the problem of symbolic presentation reveals two fundamental structures of entities: for example, an organism, understood as the individual taken apart from the matter of form, and an organism as a whole, which allows to be separate into parts. In order to speak correctly about an entity, one must follow a linguistic analysis of different concepts, in which one assumes an implicit metaphysics. A metaphysical theory should be consistent with the following explanation of language: what is when the expression « being » is used in the strict sense in referring to a thing, for example, a body, a mind, or a three-dimensional topoid. A part of a body or a topoid should also be called a thing. So a number that includes a set of things must be called a thing. But it would be misleading to think that the two parts of a thing that we add together form a third thing. Things that are added together must have no parts in common. However, the expression « what is » is used in different senses: for a concrete, we have an abstract, being; e.g., for a body, there is corporeality; for spirits, there is spirituality; for the lover, there is love; for the knower, there is knowledge; for form, there is formality. What do these *abstractions* denote? Obviously, they do not denote the same thing as a concrete thing. That would be an unnecessary duplication of the name. The relationship between *concrete* and *abstract* can be characterized as follows: we say, for example, we say « of that which is formed, that which is formed by virtue of its form ». Similarly, one can say that roundness is in that which is round and that corporeality is in a body. In this sense, Aristotle posits universals in individuals. This suggests that the *concretum* is related to the *abstractum*. Similarly, then, the part is related to the whole. In fact, the *abstractum* can be seen as the formal part of the *concretum*: it is thus what is denoted by the term *concretum* insofar as it contains an *abstractum* as a part. If *abstracta* are a part of the *concretum*, there would be no objection to including *abstracta* among the things that are in the proper sense. But abstract terms do not designate real parts. A division of the *concretum* into two parts, one of which is an *abstractum*, is clearly impossible. Such a division is pure fiction. *Abstracta* cannot exist by themselves, nor can they be thought by themselves. It is like saying that a thing has as many parts as the number of

predicates that apply to it. Using abstractions in this way, one can say that a thing is round because roundness is included in its parts, just as we say that an animal is hairy because its fur is included in its parts. But while an animal's fur is a real thing that can be separated from the animal and exists both in reality and in thought, the opposite is not true of what is called roundness, which cannot exist as a separate thing in reality but only in thought. According to Brentano, fictions of this kind are usually harmless, they can be useful, as when mathematicians treat the circle as a regular polygon with an infinite number of sides, or when they assume that parallel straight lines meet at infinity. If these fictions were useless, they would not be in use. But what can be expressed by an abstract term can always be expressed by a concrete term without resorting to fictions. The use of language allows us to say not only that there is something round, but even that there is such a thing as roundness. But we should bear in mind that the « exists » of the second statement is used in a broad sense, and that the only thing that can properly be so is the thing that is round.

CONCLUSION

In concluding the present analysis of Brentano's theory of language and cognition, it can be noted that several questions can be asked about two modes of cognition: intuitive and conceptual presentations. I have emphasized the importance of distinguishing and articulating them for Brentano's theory of intentionality. Starting from Brentano's logic, I suggested that symbolic presentation plays a central role in the birth of phenomenology. I also noted the difference between intuition and concept in terms of the nature of presentation. Brentano's conception of presentation as structured experience allows presentation to refer by symbol to something that is absent or non-existent. I explained how it is possible for a name to be both simple and structured: a simple name like « dog » connotes a simple presentation, but at the same time, when one thinks of a dog, one thinks of several things: an animal, something with a tail, confidence, the natural enemy of the cat, and so on. A name always evokes a complex field of connotations.

Language is not a central theme in Brentano's work, but this does not mean that he is completely uninterested in it. On the contrary, Brentano pays constant attention to the act of naming in human experience, because naming, thinking, and meaning are intimately connected. In this respect, I have schematically suggested that the analysis of language in Brentano is also important for understanding the context in which Frege's theory emerges: Husserl's critique of Twardowski's concept of content should be interpreted as detached from Brentano's theory of presentation and immanent object. I suggested that the psychological conception of content emerged in the discussion between Twardowski, Marty, and Kerry and gave rise to Husserl's critique.

Recebido em 10/07/2023

Aprovado em 25/07/2023

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