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Abstract	It is well known that the two philosophers who stand at the beginning of the tradition of phenomenology, namely Brentano and Husserl, aimed to describe the essential structure of our conscious experiences. Although the influence of the teacher to the pupil cannot be denied, there are plenty of disagreements between them, too. Among such disagreements, particularly interesting for me is the opposition between them concerning the correct part-whole structure of the phenomenon called judgment. And the aim of this paper is to examine the nature and possible source of that opposition. I proceed as follows. First, I explain the opposition at issue (1). Next, I present an objection to Brentano's view from the side of Husserl (2). Then, I consider the question of how Brentano could maintain his view despite the obviousness of the objection, and suggest that the opposition concerning the structure of judgment can be understood as stemming from a general mereological opposition between mereological actualism and potentialism (3).
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The Mereological Structure of Judgment in the Early Phenomenology

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It is well known that the two philosophers who stand at the beginning of the tradition of phenomenology, namely Brentano and Husserl, aimed to describe the essential structure of our conscious experiences. Although the influence of the teacher to the pupil cannot be denied, there are plenty of disagreements between them, too. Among such disagreements, particularly interesting for me is the opposition between them concerning the correct part-whole structure of the phenomenon called *judgment*. And the aim of this paper is to examine the nature and possible source of that opposition.

I proceed as follows. First, I explain the opposition at issue (1). Next, I present an objection to Brentano's view from the side of Husserl (2). Then, I consider the question of how Brentano could maintain his view despite the obviousness of the objection, and suggest that the opposition concerning the structure of judgment can be understood as stemming from a general mereological opposition between mereological actualism and potentialism (3).

1. Opposition

Let us see Brentano's view first. It is stated in the following passage from his *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*:

Therefore, we may regard the following determination of mental phenomena as indubitably correct: they [mental phenomena] are either presentations, or are based upon presentations as their bases. (Brentano 1973: 120)

Here by “presentation”, Brentano means the act of merely making something appear to consciousness, as opposed to the act of judging (accepting and rejecting) and the act of emotion (love and hate) (Brentano 1973: 112; Brentano 1959: 34). What is important here is Brentano’s claim that in general, presentations are necessary components of all kinds of mental act.¹ Thus, since the act of judgment is no exception, and since Brentano says elsewhere that the content of judgment is nothing other than that of presentation (Brentano 1959: Book 2, chapter VII), he maintains the following thesis:

(B) Every judgment contains, as its basis, a presentation with the same content.

By contrast, in the 5th *Logical Investigation*, Husserl maintains that the judgment is never something which contains a presentation as its basis, and which is formed by adding some extra component to presentation (Husserl 1984: 461ff.). According to him, when we judge something, it is not the case that we perform an act of presenting as well; rather, we are then doing only one thing, and this one thing is completely different from a mere presenting.

The opposition between Brentano and Husserl is very clear: while the former takes the presentation to be an essential part of the judgment, the latter strongly denies this part-whole relationship.

¹ I employ the vocabulary of containment or part-whole rather than that of foundation. This paraphrase is permitted by both Brentano and Husserl.

2. Reason for Rejecting (B)

From the Husserlian side, it is possible to raise a convincing objection to (B), which seems even decisive.² The central idea of it is simple. It is to appeal to the intuition that the attitudes which judgment and presentation each require from the subjects who perform them are incompatible. That is, (B) seems to fall into trouble when it comes to the attitude ascription.

To see this, consider the case of judgment first. To simplify the matter, let me concentrate on the affirmative judgment.³ Then, both Brentano and Husserl admit this:⁴

(J) When a subject actually performs an act of judgment *j*, she *affirms* the content of *j* at that time.

As for the presentation, not only Husserl, but also Brentano characterizes it as an act devoid of assertive force (Brentano 1959: Book 2, chapter VII; Husserl 1984: 444, 475, 501). Thus, both admit the following:

(P) When a subject actually performs an act of mere presentation *p*, she *does not affirm* the content of *p* at that time.

Now, combined with these two theses, (B) seems to lead to a troublesome consequence. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that (B) is true. And suppose also that a subject *S* actually performs a judgment *j*.

² The basic idea of the following objection is suggested in [Mulligan 1989: 136] and [Smith 1977: 489-90]. Also in [Akiba 2008], I myself tried to defend the Husserlian position by elaborating these suggestions. However, in that paper I did not discuss the premise which I am going to take up in this paper. See the next section and [Akiba 2008: 434(footnote 11)].

³ This simplification does not affect the essential point of the discussion, for even if one changes “affirms” in (J) into “affirm or reject”, as Brentano would require, one can correspondingly change “does not affirm” in (P) into “does not affirm nor reject”.

⁴ Although for Brentano, the object of judgment is not propositional, he admits that we affirm an existential proposition by intending an object in the mode of affirmative judgment.

Then, by (J), she affirms the content of *j*. However, since (B) states that every judgment contains an act of presentation with the same content, *it follows* that S also actually performs such a presentation at the same time. But then, by (P), this means that she does not affirm the content of *j*. And clearly, this requires that S affirm and not affirm the same thing at the same time, which seems impossible.

One might object that there indeed *are* cases where we have an attitude which is somehow contradictory, e.g., where one loves and hates someone at the same time. However, what the above argument seems to show is far more radical; it seems to show that if (B) is true, we must ascribe a contradictory attitude to someone *systematically*, i.e. *in every case* where someone judges something. And *this* is a consequence which is impossible to accept.

3. A Hidden Premise and Mereological Potentialism

The objection above seems convincing and successful. At the same time, however, it seems too easy and too simple *not* to be noticed. Accordingly, one might wonder how Brentano could maintain (B) when the apparent difficulty of it seems so easy to see. Although I do not have any definite answer to that question, in what follows I will try to suggest *a* possible way to resist the above objection – a way which might help one to understand why Brentano could endorse his view.

For that purpose, the first thing to do is to notice that the objection above has a hidden premise. The important step was marked by italic letters. The above objection took it for granted that from the fact that a presentation is part of a judgment and that a subject actually performs a judgment, it follows that she also actually performs the presentation. More generally and more intuitively, the objection assumed that *a part of a performed act is also performed in the same manner as the whole*.

Now, this premise looks quite plausible. For instance, my decision to eat a tuna-sandwich contains a presentation of tuna-sandwich, and when I actually perform this act of decision, it must be the case that I actually perform the act of presenting that food.

The premise above seems so uncontroversial that one might even take it to be needless to mention. Still, once this hidden premise is extracted, there

appears a possibility to oppose to the above objection by denying the premise in question. That is, a way now seems opened to resist it by endorsing, for example, the following principle of *Mereological Potentialism*.⁵

(MP) A part of something actually real is not itself actually real for as long as it is a part.

This principle says that when something is actually real, its parts are not in the same status of actuality (or reality) as the whole. In other words, it says that the actuality in the prominent sense can be ascribed only to the whole, and although their parts are not unreal in every sense, they nonetheless lack the prominent actuality and are only potential. As is easily noticed, this is a conception of parthood which stems from Aristotle (*Metaphysics*, 1019a 8-10).

Some clarification and qualification seem in order. On the one hand, one might find it rather difficult or even impossible to maintain (MP) *as an absolutely general principle*, which applies to all kinds of part-whole structure without any qualification. For instance, the top board of this desk seems undeniably as real and actual as the desk itself.

On the other hand, however, it seems also undeniable that there are cases where the notion of potential part is correctly applicable, in that there seems to be a sense in which some part of something is only potentially real. To illustrate, consider an earthworm and two halves of it. Although the right half of this creature is not itself an earthworm as long as it is a part, it can *become* the one when detached from the left half. Or, consider the two states of Czech Republic and Slovakia. Before 1992, there was a period in which these two states were only parts of one sovereign state (Czechoslovakia) and not themselves states. Or again, consider a family which consists of two grandparents, two younger parents and a child. Although they jointly form one family now, when the younger parents decide to buy a house and live there with their child, the subgroup

⁵ The definition is borrowed from [Smith 1996: 76ff.].

consisting of them becomes a family by its own.

What is common to these cases, I think, is the following feature: the whole is associated with some specific function or role *F* which is characteristic to the kind to which that whole belongs (biological individual, sovereign state, family); and some of its parts are such that, although they do not actually perform *F* as long as they are parts, when separated from other part(s), they in turn begin to perform it. So, we can see there is at least one sense in which certain parts of certain wholes are only potentially real: they are potentially real by virtue of being a *potential (and not actual) bearer of the function* characteristic to their wholes. Or, in other words, certain parts are only potentially real because they, as long as they are parts, do not actually perform the relevant function while they *could* perform it by their own.

Now, let us return to the objection to (B) above. For reason of space, let me confine myself to sketching roughly how one can reply to the objection by using the notion of potential part. The first thing to do is to argue that the (alleged) part-whole relationship between judgment and presentation is that of potential parthood. And, the second thing to do is to note that the characteristic function of certain conscious acts (including judgment and presentation) is to determine the detailed conditions or states of their subjects (including what attitudes the subject takes towards the world). Then, by using these two, one can argue as follows: since a judgment contains a presentation only as potential part, and since the characteristic function is not performed by a potential part, the attitude ascription by (P) is not valid as long as a presentation is a part of a judgment. In this way, then, the troublesome consequence can be avoided.

I have suggested one possible way to resist the objection to (B). And once we come to see the matter in this way, it becomes plausible that the objection in Section 2 in fact presupposes the general thesis of mereological actualism, according to which parts of a whole are every bit as real and actual as the whole. So, we can see how the *prima facie* local issue of the structure of judgment can lead to a quite general issue of mereology.

As to Brentano himself, given his Aristotelian background, it is not so far-fetched to suppose that some form of the mereological potentialism (or

anti-actualism) is a source of his acceptance of (B).⁶ However, the problem of specification of *the* reason(s) for which he did so is another matter,⁷ and I leave it for another (potential) occasion.

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⁶ According to [Chrudzimski 2004: 91], at least the young Brentano endorsed the Aristotelian mereological conception.

⁷ For instance, Brentano might respond to the objection by employing the notion of modification of subject. That is, he might say that e.g., *S as a judge* affirms the content while the same *S as a presenter* does not affirm it. Or, he might reject the validity of attitude ascription with respect to the presentation altogether, whether or not the presentation is a part of other act.