

*PAZHOE**VARIA***HUSSERL'S EARLY RECEPTION OF BOLZANO'S THEORY OF THE PROPOSITION IN ITSELF****HYNEK JANOUŠEK*

PhD, Affiliated Researcher.

Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Institute of Philosophy.

11000 Prague, Czech Republic.

E-mail: janousek@flu.cas.cz

Even today, much of the development of Husserl's interpretation of Bolzano's philosophy prior to the *Logical Investigations* remains in the dark. However, recently published manuscripts from Husserl's early period make it easier to understand Husserl's original approach to Bolzano's ideas. This article aims at describing one aspect of Husserl's reception of Bolzano, namely his reception of the latter's concept of propositions in themselves. It also corrects some errors concerning the traditional interpretation of Lotze's and Frege's influence on Husserl's turn against psychologism. Whereas Husserl's 1896 "Logic Lectures" employ a number of Bolzano's terms and ideas, there is no trace of Lotze and almost no trace of Frege when the objectivity of logic is discussed. It is rather the integration of Bolzano's famous concept of propositions in themselves that forms the core of Bolzano's logical realism, into Husserl's early phenomenology which drives Husserl's move against the alleged psychologism of his *Philosophy of Arithmetic*. The article reconstructs Husserl's early unsuccessful attempt to avoid the pitfall of psychologism by using a Brentanian theory of abstraction. This failure opened the way for a more positive appreciation of Bolzano's concept of propositions in themselves. Such a concept posed problems for Husserl's theory of judgment as inspired by Brentano, Stumpf, and Erdmann. Describing the twists and turns of the integration of Bolzano's proposition in itself into Husserl's work should contribute to a better understanding of the development of Husserl's phenomenology, philosophy of logic, and, generally speaking, of the history of philosophy of the 19th and 20th century.

Key words: Husserl, Bolzano, Brentano, Erdmann, proposition in itself, judgment, state of affairs, psychologism.

© HYNEK JANOUŠEK, 2017

* This publication is a result of the project of the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic P401/15-18149S, *From Logical Objectivism to Reism: Bolzano and the School of Brentano*, realized at the Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences.

РАННЯЯ РЕЦЕПЦИЯ БОЛЬЦАНОВСКОГО ПРЕДЛОЖЕНИЯ-В-СЕБЕ У ГУССЕРЛЯ

ХИНЕК ЯНОУШЕК

PhD, ассоциированный сотрудник.
Чешская академия наук, Институт философии.
11000 Прага, Чешская Республика.
E-mail: janousek@flu.cas.cz

По сей день многие моменты интерпретации Гуссерлем философии Больцано до «Логических Исследований» остаются неясными. Однако недавно опубликованные рукописи раннего периода творчества Гуссерля позволяют лучше понять изначальный подход Гуссерля к идеям Больцано. Настоящая статья призвана описать определенный момент восприятия Гуссерлем Больцано, а именно его рецепцию понятия *предложения-в-себе* у Больцано. Кроме того, она корректирует ошибки традиционной интерпретации относительно влияния Лотце и Фреге на критику психологизма в мысли Гуссерля. Хотя в «Лекциях по логике» Гуссерля 1896 года применяется ряд Больцановских терминов и идей, при обсуждении объективности логики отсутствуют какие-либо реминисценции к Лотце и почти отсутствуют — к Фреге. Скорее, преодоление Гуссерлем предполагаемого психологизма «Философии арифметики» мотивировано именно включением в раннюю феноменологию знаменитого Больцановского понятия *предложения-в-себе*, представляющего собой ядро логического реализма Больцано. Статья реконструирует раннюю безуспешную попытку Гуссерля избежать ловушки психологизма, используя теорию абстракции Brentano. Эта неудача способствовала более положительной оценке Больцановского понятия *предложений-в-себе*. Такое понятие было проблематичным для философии Гуссерля в той мере, в которой она вдохновлялась мыслью Brentano, Штумпфа и Эрдмана. Описание всех перипетий, связанных с включением Brentановского *предложения-в-себе* в философию Гуссерля, может помочь лучше понять развитие феноменологии Гуссерля, философии логики, и, вообще говоря, истории философии XIX и XX веков.

Ключевые слова: Гуссерль, Brentано, Больцано, Эрдманн, предложение-в-себе, суждение, положение дел, психологизм.

1. HUSSERL AND BRENTANO'S PSYCHOLOGISM

Husserl's acceptance of Bolzano's proposition was motivated by Husserl's attack on psychologism. The refutation of psychologism was connected to Husserl's abandoning the psychological views of his teacher Franz Brentano concerning the foundation of logic. However, Brentano could be hardly called a proponent of psychologism. Why then did Husserl abandon the Brentanian framework and embraced logical realism as offered by Bolzano? To understand this, we will have to expound the psychological anti-psychologism of Brentano to see why Husserl thought that Brentano's theory is too weak and flawed. We will also show that for some time Husserl tried to improve Brentano's anti-

psychologism “from within” but must have seen that his improvements led nowhere and a more robust Bolzanian solution is needed. Then we will move to explaining how Husserl tried to fit Bolzano’s proposition in itself into his early theory of judgment.

Let’s start by saying that if the term “psychologism” is employed to indicate the position under attack in the first volume of *Logical Investigations* — a position which confuses logical with empirical validity, Husserl *never turned against it*, since he was never an advocate of psychologism of this kind. Neither was his teacher Brentano. In 1911 Brentano had very good reasons to express his amazement of being charged with psychologism:

Today we may still see many who, failing to recognize the distinctive nature of *Evidenz*, confuse logical validity with the genetic necessity of a thought, whether for the individual or for the whole human species. I, at least, both in my lectures and my writings, have always very firmly distinguished between lawfulness in the sense of natural necessity and in the sense of the correctness of an activity. Indeed, no one before me and not one after me (Husserl included) has been able to express himself with greater clarity and emphasis on this matter than I have. (Brentano, 2009a, 239)

Shortly after Husserl’s visit to Brentano in Florence in 1907, Brentano wrote to his Prague follower Hugo Bergmann that Husserl assured him that he (Husserl) never considered him to be a proponent of real psychologism “whereby he [Husserl] apparently believes to clear me of a dreadful suspicion” (Bergmann, Brentano, 1946, 93).

Brentano, just like Husserl, wanted to ground his descriptive psychology on absolutely certain knowledge. This knowledge is attained in judgments that manifest themselves as *self-evident*, as in the case of affirmative judgments of inner perceptions or negative judgments denying existence of contradictory objects. Brentano called all judgments which agree with self-evident judgments correct (*richtig*) judgments¹. *Truth* is therefore explained as correctness of judgments and correctness is in turn grounded in agreement with self-evidence (*Evidenz*). Furthermore, Brentano maintained that this consciousness of evidence shows with *absolute certainty* that two contradictory judgments (two judgments of which one affirms what the other denies) cannot possibly both be evident, that any judgment that agrees in its matter and quality with an evident judgment is necessarily correct, even if it lacks evidence, and that the opposite judgment is

¹ See e.g. Brentano (2009b, 37) and Chisholm (1982, 70-71).

necessarily incorrect². Thus, for Brentano, the validity of basic logical laws is grounded on the experience of evidence. Moreover, judgment always *claims* a universal validity and evident judgments *are* universally valid, i.e. no judging entity, be it an angel or an extraterrestrial, can correctly deny them. This already exonerates Brentano from the charge of simple psychologism. As if this was not enough, Brentano used similar distinctions to ground an anti-psychologistic theory of values (Brentano, 2009c, 6-8) as noted by G. E. Moore in his positive review of Brentano's book on ethics (Moore, 1902).

Why then did the young Husserl part ways with Brentano and embraced Bolzanian solution? Husserl's basic concern regarding Brentano's philosophy was its unclear explanation of the concept of *identity* of meaning, *universality* of evidence, and *objectivity* of truth. While the latter two were explained by Brentano's rationalistic concept of evidence, the identity of meaning was accounted for by Brentano's concept of abstraction³. Brentano claimed that since we can abstract from individually relative features of our intentional experience and its objects, other people can be thought of as having same intentions directed at the same objects. This view gives abstraction with a certain *objectifying* force. Nevertheless, Husserl more and more doubted that abstraction could provide such objectification⁴. He was also troubled by Brentano's account of the objectivity of truth — as we have just said, according to Brentano objective validity of judgment is grounded in its accordance with an evident judgment. Nevertheless, is the concept of evident judgment really as primitive as Brentano claimed?

In one of the earliest preserved manuscripts on the theory of judgment (dated 1893), Husserl still speaks about evidence, truths and acts in a fully Brentanian anti-psychologistic manner but tries to provide further explications of the idea of truth:

² The “opposite judgment”, according to Brentano, is a judgment with the same matter but opposite quality. For an overview of Brentano's theory of two judgmental qualities see Brandl (2014).

³ In this respect, Husserl *did* think that Brentano's thinking was guilty of psychologism for, according to Husserl, Brentano tried to ground the objectivity of knowledge *only* on the individual experience of evidence, reflexion and abstraction without being able to properly explain the psychologically independent validity of gained insights — see e.g. Husserl's letter to Natortp (Husserl, 1994d, 43): “I am busy writing a larger work that is directed against the subjectivistic-psychologistic logic of our time (thus against the standpoint that I had earlier advocated as Brentano's student).”

⁴ Husserl's other concern related to abstraction had to do with the problem of explaining apparently formal concepts such as “unity” or “thing” by reflecting on empirical entities. However, this problem leads directly to Husserl's *Philosophy of Arithmetic* and the acceptance of Sigwart's critique of Locke's and Mill's theory of abstraction as well as Husserl's acceptance of Sigwart's proposed solution in that book. Such discussion lies beyond the scope of the present study.

The evident judgment is necessary insofar as every contradiction or doubt is in this case impossible. This impossibility, however, means not only the resistance, merely as subjectively felt, which forces us to the evident “yes” or “no”, and which we try to overcome in vain. Nor does it mean the subjective inability, conceived of as a habitual disposition. Contradiction is impossible because it affirms what is evidently false or denies what is evidently true. We are not merely subjectively incapable of opposing what is evident; rather, we also have the insight that we thereby miss the mark of knowledge, i.e. truth [...]. (Husserl, 2009, 8-9)

Here, Husserl keeps the Brentanian concept of truth as evidence intact but then he tries to explicate it further by using Brentano’s concept of correctness and a concept of a perfect logical being:

If we designate an (objective) judgment, e.g. a mathematical one, as evident, we mean that every normally disposed person among us can experience its evidence and will do so in the case of a normal logical constitution. We speak of truths which no human being can see as such and will ever see. The normal dispositions that were spoken of in the case of evidence were the dispositions of logically competent people. An ideal concept is thereby formed, but not one that designates a sharp limit, especially not an insurmountable level of perfection. If we form the absolute ideal of logical competence, the absolutely perfect faculty of judgment, there corresponds to it as a correlate the objective truth. Every judgment is true to which the ideally logical being assents with evidence, false the judgment to which it would contradict with evidence. (Husserl, 2009, 29)

The last sentence is quite compatible with Brentano’s later definition of truth, for late Brentano (e.g. Brentano, 2009b, 82) claims that truth is either said of a judgment of an evident judge (of someone who judges with evidence) or of a judgment which agrees in its matter and quality with a judgment of an evident judge. Since “evidence” is an epistemic concept, this definition of truth can be called an epistemic definition of truth.

Husserl’s addition of the concept of the perfect logical being is the natural result of Husserl’s idealized reading of Brentano’s epistemic conception of truth. Truth taken as correctness of judgment is defined by Brentano as its adequation to evident judgment. Since both the correct and the evident judgment are psychological phenomena, the concept of truth implies the concept of a *psychical judging* being. Now, given that there are things about which nobody actually judges and things about which it is factually impossible to judge, the concept of true judgment is explicated in terms of the adequacy of judgment to the *evident* judgment of this

perfect judge⁵. Of course, such an elucidation of truth does not presuppose the existence of such a perfect being⁶. What it does presuppose though is some concept of a *logically objective judgment*.

What is an objective judgment for Husserl at this stage? In his early texts, Husserl is still using a version of Stumpf/Brentano's theory of judgment. In his 1888 *Syllabus of Logic*, Stumpf stated that every judgment is founded on a presented object (called the "matter" of a judgment). However, we have to differentiate the proper object of judgment from this presented object. The former is sometimes called the "content" of a judgment or the "state of affairs". Stumpf holds that in the case of affirmation the state of affairs (the objective judgment) is the being of the presented object, in case of negation the state of affairs is the non-being of the presented object (Stumpf, 1999, 312-313). Moreover, Stumpf held that the state of affairs exists only as an immanent content "in" the mind — it has no independent existence of its own.

However, if the state of affairs is an immanent content of a subjective act, aren't "facts" hopelessly subjective? In order to overcome this problem, Husserl initially tried to use a version of a Brentanian abstractive strategy. In other words, he tried to account for the objectivity of states of affairs in a purely psychological way:

The state of affairs is drawn or rather worked out from the whole content of consciousness that simply cannot stay unchanged for a "moment", retained as identical with itself (the psychological, the concrete, is in this case not at all something absolutely identical, i.e. invariable), grasped conceptually as "this" or this A, or this A which is b, and the like ; the moment of evident truth is, once again, abstractively drawn out and conceptually grasped, and thus the judgment first comes about, even the simple perceptual judgment. Only in this way is the thought possible that "the same" judgment occurs now and again at another time for me and another person, only in this way can the subjective act of judgment become the representative of the objective judgment, of the judgment in the logical sense of "the judgment in itself". (Husserl, 2009, 29)

⁵ Late Brentano of the so called "reistic" period tried to block this result by (1) stating his definition of truth in terms of rejection of evidence of the contradicting judgment and (2) by reducing the possibility of an evident judgment to a psychical act of apodictic rejection of an evident judge. See Kraus (Brentano, 2009b, xiv-xxvi) on these transformations.

⁶ If we use Husserl's later terminology, truth is here defined as a correspondence to a completely fulfilled intuitive judgment regardless as to whether such fulfillment is factually attainable for finite judges.

The “in itself” of the *objective* judgment at the end of the quote is to my knowledge one of the earliest allusions to Bolzano’s logical proposition in itself in Husserl’s work. However, the whole context is distinctly non-Bolzanian⁷.

The theory that young Husserl proposes is quite straightforward. An act of abstraction “singles out” a certain moment in the subjective judgment, as well as in the moment of its evidence and supposedly objectifies the first moment into the “logical judgment in itself” and the second one into the “evidence in itself”. Abstraction is here understood as a process of looking away from certain specific features — we intend something “without any regard to person, time and other circumstances” (Husserl, 2009, 8)⁸. Therefore, the moment which becomes the object of our exclusive attention can be thought of as shared by many individual persons under different circumstances of time and place.

Such a theory of logical objectivity struggles with serious difficulties. Given Husserl’s acumen, it is hard to imagine that he would not have noticed these problems.

Firstly, this theory works only if the proposed theory of abstraction works. If this theory of abstraction has no such objectifying power, the result is a direct psychologism since, notwithstanding its anti-psychologistic intention, the psychological judgment, its object and its truth end up being individual entities of an individual mind. Such judgments might be at best *similar* among different psychological beings. In an act of self-critique in the *Second Logical Investigation*, Husserl later severely criticized this and similar empirical theories of abstraction in a series of arguments proving that even though exclusive attention can single out individual abstractive moments of some entity — e.g. a color or a shape of a colorful shaped object — it can never endow this individual moment with a character of generality (Husserl, 2001a, 268-270).

Secondly, even if this version of abstraction was replaced by a better one, this would still make objective judgments, truth and facts dependent on the existence of psychological beings, for the objectifying abstraction presupposes the

⁷ Husserl’s early reliance on objective contents as results of abstraction is strongly reminiscent of Herbart’s theory, especially as represented and defended by Exner in his correspondence with Bolzano viz. Exner’s letter to Bolzano 10.8.1883 (Bolzano, 1935, 20): “... the so-called objective truth is nothing but the subjective truth itself, with a certain abstraction, namely without regarding the thinking subject (the psychological context), considered only in its content (according to what it asserts).” Obviously, Husserl couldn’t have known Exner’s correspondence since it was published only in 1935, but he, as a student of Robert Zimmerman and a reader of Herbart’s work, was well acquainted with it. For Husserl’s knowledge of Herbart’s logic, see also Varga (2014).

⁸ For Brentano’s theory of abstraction which resembles in some features Berkeley’s view and which is adopted by Husserl in his very early theory of abstraction, see Marty (2011, 123-125).

existence of *real* subjective acts. Such a dependence does not directly lead to psychologism, but it leads to a view that if there are no psychical beings, there are, properly speaking, no objective truths and, given the Brentanian perspective, no objective states of affairs. This is something young Husserl was not ready to accept. He could try to block this conclusion by saying that the possibility of objective states of affairs, judgments and truths presupposes only the *possibility* and not the reality of subjective states of affairs, judgments and truths. However, this answer already presupposes objective states of affairs and truths concerning *these possibilities themselves* and therefore runs in a circle. It should be also noted that interpreting objective states of affairs (objective judgment, content of judgment) as results of abstraction is a very dubious move since e.g. *the state of affairs* that Mount Everest is the highest mountain on Earth seems to be a *numerically* identical entity and not a universal entity with an infinite number of its possible instances.

The quote also points to Husserl's conviction that if there is an act of evidence, something, some kind of strict objectivity, must be *grasped* in it. This is testified by a much later report by Brentano which points back to Brentano's private discussion of psychologism with Husserl and his students⁹. It is obvious that this early theory of objective judgment as pure abstraction from subjective acts and contents couldn't satisfy Husserl for long. Husserl's initial attempts at psychologically grounding the objectivity and validity of truths failed. Bolzano's truths and falsehoods in themselves as entities whose nature is objectively independent of subjective acts offered a more solid foundation for Husserl's theory of the identity of meanings, the universality of evidence and the objectivity of truth.

2. HUSSERL'S THEORY OF JUDGMENT AND BOLZANO'S OBJECTIVE PROPOSITION

In the following, we will describe Husserl's initial struggles with the proper understanding of Bolzano's main concept of propositions in itself.

It is well-known that in his response to Palágyi's book *Der Streit der Psychologisten und Formalisten in der modernen Logik* Husserl warns readers not to confuse Bolzano's *ideas* and *propositions in themselves* with his own *ideal*

⁹ See for example Daubert's report of such a discussion in his letter to Husserl — see Husserl (1994c, 54-55) — and Brentano's later complaint about the inclination of Husserl and others to look for transcendent objects which could guarantee the absolute validity of truth in Brentano (2009a, 239).

contents which are introduced and described in the *Logical Investigations*. Furthermore, he tells us that his concept of ideal content was developed under the influence of Lotze and his interpretation of Plato's theory of forms (Husserl, 1994a, 201).

Under this influence Husserl described meanings in his *Logical Investigations* as *general entities* (meanings *in specie*). He called the being of these entities "ideal existence". Questions concerning the ideal existence of such objects were answered by pointing out that such existence consists in its validity. According to Lotze, a proposition neither exists (as things do) nor occurs (as events do) — "in itself, apart from all application which may be made of it, the reality of a proposition means that it holds and its opposite does not hold" (Lotze, 1888, 208). Husserl thus found a key to unlocking the treasures of Bolzano's *Wissenschaftslehre* which, according to Husserl's own words, "lay hidden behind the phenomenological naïveté of Bolzano's main concepts" (Husserl, 1994a, 201).

But is Husserl's description of his own development faithful?

Whereas Husserl's 1896 *Logic Lectures* employ a great number of Bolzano's terms and ideas and defend logical realism of Bolzanian kind, there's no trace of Lotze (and almost no trace of Frege) when the objectivity of logic is discussed and no trace of understanding propositions as general entities. Many passages of these lectures give an impression of Husserl closely following the corresponding passages of Bolzano's *Wissenschaftslehre*. And it is especially the integration of Bolzano's famous concept of propositions in themselves into Husserl's early phenomenology which drives Husserl's move against the alleged psychologism of his *Philosophy of Arithmetic*. In other words, Husserl is unlocking quite a lot from Bolzano's treasure before his reading of Lotzes could exert its platonising influence on his psychology and theory of meaning.

By mentioning Bolzano's naïveté, Husserl meant that Bolzano psychology does not offer any clear and understandable explanation of the connection between the psychical acts and "ideal contents" (Husserl, 1994a, 211). However, it took much more than reading the well-known third book of Lotze's *Logic* (see Beyer, 1996, 131-153) to bring Bolzano's objectively valid logical entities into connection with the stream of conscious life. Husserl had to restructure his whole theory of presentations and judgments to accommodate them. While Husserl's initial view on the structure and basic types of psychical acts that we can find in the *Philosophy of Arithmetic* was related to the theories of his two teachers, Franz

Brentano and Carl Stumpf¹⁰, recently published manuscripts show that between the years 1891-1894 Husserl was already moving away from their theories, allowing him to adopt Bolzanian entities¹¹.

But let's first introduce Bolzano's concept of the proposition in itself which will be the main point of our interest here.

Bolzano differentiates the proposition in itself from the spoken and thought proposition. While any utterance, e.g. "It rains" or "Es regnet", by which anything true or false is claimed are called spoken proposition (Bolzano, 2014, 58), the propositions which are not presented in words but which somebody merely thinks are called thought propositions. (Bolzano, 2014, 58). However, propositions in themselves are not reducible to real thoughts and expressions. It is Bolzano's explicit wish to designate by proposition in itself "any statement that something is or is not, regardless whether it is true or false, whether somebody has put it into words, and even whether it has been thought" (Bolzano, 2014, 58-59)¹².

Since propositions in themselves are necessarily either true or false, Bolzano also speaks of truths and falsehoods in themselves. Truths and falsehoods "appear" in our psychical life but they are not reducible to being known or thought. Bolzano claims that "Thus, for example, the number of blossoms that were on a certain tree last spring is a storable, if unknown, figure. Thus, the proposition which states this figure I call an objective truth, even if nobody knows it" (Bolzano, 2014, 84).

Bolzano insists that we should not confuse proposition in itself with its assertion. Even though the name "proposition" is derived from the verb "to propose" we "must not think of something actually proposed, which would presuppose the existence of being that does the proposing" (Bolzano, 2014, 59). For the same reason we also must not confuse a proposition with its presentation

¹⁰ For the evaluation of this relation see Ierna (2012).

¹¹ My points were made possible by recently published manuscripts on Husserl's early conception of judgment, see Husserl (2009). I will use some relevant passages from these manuscripts as well as sections of Husserl's *Logic Lectures* from 1896 (Husserl, 2001c) to elucidate the whole matter. It should be noted that Bolzano's influence on Husserl goes far beyond mere acceptance and transformation of the concepts of ideas and propositions in themselves. Especially, Bolzano's method of variation and its influence on Husserl's phenomenological method is an important topic waiting for more detailed discussion. For a very clear description of Bolzano's application of variation to capturing logical inference and its position within the development of modern approaches to logical inference see Koreň (2014a) and Koreň (2014b).

¹² Bolzano claims that God knows all propositions in themselves. However, this does not follow from the intrinsic nature of a proposition in itself, but from God's omniscience (Bolzano, 2014, 85).

(with its being merely thought), i.e. with a psychical *idea* of which it is a matter (Bolzano, 2014, 59)¹³.

Bolzano doesn't say much about how we should understand the relation between the psychical life on one side and propositions in themselves on the other. In his correspondence with Exner, which remained unpublished until 1935, he explains that expressions like “grasping or “representing” are “only figurative, drawn from sensible (corporeal) relations — but here there simply are no words that are not figurative” (Bolzano, 2004, 164).

Husserl's whose theory of judging comes from a very different tradition had problems with understanding Bolzano's logical propositions. Even shortly before publishing his *Prolegomena to Pure Logic*, at the time when Husserl was already using Lotze and Plato to supplement and understand Bolzano's theory of propositions, Husserl still wasn't sure about the precise content of Bolzano's concept. One should pay attention to the following quote, since, as I will claim, it offers a brief history of the development of Husserl's views concerning Bolzano's notion of a proposition. In the quote Husserl claims that:

Bolzano, it seems to me, was unclear about how the proposition is related to the judgment as an act. At least I have tried in vain to find decisive passages, ones that decide between the two possible conceptions, according to which the proposition is *either* the judgment in specie *or* the proposition is that common content in presentations, judgments, wishes, doubts, etc. which refer to the same state of affairs, i.e. the uniformity that we designated as reference to the same state of affairs, but in the case of varying modes of reference. Bolzano speaks only in a very vague manner about the proposition as the material of the judgment, and he calls the judgment the appearance of the proposition, which is hardly to be recommended, just as he designates the act of presentation as the appearance of “the idea in itself”. In this way the proposition would indeed be the state of affairs and, as a consequence, the idea in itself the object. But this is not and cannot be Bolzano's view. (Husserl, 2009, 138-139)

The position mentioned at the end of the quote — that propositions are states of affairs and not ideal propositional meanings through which states of affairs are meant — is a position which, as we shall see, Husserl originally and quite unproblematically ascribed to Bolzano. It is also a position which Husserl himself defended for some time, at least till his reading of Twardowski's work in 1894, as it is more compatible with Husserl's original Brentanian-Stumpfian

¹³ It seems that Husserl overlooked that Bolzano is treating presented propositions as presented ideas and not as objects of propositional acts of mere presenting.

theory of judgment. In other words, Husserl originally thought that Bolzano's propositions in themselves *are* proper *objects* of judgments or, on alternative reading, proper objects that can be shared by all propositional acts. Husserl's original question was whether this is a correct interpretation of Bolzano's position.

The second problem lurks in the beginning of the quote. It concerns the question, whether we should understand Bolzanian proposition *only* as correlates of judging or of *all* kinds of propositional acts like questions, wishes, presentations and conjectures. Husserl was originally confronted with the following problem concerning Bolzano. If what I have "on my mind" when I, for example, merely imagine a certain proposition (= state of affairs), is a proposition in itself, then this proposition lacks the main Bolzanian feature of appearing to my consciousness as a *truth* or *falsehood* in itself. *Proposition appears* but it is merely entertained. If, on the other hand, we understand the proposition in itself only as an object of judging in which truth and falsehood appears, then how do we interpret the common state of affairs which is qualified by a variety of propositional attitudes?¹⁴ Neither of these two possibilities seems to respect Bolzano's views and Husserl was left wondering, what actually was Bolzano's view after all. To make the matter more complicated, the acceptance of a rich variety of propositional attitudes is distinctly non-Brentanian, since it discards the simple Brentanian trichotomy of presentations, judgments and acts of love and hate. And there is one more question with which Husserl had to grapple. Is the common element of propositional attitudes an object (or — after 1894 — a logical meaning) of *independent* acts of presenting or not? Husserl's teacher Brentano claimed that all psychical acts are either presentations or *based* on presentations. According to Brentano, conjectures, questions, judgments, among others, therefore presuppose independent acts of presenting of what is conjectured, questioned or judged.

We will now claim that Husserl's move away from Brentano's theory was partly motivated by Husserl's acquaintance with the work of Benno Erdmann,

¹⁴ In this example, this version of the problem is formulated in the position Husserl accepted before 1894 but not much changed after 1894 when Husserl took logical propositions to be ideal entities directed to states of affairs are presented as we have seen in the quote above — "proposition is *either* the judgment in specie *or* the proposition is that common content in presentations, judgments, wishes, doubts, etc." By "judgment in specie" Husserl means proposition plus its truth value, not a type of psychical act of judging.

Husserl's colleague in Halle. Erdmann position is compatible neither with Brentano, nor with Bolzano's theory of positional¹⁵ and propositional acts.

3. BENNO ERDMANN AND PRESENTED PROPOSITION

As the early Husserl moved away from the *subjective* realm due to his unsuccessful attempt at grounding objectivity *psychologically*, he accepted two points concerning the theory of judgment made by German philosopher and logician Erdmann. First of all, he began talking about states of affairs as propositional entities. Erdmann, who published the first volume of his *Logic* in 1892, defended a theory of propositional objects of judgment which had a strong appeal to those students of Brentano's *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* who, like Husserl and Meinong, refused to follow early Brentano in interpreting all categorical sentences as expressions of existential judgments. A very explicit statement of Erdmann's theory can be found in the first volume of Erdmann's *Logic*:

In the judgment "The light waves are electrical waves of some sort" the subject is "the light waves", the copula "the light waves' being electrical waves of some sort". Another example in order to avoid confusion which inserting the assertive word "being" into the predicate might bring about in spite of the above remarks: In the judgment "the dead ride fast" the subject is "the dead", the predicate "riding fast", the copula "the fast riding of the dead". (Erdmann, 1892, 188-189)

In the categorical judgment "S is P" we affirm the Being-P of S as the object of a judgment and that substantially differs from existential judgment affirming the being of SP — which was the only kind of state of affairs which Stumpf (and early Brentano) allowed.

For historical reasons it is worthwhile to note that in the same year this very same passage in Erdmann also inspired Meinong to differentiate objects of existential judgments from objects of genuine categorical judgments. While the former have "Dass-sein" state of affairs as their objects, the later aim at "So-sein" state of affairs.

...according to my conviction, to which Erdmann's new investigations have especially contributed clarification and confirmation, a judgment such as "Some

¹⁵ According to Husserl, nominal matter can also be affirmed — e.g. when we perceive a black table instead of perceiving that a table is black. Therefore, nominal position can also raise a pre-predicative truth claim. For a short description of this theory see, for example, "Positing names and Non-Positing Statements" in Rollinger (2008, 58-62).

rectangles are squares” immediately refers neither to a rectangle nor to a square, but rather to “some rectangles being square” as the proper content, hence neither to the subject nor to the predicate, but rather to a relation between the two. But I would not call this the “copula”, as Erdmann does (Logik I, 188 ff.). One is used to thinking of a connection *in abstracto* when speaking of the copula, without a determination of this being given by that which appears connected. The copula is in our example thus, in accordance with the customary tradition, “being”, being-somehow or being-so; by the surrounding in which it appears it is of course determined, so to speak, as being-square, more particularly some rectangles’ being square. (Meinong, 1892, 453)

Furthermore, Erdmann refused to press all propositional attitudes into the Brentanian trichotomy of presentations, judgments and phenomena of love and hate. According to Erdmann, it is possible to take different propositional attitudes toward the same state of affairs. Husserl writes in one of his early manuscripts:

If, however, this character of the presentation [i.e. the mode of reference] that we have [when we judge] is missing, the conviction is missing as well. What attaches to the content of judgment instead is doubt, surmise, indeterminacy, or something of that nature. Hence, Erdmann, with his theory of judgment, seems to have seen something correct in some way, namely that a phenomenon called “judgment”, common to a question, a surmise, etc. also lies at the basis of the judgment in the narrower sense (bearing “consciousness of validity”, “conviction”), but this [common phenomenon] should rather be called “judgable state of affairs”. It is always expressed in a proposition. The question is now: Is a presented judgment a judgable state of affairs? (Husserl, 2009, 49)

If the judgable state of affairs is, strictly speaking, *presented* in *all* propositional qualities directed at it, then all propositional qualities are *founded* on independent acts of presenting. If not, then there is a dependent moment which is an intrinsic part of all propositional attitudes and presenting is just *one of these attitudes* alongside others.

We have finally reached a perspective which makes Husserl’s first encounter with Bolzano understandable. One of the early Husserl’s 1894 manuscripts contains, as Guillaume Frechette stated (Frechette, 2011), Husserl’s early notes concerning the main concepts of Bolzano’s *Theory of Science* including page numbers of the corresponding pages of their definitions in the *Theory of Science*. In the manuscript, Husserl does not identify Bolzano’s *Satz an sich* with state of affairs but with *presented* state of affairs. At this time, Husserl therefore understands proposition in itself as a common *object* of various kinds of

propositional attitudes which he could have encountered in Erdmann. Husserl's brief notes on Bolzano's concepts in his early text seem to be quite clear.

Objective truths = Truths in themselves, real truths (*wirkliche Wahrheiten*)

Concept of the proposition in itself = [concept] of the presented state of affairs

Idea in itself = the conceptual determination¹⁶

No doubt, this view of Bolzano is hardly compatible with Bolzano's explicit statements in many other passages. Bolzano clearly differentiates between ideas in themselves and their objects (Bolzano, 1837a, 296-297) and interprets objective ideas as parts of objective propositions (Bolzano, 1837a, 216). Husserl was therefore right when he later said that if the objective proposition was to be identified with (presented) state of affairs then the objective ideas would have to be identified with (presented) objects, e.g., in some cases with material things, which is clearly mistaken. The object constituting the state of affairs "That Everest is the highest mountain in the world" is the mountain called "Everest" and not the objective idea "Everest". Young Husserl therefore took objective ideas as conceptual determinations of objects constituting propositions in themselves (presented state of affairs). This is very far from Bolzano's own views.

Let's go back to the question, whether state of affairs are objects of independent presentations or not.

It is worth noting that Brentano's thesis that judgment presupposes an independent act of presenting is very awkward, to say the least. It either means that in judging we hold two propositional attitudes — presenting *and* judging — *at the same time* or that we hold these attitudes *successively* — we *first* present what is to be judged and *then* we either affirm or reject it as true or false. While the former option seems to be outright impossible the latter describes either a case of accepting or rejecting a presented *claim* or a transition from pure imagining to believing or disbelieving. Husserl quite correctly claims that the inner perception of judging does not exhibit any trace of such a complex acceptance or transition (Husserl, 2009, 49). The presented state of affairs is not an object of an independent act of presenting on which higher order propositional attitudes are founded. Instead, the presented state of affairs is a *dependent* part of every

¹⁶ See Frechette (2011, 52).

objective correlate of propositional acts. In all propositional attitudes we present something, but this presenting is not an independent act of presenting.

Such a transformation is *a major move against* Brentano, for Brentano, as we have said, claimed that all psychical acts are either presentations or *based on* independent presentations.

However, it needs to be said that this solution is *terminologically* unsatisfying. If we use the term “proposition in itself” for a “presented” part of a propositional object judged in judging or supposed in supposing, what should we call the full correlates of judgments or of suppositions?

Husserl therefore later made one more terminological move and attributed the term “proposition in itself” to objects (or after 1894 to full logical “meanings”) of judgments only. And here is yet another interesting question to decide. For Husserl, just like for Brentano, there are two important kinds of judging — evident (fully intuitive) and blind judging. Should we regard propositions in themselves as correlates of judging as such or restrict them to evident judging?

Quite often we mistakenly take a proposition for true or false while the opposite is the case. When Bolzano claimed that in judgment a truth or falsehood in itself *appears*, he therefore oversimplified the actual relation of judgments to these entities. In one of the texts from late nineties Husserl consequently objects that Bolzano did not notice that proposition and truth stand to each other in a relation similar to the relation between *presentation* of an object and its *perception* (Husserl, 2009, 93). While this still makes propositions correlates of presented propositions, Husserl also suggests that we should not regard the proper *appearance* of truth in itself as the correlate of judging, but only of *fully intuitive* or *evident* judging.

However, this is too harsh. Bolzano’s claims appear to be perfectly in order if one differentiates two senses of appearing. While in blind judging propositions in themselves *subjectively appear to be true or false*, in evident judging they are also *objectively given* — they themselves appear to subject for what they are. The evident judgments — and not judgments as such — are “points of contact” between real acts on one side and truths and falsehood in themselves on the other. Nevertheless, in *all* judgments something is taken to be true or false in itself. If “appearing” is understood in this wider sense then it is possible to see propositions, both truths and falsehoods, as correlates of judgments as such. It seems that Husserl came to appreciate this wider meaning of “appearance” and judging. Shortly after he made his objection concerning Bolzano’s lack of understanding of the correlation of propositions in themselves with intuitive

judgments, he made the following retracting remark: “No, he [Bolzano] had the only proper concept of proposition. Proposition = judgment” (Husserl, 2009, 93).

In 1894 Husserl accepted Twardowski’s distinction between intentional content and intentional object. Every act has a *content* directing it at a certain *object*. These two should be strictly differentiated. Contents also function as meaning of linguistic expressions — for instance, as meanings of names. Thus, two presentations can have different contents but intend the same object: “An example of equivalent presentations is: *the city located at the site of the Roman Juvanum* and the *birthplace of Mozart*. These two names have a different meaning, but they both designate the same thing” (Twardowski, 1982, 32)¹⁷.

In consequence, Husserl differentiated propositions in themselves as propositional meaning-contents from states of affairs as objects to which propositional acts are directed.¹⁸

However, in contrast to Twardowski and in accordance with Bolzano, in 1894 Husserl points out that if every psychical act, e.g. a subjective presentation, judgment etc. has a content then our evident ability to think and judge *exactly* the same thoughts and judgments in different psychical acts demonstrates the fact that these subjective acts have a strictly identical and objective content (Husserl, 1994e, 389). Therefore, these contents cannot be *real parts* of real subjective psychical acts as Twardowski claimed.

4. FREGE’S INFLUENCE ON HUSSERL’S PSYCHOLOGISM

The development of Husserl’s thinking presented so far should answer one question of historical interest. The question concerns Frege’s influence on Husserl’s anti-psychologism and created a whole domain of Husserl scholarship.¹⁹

If we take into account that Husserl clearly wasn’t satisfied with the Brentanian psychologically oriented anti-psychologism in the early nineties and that Bolzanian arguments against the immanent interpretation of logical contents defended by Twardowski were presented by Husserl in 1894 and developed

¹⁷ The translation of the quote is taken from Twardowski (1977, 29).

¹⁸ What name is then left for the common content of all propositional attitudes? In his 1896 *Logic Lecture*, Husserl’s accepted the term “propositional thought” (*Satzgedanke*) as a proper term for this part (see for instance Husserl 2001c, 47-48). It is hard to say, whether Husserl could have been influenced here in his reception of Bolzano by Frege’s well-known use of “thought” (*Gedanke*) for the sense that can be true or false and that can be affirmed, asked etc. The term appears already in Frege’s early texts. However, Bolzano also uses the term “thought propositions” (*gedachte Sätze*) in relation to propositions merely grasped by subjective ideas.

¹⁹ The seminal article is Føllesdal (1994). For the subsequent discussion concerning this point see also Mohanty (1977) and Haddock, Hill (2001).

before he read Frege's review, that Husserl had tried to integrate Bolzano's main concepts into his work even before he read Twardowski's book and that Husserl's work on logic in 1896 is filled with Bolzanian terminology and examples, it is surprising that some interpreters, e.g. Centrone in her otherwise very interesting book (Centrone, 2010, xii), can still support the claim that Frege somehow initiated Husserl's turn against psychologism in his 1894 review of Husserl's *Philosophy of Arithmetics*²⁰ or that he was a major source of inspiration for Husserl's anti-psychologism. Husserl could concede that Frege helped him to move away from Brentano's flawed anti-psychologistic theory, but this was a move toward an enthusiastic study of Bolzano's work on logic. Leaving the important issue of philosophy of mathematics aside, the proper question concerning the development of Husserl's anti-psychologism is not to what extent Frege initiated Husserl's turn to the logical objectivism, but rather to what extent Frege, who apparently didn't know Bolzano's logic, could have influenced Husserl's study, understanding, and acceptance of Bolzano's ideas.

After 1894, Husserl's first reception of Bolzano is reformulated in new terms in the subsequent development of Husserl's view regarding judgments and other propositional acts. While Husserl now holds that Bolzano couldn't have meant to identify propositions with specific objects of propositional attitudes (with states of affairs), he still wonders whether Bolzano himself understood his objective propositions as logical truths and falsehoods or as logical thoughts *in specie*, i.e. as *Satzgedanken*. In his *Logical Investigations*, Husserl works out a theory of a categorical intuition and an epistemic essence of intentional acts to further illuminate the appearance of truth in evident judging. But this is already a different story, to be left for a different occasion.

CONCLUSION

Even though Brentano's philosophy presents a kind of anti-psychologism, Husserl clearly wasn't satisfied with the way Brentano treated *identity* of meaning, *universality* of evidence, and *objectivity* of truth. His very early attempts — made already in early 1890's — at explaining these concepts as results of abstraction from real psychical acts failed. Husserl looked for another solution and found a promising theory in the work of Bernard Bolzano. One of the most prominent concepts in Bolzano's anti-psychologism is his concept of propositions, both truths and falsehoods in themselves. Following the theory of judgment

²⁰ Frege (1894).

offered by Stumpf (and Brentano) Husserl identified propositions in themselves with states of affairs. However, he enriched his understanding of the concept of state of affairs by views defended by his colleague in Halle, Beno Erdmann. Husserl also agreed with Erdmann that the same state of affairs can be presented as the object of many propositional attitudes. But is the presented state of affairs (presented proposition in itself) an object of an independent act of presenting as Brentano's psychology suggests? Husserl's answer was negative. All propositional theoretical acts, presenting included, have a certain presentative component, but this component is not an independent act.

In 1894 Husserl read Twardowski's book and accepted his distinction between contents and objects of acts. This helped Husserl to understand Bolzano's propositions in themselves as contents of propositional acts or as objective "sentences". However, he followed Bolzano in defending the irreducibility of these contents to immanent parts of acts. In the end, Husserl was left wondering whether Bolzano meant by "proposition" a common element of all propositional attitudes or a full logical content of judgments only. In 1896 Husserl claimed that if qualitatively different propositional acts share the same content then they share the same propositional *thought*, but only in judgments a proposition appears since only in judgments a *truth* or *falsehood* appears. This sense of appearing required further elaboration. Even though in all judgments a proposition appears to be true or false, only in evident judgments objective truth or falsehood appears. In this respect, Husserl still stands firm in the tradition of Brentano. We have stressed that there is no talk of Lotze and not a trace of interpreting logical contents as general entities in Husserl's 1896 *Logic Lectures* and that these lectures are filled with Bolzanian examples and Bolzano's terminology. Moreover, Frege doesn't seem to have much influence on Husserl's move against psychologism and the general transformation of his theory of propositional acts, even though his work could have influenced Husserl's views concerning more specific topics of logic and semantics.

REFERENCES

- Bergmann, H., & Brentano, F. (1946). Briefe Franz Brentano's an Hugo Bergmann. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 7 (1), 83-158.
- Beyer, C. (1996). *Von Bolzano zu Husserl, Eine Untersuchung über den Ursprung der phänomenologischen Bedeutungslehre*. Dordrecht, Boston, London: Kluwer.
- Bolzano, B. (1837a). *Bolzanos Wissenschaftslehre: Versuch einer ausführlichen und grösstentheils neuen Darstellung der Logik mit steter Rücksicht auf deren*

- bisherige Bearbeiter*, Band I. Sulzbach: Seidel.
- Bolzano, B. (1837b). *B. Bolzanos Wissenschaftslehre; Versuch einer ausführlichen und grösstentheils neuen Darstellung der Logik mit steter Rücksicht auf deren bisherige Bearbeiter*, Band II. Sulzbach: Seidel.
- Bolzano., Exner F. (1935). Der Briefwechsel B. Bolzano's mit F. Exner. In *Bernard Bolzano's Schriften*, Band IV. Praha: Královská česká společnost nauk.
- Bolzano, B. (2004). *On the Mathematical Method and Correspondence with Exner*. Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi.
- Bolzano, B. (2014). *Theory of Science*, Volume One. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Brandl, J. (2014). "Brentano's Theory of Judgement". In E.N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Summer 2014 Edition. Retrieved from <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/brentano-judgement/>
- Brentano, F. (2009a). On Psychologism. In: F. Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*. New York: Routledge, 238-239.
- Brentano, F. (2009b). *The True and the Evident*. New York: Routledge.
- Brentano, F. (2009c). *The Origin of our Knowledge of Right and Wrong*. New York: Routledge.
- Brentano, F. (2009d). *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*. New York: Routledge.
- Centrone, S. (2010). *Logic and Philosophy of Mathematics in the Early Husserl*. New York: Springer.
- Chisholm, R.M. (1982). *Brentano and Meinong Studies*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Erdmann, B. (1892). *Logik*, Band I. Halle: Niemeyer.
- Føllesdal, D. (1994). Husserl and Frege: A Contribution to Elucidating the Origins of Phenomenological Philosophy. In L. Haaparanta (Ed.), *Mind, Meaning and Mathematics: Essays on the Philosophical Views of Husserl and Frege* (3-50). Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Frechette, G. (2011). De la proposition à l'état de choses : Husserl lecteur de Bolzano. In A. Dewalque, D. Seron, and B. Leclercq (Eds.), *Catégories ontologiques et catégories logiques* (33-53). Liège: Presses de l'Université de Liège.
- Frege, G. (1894). Rezension von: E. G. Husserl, Philosophie der Arithmetik. Band I. *Zeitschrift für Philosophie und philosophische Kritik*, 103, 313-332.
- Haddock, G. & Hill, C. O. (2000). *Husserl or Frege?* Chicago: Open Court, Chicago.
- Husserl, E. (1994a). Review of Melchior Palagyi's *Der Streit der Psychologisten und Formalisten in der modernen Logik*. In *Early Writings in the Philosophy of Logic and Mathematics* (197-206). Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Husserl, E. (1994b). *Briefwechsel, II* (Hua, Dokumente). Den Haag: Kluwer.
- Husserl, E. (1994c). *Briefwechsel, III* (Hua, Dokumente). Den Haag: Kluwer.
- Husserl, E. (1994d). *Briefwechsel, V* (Hua, Dokumente). Den Haag: Kluwer.
- Husserl, E. (1994e). *Early Writings in the Philosophy of Logic and Mathematics*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Husserl, E. (2001a). *Logical Investigations*, Vol. 1. New York: Routledge.
- Husserl, E. (2001b). *Logical Investigations*, Vol. 2. New York: Routledge.
- Husserl, E. (2001c). *Logik Vorlesung 1896, I* (Hua, Materialbände). Dordrecht: Springer.

- Husserl, E. (2009). *Untersuchungen zur Urteilstheorie, Texte aus dem Nachlass (1893-1918)* (Hua XL). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Ierna, C. (2012). Husserl's Psychology of Arithmetic. *Bulletin d'analyse Phénoménologique*, 8, 97-120.
- Koreň, L. (2014a). Quantificational Accounts of Logical Consequence I: From Aristotle to Bolzano. *Organon*, 21 (1), 22-44.
- Koreň, L. (2014b). Quantificational Accounts of Logical Consequence III. The Model-Theoretic Account: Quantificational Approach Triumphant? *Organon*, 21 (4), 492-515.
- Kraus, O. (2009). Introduction. In F. Brentano, *The True and the Evident* (xiv-xxvi). New York: Routledge.
- Lotze, H. (1887). *Logic in Three Books*, Vol. II. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Marty, A., Antonelli, M., Marek, J.C. (2011). *Deskriptive Psychologie*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann.
- Meinong, A. (1892). Anzeige von: Franz Hillebrand, Die neuen Theorien der kategorischen Schlüsse. *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen*, 10, 443-466.
- Mohanty, J. N. (1977). Husserl and Frege: A New Look at their Relationship. In J. N. Mohanty (Ed.), *Readings on Husserl's Logical Investigations* (22-32). The Hague: Nijhoff.
- Moore, G. E. (1902). The review of Franz Brentano's The Origin of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong. *International Journal of Ethics*, 14, 115-23.
- Rollinger, R. (2008). *Austrian Phenomenology, Brentano, Husserl, Meinong and Others on Mind and Object*. Frankfurt a.M.: Ontos Verlag.
- Stumpf, C. (1999). Syllabus for Logic. In R. Rollinger, *Husserl's Position in the School of Brentano* (311-339). Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Twardowski, K. (1977). *On the Content and Object of Presentation*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Twardowski, K. (1982). *Zur Lehre vom Inhalt und Gegenstand der Vorstellungen*. Wien: Philosophia Verlag.
- Varga, (2014). Was hat Husserl in Wien außerhalb von Brentano's Philosophie gelernt? Über die Einflüsse auf den frühen Husserl jenseits von Brentano und Bolzano. *Husserl Studies*, 31 (2), 95-121.