



# GUAIRACÁ REVISTA DE FILOSOFIA

## INTENTIONALITY AND ETHOLOGY DIFFERENCES IN THE APPROACHES OF JOHN STUART MILL AND FRANZ BRENTANO

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**ABSTRACT:** The point of this paper is to present a historical introduction to the notion of *intentionality* as it occurred in the context of philosophical and scientific research on ethology, namely the science of the formation of character. My argumentative strategy will be to maintain that both John Stuart Mill, in his work *Logic of the Moral Sciences*, and Franz Brentano, in his work *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, explicitly agreed that Psychology was the science of elementary laws of mind and that Ethology was the science that corresponds with the art of education in the broadest sense. Thus first, I will analyze the converging points of both theories, and second, I will argue that the fundamental difference between the Psychologies of Mill and Brentano is the fact that Brentano's thesis did not recognize the fundamental Millian assumption, i.e., the assumption that the causal relations between mental phenomena should be the Psychological object of study from which the mental law is established. Through my analysis I intend to demonstrate that for Brentano, the mental phenomenon, while a matter of study for Psychology, is itself the fundamental relation between the physical phenomenon and the mental phenomenon. This fundamental relation can be characterized by its *intentional nature*, which makes explicit the description of the physical phenomenon as the content or object of the mental phenomenon. The consequence of this

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Brentanian thesis implies that the theoretical basis of Ethology also results from the investigation of the *intentional nature* of the mental phenomenon.

**Keywords:** Intentionality. Ethology. Franz Brentano. John Stuart Mill.

## INTENCIONALIDADE E ETOLOGIA

### Divergências e convergências entre Franz Brentano e John Stuart Mill

RESUMO: O presente artigo tem como objetivo apresentar a introdução histórica da noção de intencionalidade, tal como ela se deu no âmbito da investigação filosófica e científica acerca da Etologia, ou seja, da ciência da formação do caráter. Nossa estratégia argumentativa consistirá em sustentar que John Stuart Mill, em sua obra *Lógica das ciências morais*, e Franz Brentano, em sua obra *Psicologia do ponto de vista empírico*, acordaram explicitamente que a Psicologia seria a ciência das leis elementares da mente e a Etologia seria a ciência que corresponderia à arte da educação no sentido mais amplo. Portanto, o artigo tratará, num primeiro momento, de especificar os pontos convergentes das duas teorias e, num segundo momento, de sustentar que a diferença fundamental entre as PsicoLOGIAS de Mill e Brentano estava no fato de que a tese de Brentano não reconhecia o pressuposto milliano fundamental de que a relação causal entre fenômenos psíquicos deveria ser o objeto de estudo da Psicologia, a partir do qual as leis psíquicas seriam estabelecidas. A análise mostrará que, para Brentano, o fenômeno psíquico seria, enquanto objeto de estudo da Psicologia, a própria relação fundamental entre fenômenos físicos e fenômenos psíquicos. Esta relação fundamental estaria caracterizada por sua natureza intencional, a qual apresentava a descrição dos fenômenos físicos como conteúdos ou objetos dos fenômenos psíquicos. A consequência desta tese brentaniana implicaria, portanto, que a fundamentação da Etologia também decorreria da investigação da natureza intencional dos fenômenos psíquicos.

**Palavras-chave:** Intencionalidade. Etologia. Franz Brentano. John Stuart Mill.

## INTRODUCTION

Although the theoretical distance between the philosophical theses developed by the philosophers John Stuart Mill and Franz Brentano is undeniable, it is impossible to deny the similarity in the relation that both established between Psychology and Ethology (the science of the formation of the character). Indeed, although Mill and Brentano conceived the specificity of each of these sciences

differently, they were in full agreement as to both definitions, in the more general sense, and the relation of dependence between them. In other words, they both explicitly agreed that Psychology was the science of the elementary laws of mind, and that Ethology was the science that corresponded with the art of education in the broadest sense. Mill, for example, stated in the book VI of his work *System of Logic*, called *Logic of the Moral Sciences* (2009), that the laws of character formation were laws deduced from the general laws of mind. In turn, Brentano stated in his *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (2009 [2008]), citing explicitly the tasks outlined by Mill, that Psychology also had the task of becoming the scientific foundation of a theory of education, both for the individual and for society. Thus, if the similarity between the works of both philosophers is evident and acknowledged in writing, it is worth asking what is the specificity and difference between them. This will, therefore, be the question that this article answers in four parts.

In the first part, I will describe the way in which the German philosopher Franz Brentano, in his work *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, conceived the proposal of the foundation of Ethology as presented by John Stuart Mill in his work *Logic of the Moral Sciences*. In the second part, I will present the Millian definition of Psychology, and the distinction between mental phenomena and physical phenomena that it assumes. In the third part, I will set out the main epistemological limitation that Brentano found in Mill's Psychology, and show how the notion of *intentional relation (to the object)* was introduced by Brentano to resolve this limitation. In the last part, I will present the main Brentanian turning point to moral cognitivism, and I will conclude by identifying the problem that led Brentano to abandon his first project: the foundation of the theory of moral sentiment, as well as the foundation of Ethology, in his Philosophy of mind. In any case, even though this was Brentano's unfinished project, he had the virtue of reintroducing the theory of intentionality, through both the concept of *intentional object* and that of *intentional relation*, as the foundation of the investigation of laws governing the formation of human character.

## THE BRENTANIAN HERITAGE RECEIVED FROM JOHN STUART MILL

In order to present the way in which Brentano conceived the proposed foundation of Millian Ethology, I will contextualize it in terms of the foundation of the human sciences developed by Mill in his work *Logic of the Moral Sciences*. This contextualization will require specifically a description of the Millian way in which Psychology should be constituted as a science, since the consolidation of Psychology as a science is a condition of the possibility of Ethology as a science.

In order to make his conception of mental science explicit, Mill offered a synopsis that dealt with the basic questions of Psychology. In Brentanian opinion, this synopsis established the following three fundamental points.

The first point in Brentano's systematization made it clear that the general task of Psychology was to investigate the laws of succession of our mental states. In other words, Psychology tries to investigate and explain the laws according to which one mental state produces another. Such an investigation would show that some mental laws are general, and others special.

According to the Brentanian interpretation, Mill stated that "a general law, for example, would be the law according to which, whenever any state of consciousness has once been excited in us, no matter by what cause ... a state of consciousness resembling the former but inferior in intensity, is capable of being reproduced in us, without the presence of any such cause as excited it at first" (BRENTANO, 2009, p. 9 [2008, p. 28]). Thus, to use Hume's language, Mill assumed that each impression has an idea, and thus that there are certain general laws that determine the effective realization of the idea.

Brentano (2009, p. 9 [2008, p. 28]) presented the three "Laws of Association of Ideas" quoted by Mill, as follows:

a) The Law of Similarity (*Gesetz der Similarität*): "Similar ideas tend to excite one another."

b) The Law of Contiguity (*Gesetz der Contiguität*): "When two impressions have been frequently experienced... either simultaneously or in immediate succession, then when one of these impressions, or the idea of it, recurs, it tends to excite the idea of the other."

c) The Law of Intensity (*Gesetz der Intensität*): "Greater intensity in either or both of the impressions, is equivalent, in rendering them excitable by one another, to a greater frequency of conjunction."

After highlighting thus the investigation of the succession laws of our mental states as a general task of Psychology, Brentano went on to the delimitation of the next point.

The second point of the Brentanian systematization established that the Psychology conceived by Mill would still have the task of deducing more specific and more complex laws of thought from these general and fundamental laws of mental phenomena. Thus, in the words of Brentano, the question that Mill established for the investigation of specific laws was put like this:

He says that since several mental phenomena often work concurrently, the question arises whether or not every such case is a case of a combination of causes—in other

words, whether or not effects and initial conditions are always related in the same way, as they are in the field of mechanics, where a motion is always the result of motion, homogeneous with its causes and in a certain sense the sum of its causes; or whether the mental realm also exhibits cases similar to the process of chemical combination, where you see in water none of the characteristics of hydrogen and oxygen, and in cinnabar none of the characteristics of mercury and sulphur. (BRENTANO, 2009, p. 9 [2008, p. 28])

This was, in fact, a complex question, and Brentano pointed out two fundamental elements of analysis established through it. The first of these elements to be analyzed was the causal relation itself, or causation, between ideas, *conditio sine qua non* of the formulation of laws.<sup>2</sup>

The second element was the kind of causal combination, since, as Mill had established in the first part of his *System of Logic*, Psychology could draw on both the method of Physics and the method of Chemistry.

In the Brentanian interpretation, “Mill himself believed it to be an established fact that both types of case exist in the domain of inner phenomena” (BRENTANO, 2009, p. 9 – 10 [2008, p. 28]).

In other words, it is possible that sometimes a process analogous to the process of mechanics occurs, and at other times a combination analogous to the process of chemistry occurs. Thus, if the causal relation were analogous to those in mechanics, mental phenomena would cause other mental phenomena in a homogeneous way and as a sum of causes, such as “motion is always the result of motion, homogeneous with its causes and in a certain sense the sum of its causes” (BRENTANO, 2009, p. 9 [2008, p. 28]).

However, it might be that the causal relation is analogous to that which occurs in chemistry. In that case, the mental phenomena or representations would merge so that they no longer resembled several representations but rather one simple representation of a completely different kind. This is, therefore, the case that “the idea of extension and three-dimensional space develops from kinesthetic sensations” (BRENTANO, 2009, p. 10 [2008, p. 29]).

Having thus explained first what Mill defined as the object of psychology (the general and special laws regulating the causal relations that govern the association of mental phenomena) and second, the two possible methodological modes of investigation of causal relations (analogous to those of physics and chemistry), the Brentanian analysis went one step further.

2. See Chapter II of *Logic of the Moral Sciences*, entitled *Freedom and Necessity*, in which Mill explains his concept of causation (or relation of cause and effect between phenomena), as well as an object of moral sciences, eliminating any taint of fatalistic or necessitarian doctrines.

The third point of the systematization revealed the functions of Millian Psychology in two fundamental realms. On the one hand there was the cognitive realm, where one would investigate both the knowledge, or immediate beliefs, and the laws that regulate valid inferences. On the other, was the emotional realm, in which the original objects as well as the causal relations that determine the desire for things originally viewed indifferently or even as disagreeable would be investigated. As Brentano states:

In respect to belief, we would inquire what we believe directly; according to what laws one belief produces another; and what are the laws in virtue of which one thing is taken, rightly or erroneously, as evidence for another thing. In regard to desire, the primary task would consist in determining what objects we desire naturally and originally, and then we must go on to determine by what causes we are made to desire things originally indifferent or even disagreeable to us. (BRENTANO, 2009, p. 10)

Let me then return to what was established here in the three points systematized by Brentano, in light of the statements in the above quotation.

Brentano set out the fundamental stages of Mill's proposal for the founding of the moral sciences. Thus, the basic position of Psychology was that it would make explicit the general and special laws governing the associations between internal phenomena, establishing their type of causal relation through a methodological procedure analogous to that of physics or chemistry.

Therefore, once Psychology was constituted as science, the door would be open for the development of a theory of knowledge and logic, as well as of the moral sciences. The former would be the result of the investigation of beliefs and possible inferences from their relations, while the latter would be the result of the investigation of desires and volitions.

Thus, having set out the Millian epistemological basis and the research field of moral sciences, Brentano could also point to the Millian way of adding another rich scientific field. In his interpretation, it is in the field of Ethology, or science of character formation, where "psychological and physiological research become more closely involved with one another than elsewhere" (BRENTANO, 2009, p. 10 [2008, p. 29]).

More objectively, the Brentanian analysis made explicit that, according to Mill, the psychologist also had the task of investigating the extension in which the production of one mental state by another is influenced by demonstrable physical states. Thus, investigation of the causal relation between physical states and their respective mental states would therefore constitute the field of Ethology.



According to the Brentanian analysis, Mill structured this field as follows. In the first place, he established a threefold basis for the fact that different people are differently sensitive to the same mental causes. Hence, such differences “could be an original and ultimate fact, they could be consequences of the previous mental history of those individuals, and they could be the result of differences in physical organization” (BRENTANO, 2009, p. 10 [2008, p. 29]). Thus, the causal relations between physical states and mental states that determine the formation of a person’s character would therefore be determined not only by biological causes but also by external circumstances and education.

The formation of character would, however, be a fundamental point of Millian Ethology. Brentano did not address this specifically, since his theoretical interest lay mainly in the global scope of Mill’s Psychology of which Ethology was only a part. In this sense, it is important to emphasize the fact that the possibility of the scientific study of character formation was conceived by Mill as a direct consequence of his way of defining the notion of causality as causation; that is, as causal relations between phenomena, called laws of association.

In other words, by excluding the metaphysical presuppositions that referred the notion of causality to fatalism and necessity<sup>3</sup>, Mill restricted the field of investigation of Ethology to the causal relations between physical and mental phenomena, as with the field of all moral sciences. Thus, the scientific validity of empirically founded ethological laws governing the causal relations between constituent phenomena of the formation of character, would result from the fact that such laws should be deduced from the more general mental laws governing the causal relations between all mental phenomena related to desires and volitions.

As Mill explained in the quotation below, in view of this conceptual framework the whole field of ethological investigation is constituted under the assumption of personal freedom, which is defined as the capacity to choose or change the always necessary causes that influence character formation.

He [a person] has, to a certain extent, a power to alter his character. Its being, in the ultimate resort, formed for him, is not inconsistent with its being, in part, formed by him as one of the intermediate agents. His character is formed by his circumstances (including among these his particular organization); but his own desire to mould it in a particular way, is one of those circumstances, and by no means one of the least influential. We can not, indeed, directly will to be different from what we are. But neither did those who are supposed to have formed our

3. “The free-will doctrine, by keeping in view precisely that portion of the truth which the word Necessity puts out of sight, namely the power of the mind to co-operate in the formation of its own character, has given to its adherents a practical feeling much nearer to the truth than has generally (I believe) existed in the minds of necessitarians. The latter may have had a stronger sense of the importance of what human beings can do to shape the characters of one another; but the free-will doctrine has, I believe, fostered in its supporters a much stronger spirit of self-culture” (MILL, 2009, p. 1034).

characters directly will that we should be what we are. Their will had no direct power except over their own actions. They made us what they did make us, by willing, not the end, but the requisite means; and we, when our habits are not too inveterate, can, by similarly willing the requisite means, make ourselves different. If they could place us under the influence of certain circumstances, we, in like manner, can place ourselves under the influence of other circumstances. We are exactly as capable of making our own character, if we will, as others are of making it for us. (MILL, 2009, p. 1023).

Thus, this capacity would be characterized as the autonomy of a person in establishing the means (the circumstances) that would necessarily determine his/her character. As Mill put it, "if we examine closely, we shall find that this feeling, of our being able to modify our own character if we wish, is itself the feeling of moral freedom which we are conscious of" (Mill, 2009, p. 1023). In the Millian view, the condition for a person to feel morally free would be tied to the fact that he/she did not feel dominated by his/her habits and temptations. Rather, he/she would feel morally free when he/she dominated them, even when he/she had to yield to them, but he/she would be sure that he/she could resist them: "there would not be required for that purpose a stronger desire than he knows himself to be capable of feeling" (MILL, 2009, p. 1024).

After establishing these two presuppositions, namely, current freedom in the formation of character and current necessity in the causal relations between physical and mental phenomena, the conclusion of the Brentanian analysis becomes understandable. For, as Brentano asserted, Ethology would allow that "the attentive and critical observer will recognize that by far the greatest portion of a person's character can be adequately explained in terms of his education and outward circumstances" (Brentano, 2009, p. 10 [2008, p. 29]).

The remaining part of the formation of character, which would result neither from education nor from external circumstances, would be established, in general, only indirectly by organic differences. The Brentanian examples for cases originating from organic differences show that this causal relation would be valid "not merely for the commonly recognized tendency of the deaf toward mistrustfulness, of the congenitally blind toward lustfulness, of the physically handicapped toward irritability" (Brentano, 2009, p. 10 [2008, p. 29]), but also, in the same way, for many other cases less easy to conceive.

Finally, according to the Brentanian analysis, in the same field as that for Ethology, that is, for the science of the laws of character construction, there would still be other phenomena, particularly instincts, which would be explained only immediately after their constitution.



# JOHN STUART MILL'S PSYCHOLOGY AND THE LAWS OF MIND

Having demonstrated the way in which Brentano conceived the Millian proposal for deriving Ethology from Psychology, I now present the definition of Psychology adopted by Mill, as well as its object of study, since it explains the main epistemological limitation indicated by the Brentanian analysis. In other words, Brentano accepted the definition of Psychology as a science of the elementary laws of mind, but he rejected the assumption that the *causal relation* between *mental phenomena* was its object of study. After comparing, then, the definitions of Psychology presented by Mill and Brentano, I will explain how and why the notion of *intentional relation (to the object)* was introduced by Brentano to replace this assumption.

Let me first introduce the Millian theory presented in the chapter entitled *The Laws of the Mind* in *The Logic of the Moral Sciences* (2009).

According to Mill's view, Psychology would be defined as that science which has as its object "the uniformities of succession, the laws, whether ultimate or derivative, according to which one mental state succeeds another; is caused by, or at least, is caused to follow, another" (MILL, 2009, p. 1035). In other words, Psychology would be the science that had as its object, laws, such laws being of two distinct types, namely general laws and special laws, governing the production of ideas through three modes of association (similarity, contiguity, and intensity)<sup>4</sup>. By defining Psychology in this way, Mill made explicit his intention to respect the Comtean criteria of scientificity, at least with respect to the refusal of metaphysical speculation. In fact, as Mill points out in the following quotation, Psychology was not so much a science of the mind, where the mind is a substantial bearer, a substantial substrate, or a thing in itself. Rather, it was mainly that the contents of those relations, or laws, conceived by Psychology, would be either mental phenomena of a sensorial nature or mental phenomena caused by sensorial phenomena.

What the Mind is, as well as what Matter is, or any other question respecting Things in themselves, as distinguished from their sensible manifestations, it would be foreign to the purposes of this treatise to consider. Here, as throughout our inquiry, we shall keep clear of all speculations respecting the mind's own nature, and shall understand by the laws of mind those of mental Phenomena; of the various feelings or states of consciousness of sentient beings (MILL, 2009, p. 1032).

The fact that Millian Psychology would investigate the laws of mind, conceived as causal relations of association, immediately leads us to the question

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4. Compare Mill (2009, p. 50).

of the contents of the mental phenomena that would be causally associated in those relations. In other words: how did Mill define the mental phenomena that exist as contents of causal relations?

According to him, such phenomena of the mind would be “the various feelings of our nature, both those improperly called physical and those peculiarly designated as mental” (MILL, 2009, p. 1032). In this sense, Mill said, “by the laws of mind, I mean the laws according to which those feelings generate one another” (MILL, 2009, p. 1032). However, in this definition of *phenomena of the mind* there was imprecision concerning the “improper” nature of the physical phenomenon, which was recognized and clarified by Mill himself. According to Mill’s view, a clear distinction between mental states and bodily states could be established if the concept of sensation were conceived of as a state or mental phenomenon rather than a bodily state. Thus, as Mill’s words below indicate, it would be necessary to define the mental phenomenon of sensation, distinguishing it from its approximate cause, which would be a state of body.

These [mental Phenomena], according to the classification we have uniformly followed, consist of Thoughts, Emotions, Volitions, and Sensations; the last being as truly states of Mind as the three former. It is usual, indeed, to speak of sensations as states of body, not of mind. But this is the common confusion, of giving one and the same name to a phenomenon and to the approximate cause or conditions of the phenomenon (MILL, 2009, p. 1032).

The ambiguous use of the word sensation results, according to Mill, from the fact that it is not recognized that “the immediate antecedent of a sensation is a state of body, but the sensation itself is a state of mind” (MILL, 2009, p. 1032). Thus, Mill concluded, “If the word Mind means anything, it means that which feels” (MILL, 2009, p. 1032). This established distinction thus differentiated the mental state of feeling from the bodily state of feeling, although the state of the body immediately preceded the state of the mind, acting as its approximate cause.

There was, however, something else relevant in the characterization of this causal relation between mental and bodily states. It was also a negative demarcation of the object of study of Psychology before the positive demarcation of the object of study of Physiology. Thus, as the following quotation proves, Mill presented the laws governing the causal relation between corporeal and mental states as objects of study of Physiology. Let us see.

With regard to those states of mind which are called sensations, all are agreed that these have for their immediate antecedents, states of body. Every sensation has for its proximate cause some affection of the portion of our frame called the nervous system, whether this affection originates in the action of some external object, or in some pathological condition of the nervous organization itself. The laws of this

portion of our nature—the varieties of our sensations, and the physical conditions on which they proximately depend—manifestly belong to the province of Physiology (MILL, 2009, p. 1033).

After demarcating, therefore, the object of study of Psychology in the face of the object of study of Physiology, and having established the distinction between the physical state of sensation and the mental state of sensation, Mill made explicit his classification of physical facts and mental facts. His following words summarize this classification.

Whatever opinion we hold respecting the fundamental identity or diversity of matter and mind, in any case the distinction between mental and physical facts, between the internal and the external world, will always remain, as a matter of classification; and in that classification, sensations, like all other feelings, must be ranked as mental phenomena. The mechanism of their production, both in the body itself and in what is called outward nature, is all that can with any propriety be classed as physical... All states of mind are immediately caused either by other states of mind, or by states of body. When a state of mind is produced by a state of mind, I call the law concerned in the case a law of Mind. When a state of mind is produced directly by a state of body, the law is a law of Body, and belongs to physical science (MILL, 2009, p. 1032 - 1033).

Thus I conclude the systematization of the Millian conception of Psychology, having defined its object of study and specified the content of the cause and effect relations that would be investigated in the process of obtaining laws.

It is now time to present Brentano's critique of Mill's conception of Psychology and to clarify how Brentano introduced the notion of *intentionality*, defined first as *an intentional relation (to the object)* and later as *an intentional relation to the immanent object*.

## THE CRITICISM OF JOHN STUART MILL BY FRANZ BRENTANO

The Brentanian Philosophy of mind, presented in the work *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (1874), was intended to support Ethics and Ethology through a theory of moral feeling, but it would be compromised by a scientific proposal as a consequence of its connection with a project by J. St. Mill.

However, although Brentano had promised to present his theory of moral sentiment in a companion volume, to be elaborated after the publication of his main work, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (2009 [2008]), that promise was never

fulfilled. What we get from his theory of moral feeling is only an outline presented in the main work itself<sup>5</sup>.

Regarding his intended goals for his *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, Brentano explicitly stated his commitment to achieve the same results for which Mill had hoped. As the following passage indicates, Brentano clearly quoted the Millian proposal presented in the *Logic of Moral Sciences* and defined it as his.

John Stuart Mill is right, then, when he says in his *Logic*: "In respect to Belief, psychologists will always have to inquire (a) what beliefs we have by direct consciousness, and (b) according to what laws one belief produces another; (c) what are the laws in virtue of which one thing is recognized by the mind, either rightly or erroneously, as evidence of another thing. In regard to Desire, they will have to examine (d) what objects we desire naturally, and (e) by what causes we are made to desire things originally indifferent or even disagreeable to us; and so forth" (Ded. u. Ind. Logik B. VI, Kap. 4, § 3). (BRENTANO, 2009, p. 174 [2008, p. 224])

If there is, in fact, individuality in Mill and Brentano's purposes, the question that arises is what are the fundamental differences between the assumptions of both proposals. In other words, if Brentano intended to present the foundations of *the theory of knowledge* and *the theory of moral sentiment* from the foundations of *Philosophy of mind*, how did he proceed and what is the main difference presented?

The fundamental difference between Mill and Brentano's Psychology lay in the fact that Brentano's thesis did not recognize *the causal relation* between *mental phenomena* as the object of study of Psychology from which mental laws would be established. For Brentano, *the mental phenomenon* would be, as the object of study of Psychology, the fundamental relation itself, characterized by its *intentional* nature, which would offer the foundations for the scientificity of Psychology in guaranteeing the evidence of its laws.

The famous Brentanian quotation, presented below, describes the fundamental point of the theoretical divergence between Mill and Brentano.

Every mental phenomenon is characterized by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental)† inexistence of an object, and what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously, reference to a content, direction toward an object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a thing), or immanent objectivity. Every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself, although they do not all do so in the same way. In presentation something is

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5. In 1889, when he published the work *Vom Ursprung sittlicher Erkenntnis*, Brentano radicalized his ethical theory by abandoning moral expressivism and assuming a moral cognitivism. Although it is not possible to explain it in this work, it is interesting to note that one of the factors that would have explained this change is the reformulation of the notion of intentionality, defined in *Psychologie vom empirisch Standpunkt* (1874) as an intentional relation (to the in-existent object) and, later, in *Vom Ursprung sittlicher Erkenntnis* (1889), as intentional relation to the immanent object.

presented, in judgement something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on. (BRENTANO, 2009, p. 68)

This quote involves a lot of assumptions that I do not care to analyze here. I will deal only with one aspect; namely, the characterization of *the mental phenomenon* as an *intentional relation* that refers to something already contained in the mental phenomenon itself as its content or object; that is, in an *objective way*.

It is fundamental to consider, first, that Brentano arrived at this definition of the concept of *mental phenomenon* after reformulating the classic concept of *representation*, adopting a procedure of analysis very similar to that adopted by Mill in order to define the concept of sensation.

Thus, as I explained in the previous section, one of the fundamental assumptions of Mill's Psychology lay in his definition of sensation as a mental phenomenon. For he posited, as opposing poles of the same relation, on the one hand the mental phenomenon of sensation, and, on the other, the physical or corporeal phenomenon that would act as its approximate cause. Thus, although distinguished from the bodily phenomenon, but being immediately characterized as a mental phenomenon, the sensation would be constituted as an effect of the causal relation between these two phenomena. Moreover, only as a mental phenomenon would the sensation be causally related to other mental phenomena (according to the laws of association), and when this condition was fulfilled, sensation would be part of the very object of study of Psychology, namely, the laws of mind.

Brentano, in a very similar way, called *presentation* the fundamental *mental phenomenon*. However, the relevant point for our analysis lies in the differences and not in the similarities. Thus, in rejecting the classic definition of representation, Brentano established the distinction between *the mental act* of presenting and the *object presented* in this same act. This meant that as activities of sensation itself, acts of seeing, hearing, smelling, groping, or tasting would be characterized as *mind or mental acts* and defined as *presentations*. On the other hand, as correlates of the activity of sensation, what was seen, heard, smelled, felt or tasted would be characterized as an *object* contained in the *mental acts* and defined as *presented content*. In this way, as Brentano exemplified in various quotations, in the *act of seeing* the color red, the *presentation* would consist exclusively of the *mental act of seeing*, and in turn, the red color would consist of the (*immanent*) *object seen* as the correlate of that mental act. In an analogous way, in the *act of feeling pain*, the *presentation* would consist exclusively of the *mental act of feeling* and, in turn, *the felt pain* would consist of the (*immanent*) *object* as the correlate of that mental act. Thus, in a way analogous to the Millian distinction, the *presentation* would be the *mental phenomenon* and the *presented object*



would be the *physical phenomenon*. However, for Brentano there would be something else.

If, as I have stated above, Mill conceived the relation between the mental phenomenon and the physical phenomenon from the causal relation that described the physical phenomenon as an approximate cause of the mental phenomenon, then the difference between Mill's position and that of Brentano is made explicit. In other words, in defining the concept of mental phenomena and establishing their mode of relation to the physical phenomenon, Brentano conceived the mental phenomenon and the physical phenomenon as two parts of a relation, viz., *the intentional relation (to the object)*. In this way, the Brentanian description of mental phenomena would be somewhat more complex and radical, since presentation would be only a mode of *mental phenomena*, albeit the most fundamental one.

Described as a *mental phenomenon*, the concept of *presentation* assumed a fundamental role in Brentano's theory since, as Brentano stated, "But we have at the same time noted a certain difference as regards their universality, insofar as the only way in which the primary object is necessarily and universally present in consciousness is with the kind of intentional inherence peculiar to presentations" (BRENTANO, 2009, p. 207 [2008, p. 288]). This meant that as a *mental phenomenon*, the *presentation* would necessarily be related to the *physical phenomenon*, having it as its content (in an objective way).

This was Brentano's central thesis, developed in *Psychology from the Empirical Standpoint*, which established that Psychology would have as an object of investigation this *intentional relation (to the object)* called *mental phenomenon* and, thus, the mental laws would be founded in the objective character of this relation. Brentano says that " We can conceive, without contradiction, of a being which has no capacity for judgement or love, equipped with nothing but the capacity for presentation, but we cannot conceive of it the other way around" (BRENTANO, 2009, p. 207 [2008, p. 288]). Therefore, as already stated in another work (BRITO, 2013, p. 95), the presentations, by themselves and even ficticiously, would allow the inference of laws that would describe this single mental activity. The inference of these laws would be what would consolidate Psychology as an empirical science.

However, as I have mentioned, there were other laws that this Millian proposal, assumed by Brentano, established as the goal of Psychology. These were the laws of belief (or of judgment) and the laws of feeling. In order to account for these two spheres of knowledge, and rejecting the Millian scheme based on the laws of association, Brentano assumed that, in addition to presentation, but taking it as its basis, there would also be the *mental phenomena of judgment* (act of judgment) and the *mental phenomena of sentiment* (act of loving or hating).



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According to Brentano, however, the description of the other mental phenomena showed that the complexity of such phenomena was directly linked to their degree of dependence. This explained the fact that since *presentation* was the simplest phenomenon, it would be the most independent.

In describing the *mental phenomena of judgment*, Brentano maintained that they were acts of affirmation or negation referred to a presented object. Thus, for a complex type of *intentional relation (to the object)*, every judgment would be based on a presentation, insofar as it would affirm or deny the *object presented*. Judgments would thus be described as relatively complex phenomena, and would therefore be directly dependent upon the mental phenomena of presentation but independent of the phenomena of sentiment. This meant, among other things, that the laws governing the mental activity of judging would depend only on the laws governing the mental activity of presenting.

In describing the *mental phenomena of sentiment*, Brentano maintained that they were acts of love or hate referred to a presented object. Thus, for a complex type of *intentional relation (to the object)*, every sentiment would be based on a *presentation*, insofar as it would desire or reject the *presented object*. According to the same criterion, the sentiments would still be more complex phenomena and therefore the most dependent ones. Therefore, the laws would depend directly on the laws governing the judgments, but also on the laws governing the activity of presenting.

In an analogous way to the mental laws obtained from the investigation of the *mental phenomenon of presentation*, the investigation of the *mental phenomena of judgment* and the *mental phenomena of sentiment* would explain two new orders of laws. These were the laws that would found, on the one hand, the logic and theory of knowledge, and on the other, the theory of moral sentiment and the human sciences in general. Thus, guided by the *intentional relation (to the object)* that is judged (or loved and hated) in a complex mental act, Brentano replaced the *principle of laws of association* as the foundation of Psychology and of the moral sciences, as claimed by Mill.

According to what I have set forth, the Brentanian ethological foundation proposal was based on Brentano's Philosophy of mind, which was based on the notion of *intentional relation (to the object)*. Thus, breaking definitively with Mill, Brentano replaced the associationist assumption of the *mental laws*, which established

a relation of cause and effect between *mental phenomena*, with the description of the *intentional relation (as the object)* that would characterize these mental phenomena. With this change in foundation, and despite becoming an unfulfilled promise, the virtue of this work consisted precisely in the introduction of the notion of intentionality, both in the 1874 version (as *relation to the in-existent object intentional*), and in the 1889 version (as an *intentional relation to the immanent object*), because the introduction of this notion imposed a new foundation for the investigation of the laws governing the formation of the human character.

In conclusion, it is necessary to present the main reasons that made Mill's proposal of the founding of Ethology a promise not to be fulfilled by Brentano, in the terms presented in *Psychology from the Empirical Standpoint*. In order to do so, it is enough to take the central elements of the Brentanian theory of 1874 and to analyze the fundamental points that structured his theory of moral sentiment, since this theory, which would serve as the basis for Ethology was abandoned and replaced in 1889 by a theory of moral cognitivism. Let us see.

First, the Brentanian theory of moral sentiment presupposed the unity of the third class of mental phenomena (feelings of love and hate). Thus, with the description of *mental phenomenon of sentiment*, Brentano stated that the *mental act of sentiment* would consist of a reference to the good or bad character of the *in-existent intentional object*, insofar as the ontological status of the object constituted it as a content of consciousness.

Second, the Brentanian theory of moral sentiment presupposed the specificity of the three reference modes to the *in-existent intentional object*. Thus, with the description *phenomena of sentiment*, Brentano established that his specificity would define the experience of the sentiment of love and hate as a moral and non-cognitive value experience. Hence, Brentano affirmed, "I do not believe that anyone will understand me to mean that phenomena belonging to this class are cognitive acts by which we perceive the goodness or badness, value or disvalue of certain objects" (BRENTANO, 2009, p. 196 [2008, p. 256]). Thus, in 1874, the possibility of knowledge within the mental activity of sentiment was eliminated.

Third, there would be the unfulfilled promise of describing the rule of inference governing ethical laws from the judgments (or beliefs) that determine the moral value of the will. Therefore, taking this rule, which would be inferred from the relation between loved objects, Brentano would describe ethics as the rectitude of love in conformity with his rule. Such rules, once made explicit by Psychology, would be constituted in the laws of mind, from which the empirically discovered laws of Ethology would be deduced.

As I have explained in another paper (BRITO, 2013, p. 120-124), the solution to this last point should contain two theoretical parts: (1) an ethical theory analogous

to the theory of syllogism, which Brentano formulated from the rules of judgment. Such a theory would allow us to describe the genesis of one love from another; and (2) the rules that would justify the validity or invalidity of the inferences of one love from the other. These two theoretical parts would thus compose the structure of the theory of moral sentiment based on the Brentanian philosophy of the mind and would be the basis of all moral science.

Finally, I deal with the point that led Brentano's work to a turning point for moral cognitivism, and implied abandoning the project of the mental foundation of Ethology, since this theoretical proposal was presented as an answer to the two questions of Mill, which Brentano assumed only showed his commitment to what he called Aristotle's error and confessed, in 1889, not to have realized in the context of the formulation of his first works (BRITO, 2013, p. 124). This error can be seen from the two main points that Brentano corrected in his turn towards moral cognitivism. Let us see:

(a) The first point was the error in assuming that the mental phenomenon of love is a consequence of knowledge. For Brentano maintained in 1874, that "It is not just presentation that is obviously a prerequisite for the will. The discussion just conducted shows that judgment precedes love and hate generally and, all the more, the relatively late phenomena of the will. Those philosophers thus turn the natural order precisely around" (BRENTANO, 2009, p. 208 [2008, p. 289]).

(b) The second point was the error in assuming that, based on the rule that would be inferred from this relation, ethics could be considered as the rectitude of love that is in conformity with this rule. Thus, as Brentano said in 1874: "in fact, then, it seems inconceivable that a being should be endowed with the capacity for love and hate without possessing that of judgment. And it is equally impossible to set up any law governing the sequence of this kind of phenomena which completely leaves out the phenomenon of judgment" (BRENTANO, 2009, p. 208 [2008, p. 288]).

The above is sufficient to demarcate the main lines of the main problem faced by Brentano in the formulation of his theory of moral sentiment and, consequently, to explain the abandonment of his first project of the mental foundation of Ethology. However, it is necessary to consider the fact that the Philosophy of mind presented by him in 1889 had the intention of exposing the fundamentals of sciences more robustly, basing them on the cognitive evidence offered by the notion of *intentional relation to the immanent object*. Therefore, my analysis concludes with the following question, which considers the possibility of formulating a sounder scientific path for Ethology: how did Brentano's theory of moral knowledge reassume the proposal of the foundation of ethology after 1889?

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