

Theory and History of Ontology

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Ontology and Psychology in the Work of Liliana Albertazzi

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

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"This Introduction to Brentano' is primarily aimed at conceptual interpretation even though it has been written with scrupulous regard to the texts and sets out its topics according to their chronological development. I have concerned myself at length with historical questions on other occasion, as when editing the Italian versions of the three volumes of Brentano's Psychologies published by Laterza in 1997. Again for Laterza, and in accompaniment to the Psychologies I have written a short *Introduzione a Brentano* (Introduction to Brentano) of which this book is the development.

Before these publications, I have sought to outline the origin and influence of the theses put forward by the school of Brentano, and subsequently those of the school of Meinong with colleagues (L. Albertazzi et. al. ed., *The School of Franz Brentano*, Dordrecht, Kluwer 1996, and L. Albertazzi et. al. ed., *The School of Alexius Meinong*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2001).

I have concentrated on these matters long enough to realize that it is still premature to attempt an exhaustive monograph on Brentano. Apart from the few texts published by Brentano during his lifetime, his writings -- and especially those published posthumously by his pupils -- are in a parlous state. And at the moment there seems to be no way out of the impasse." p. 1.

Essays

1. Albertazzi, Liliana. 1992. "Is There a Transcendental Object?" In *Theories of Objects: Meinong and Twardowski*, edited by Pasniczek, Jacek, 26-44. Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Sklodskiej.

"Twardowski's ontology is to be listed among the jungle of ontologies which seem to be in fashion in contemporary philosophy. It has in common with Meinong's *Gegenstandstheorie* the description and definition of objects. But two are peculiar to Twardowski's ontology: the object in general and the general object. This stems from Twardowski's Kantian heritage and has to be related to a general Wolffian influence on the ontology of the Brentanists."

2. ———. 1995. "Forms of Completion." *Grazer Philosophische Studien* no. 50:321-340.

"The essay underlines the complementarity between theory and experimentation as a characteristic feature of the Meinong-school. In particular, it deals with the nucleus of a theory of presentation implicit in the theory of production. In fact, on the basis of Benussi's experimental results, I distinguish between presentation and representation, relatively to the various phases of the moment-now as the qualitative primitive of cognition. This result has various consequences which shed light on the act-side: it shows that the production relation relates to the act and not to the produced object, clarifying some difficulties concerning the nature of ideal objects in Meinong's ontology; that the psychological act grants the objects of knowing on the basis of cognitive determinants which are assimilative determinants and determinants of connection. These cognitive aspects of the act are indeed forms of completions of the known objects. Endly, the essay deals with the a-modal development of Benussi's theory of the cognitive aspects of the act as performed by the Italian Gestaltist Gaetano Kanizsa."

3. ———. 1996. "Anton Marty." In *The School of Franz Brentano*, edited by Albertazzi, Liliana, Libardi, Massimo and Poli, Roberto, 83-109. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
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"We owe the concept of formal ontology to Husserl, who called it the 'formal theory' of objects. However, the concept of formal as used by Husserl in his definition should not be understood in the conventional sense, since in his thought 'formal' is equivalent to 'categorical'; it is closely connected with the structures

of the intentional acts and, as we shall see, has morphodynamic implications.

In contemporary philosophy, formal ontology has been developed in two principal ways. The first approach has been to study formal ontology as a part of ontology, and to analyse it using the tools and approach of formal logic: from this point of view formal ontology examines the logical features of predication and of the various theories of universals. The use of the specific paradigm of set theory applied to predication, moreover, conditions its interpretation. The second line of development returns to its Husserlian origins and analyses the fundamental categories of object, state of affairs, part, whole, and so forth, as well as the relations between parts and the whole and their laws of dependence - once all material concepts have been replaced by their correlative formal concepts relative to the pure 'something'. This kind of analysis does not deal with the problem of the relationship between formal ontology and material ontology." p. 199. (Notes omitted)

7. ———. 1997. "Continua, Adjectives and Tertiary Qualities." *Axiomathes* no. 8:7-30.
8. ———. 1998. "Perceptual Saliences and Nuclei of Meaning." In *The Brentano Puzzle*, edited by Poli, Roberto, 113-138. Aldershot: Ashgate.
9. ———. 1999. "Form Metaphysics." In *Shapes of Forms. From Gestalt Psychology and Phenomenology to Ontology and Mathematics*, 257-305. Dordrecht: Kluwer.

"A not up-to-date premise.

Can metaphysics be a science? The question has long been dismissed as obscurantist and in bad taste, as well as being obfuscatory, impossible to frame and methodologically inadequate. And yet it is an entirely legitimate question when stated in the following simple terms:

(i) what *exists*?

(ii) what are the best methods with which to *describe it*?

and, subordinately, why do things sometimes *appear* differently from what they *are*?

Questions of this kind stem from an empirical and experimental vocation.

The first step to take in analysis of an "elementary doctrine of the components of experience", as Kant put it, is an apparently simple one. One asks oneself, in order to remain on certain ground, what it is that exists here and now in the present moment.

A first answer concerns those apparently indubitable situations in which *something* - that is, *objects* of some kind - are seen, felt, smelt or touched. Yet an immediate certainty based on sounds, colours and things that are experienced apparently without mediations and usually with an emotional connotation - the bold red of a dress, the strident sound of violently applied brakes, the glittering gold of the decoration on the facade of a Viennese building, the pale moon that fades with the morning - at once raises the problem of the *terms used to describe it*, since these are extremely difficult to manipulate. *Here, now, something, object*, and so on, but also and more simply *colour, sound, emotion*, etc., are all terms which are widely abused and apparently bankrupt if analysed on the basis of linguistic definitions. And as for *seeing, feeling, hearing*, etc., these are veritable speculative pitfalls for the unwary. Are they acts? If they are, on what do they rest? Do they have some sort of substratum or are they wholly unconnected? And then, what is their origin? Metaphysics thus seems to oscillate perilously between the mute *deixis ad oculos* of the moment-now and the atemporality of abstract definitions of terms such as *be, exist, become*, and so on.

Not surprisingly, therefore, several philosophers have given up in the attempt and devoted themselves to the much more reassuring theories of epistemological *models* and logics of the existent, declaring metaphysics to be 'off limits'.

For those who persist in their empirical endeavour, the only option is to adopt a different approach: a minimalist one which analyses the *situation* to which these terms refer and their genesis in the duration. This is an essentially *descriptive* approach; it has close ties with psychology and it is, specifically, an *experimental phenomenology*." p. 257 (Notes omitted)

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