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The *Impersonalien* Controversy in Early Phenomenology. Sigwart and the School of Brentano

Peter Andras Varga*

Abstract: The puzzle of sentences lacking proper grammatical subjects not only challenged mainstream logical and psychological theories of judgements in post-Hegelian German academic philosophy, but it also gave rise to a historically well-defined controversy between Christoph Sigwart, a major logician of that time, and the School of Brentano in the 1880s. I analyze Sigwart's biographical and philosophical trajectory and the early interactions between him and the nascent School of Brentano. The controversy was triggered by a philosophical and academic alliance between Brentano and a colleague of his in Vienna, the linguist Franz Miklosich, which I reconstruct through an investigation of Brentano's theory of judgement and its contemporaneous reception, as well as through a microhistorical analysis of the genesis of Brentano's *Psychologie* of 1874 and his appointment to Vienna. I provide a detailed reconstruction of the actual controversy that was to a large extent fought as a proxy war between Sigwart and Brentano's orthodox disciple Anton Marty and gradually evolved into a cluster of debates on issues in the philosophy of language, burdened by *ad hominem* attacks. I argue that the controversy was fundamentally shifted by Brentano's personal intervention in 1889 but, at the same time, Sigwart's original theory of denominative judgements, the merits of which went unnoticed in his debate with Marty, is worth being studied on its own. I investigate the strata of Edmund Husserl's engagement with Sigwart and use Husserl's marginal notes in his copy of Sigwart's *Logik* to argue for an influence of Sigwart's theory of denominative judgements on Husserl's descriptive analysis of judgements and their fulfillments, especially on Husserl's idea of categorial intuition. In sum, the *Impersonalien* Controversy could be added to the list of historiographically relevant controversies in the post-

* Institute of Philosophy, Research Centre for the Humanities, Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA BTK FI). Orszaghaz u. 30, Budapest, Hungary. Email: varga.peter@btk.mta.hu. My research was supported by the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA) project no. PD105101.

Hegelian German academic philosophy (e.g., the recently highlighted *Ignorabimus* controversy, the debates on materialism and Darwinism, the less-known pessimism or the well-known psychologism controversies) and, furthermore, it could constitute one of the historically well-defined links between Early Phenomenology and the contemporaneous post-Hegelian German academic philosophy.

„Die Impersonalien und Existenzialsätze waren von jeher
das Kreuz der wissenschaftlichen Logik“
Martin Heidegger in 1912¹

1 Introduction: Why Study Sigwart?

In a letter written in 1905, at the heights of his alienation from Franz Brentano, Edmund Husserl tried to recapture the benevolence of his former philosophical master by insisting that he, contrary to the behavior of a “ambitious university lecturer” (*aufstrebender Privatdozent*; a derogatory label applied at him by Brentano in the previous piece of their correspondence), had never tried to “align himself with those who are influential and famous ([Wilhelm] Wundt, [Christoph] Sigwart, [Benno] Erdmann etc.)” (Husserl 1994, vol. 1, p. 25). Even though Husserl failed to convince Brentano,² there are two aspects of his claim that strike the contemporary reader. First, the fact that the philosophers classified by Husserl as “influential and famous” have by now mostly been forgotten – or, like Wundt, reassigned to the history of a specific scientific disciple – indicates the extent to which the focus of our contemporary scholarship differs from the actual mass distribution of the philosophical landscape in Germany at the end of the nineteenth century. Such a discrepancy, furthermore, inevitably raises the question whether the members of the contemporaneous philosophical establishment could have exerted an influence on our authors that might remain hard to discern precisely because of this shift in research interest. Was, e.g., Husserl, despite his manifest oath of allegiance to Brentano, really devoid of any influence, either conscious or subliminal, from the “influential and famous”? Isn’t it possible that his letter was intended precisely to mitigate the extent of his adherence to the contemporaneous philosophical establishment – an adherence that could have easily been ascribed to him or any young philosopher in the proximity of Brentano at the turn of the last century?

In the wake of such observations, the present paper intends to develop a case-study in the complex interaction between, on the one side, Brentano and the network of his orthodox and heterodox

1 Heidegger 1978, 32; originally published in 1912.

2 One year later, writing to an orthodox pupil of him, Brentano characterized “Husserl’s confused mindset” (*verworrener Husserlkopf*) as “somebody who has gained fame too quickly” (Brentano 1946, 86).

disciples and, on the other side, the traditional logic that was dominant in post-Hegelian German philosophy during the nineteenth century.³ There are good reasons for singling out Christoph Sigwart as a representative of this broader logical tradition: He was a widely-read and influential logician, author of a large but less-studied philosophical oeuvre, he was susceptible to modern natural science, and, last but not least, he fought a highly visible and bitter philosophical controversy with Brentano and his School. Following the trails of an actual controversy fought by historical actors could, in turn, help finding a middle way between the Scylla of anachronism and the Charybdis of irrelevant antiquarianism. Correspondingly, special attention will be paid to the origins and early stages of the controversy, the intertwining of philosophical arguments and historical circumstances, as well as how Brentano's disciples were involved in and affected by the debate. The investigation will, hopefully, teach lessons both concerning the theories of judgement in and around the School of Brentano, as well as about the historiography of Early Phenomenology in general.

2 Christoph Sigwart: A Premodern Biography and a Modern Oeuvre

Christoph Sigwart (1830-1904) perfectly represented the aforementioned philosophical establishment which had dominated the German academic life in the latter half of the 19th century and receded into oblivion since then. He was the youngest son of Heinrich Christoph Wilhelm Sigwart (1789-1844), who was himself a professor of philosophy at the University of Tübingen since 1816 (regular professor since 1818) and an author of a logical handbook (H. C. W. Sigwart 1835), which were published three times between 1818 and 1835. Although the father's "conduct of life" has been described as "simple-minded and monotonous" (Liebmann 1892, 307) and Sigwart senior had even abandoned his university position in favor of working in the secondary education sector; the son was never shy of the pleasures a successful academic career could provide.⁴ After philosophical and theological studies, which he completed at the famous Tübingen Stift, a residence and teaching hall once attended by, amongst others, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling and Friedrich Hölderlin (and where Sigwart senior formerly served as a

3 The case for re-assessing the merits of the German academic philosophy (*Universitätsphilosophie*) of the second half of the nineteenth century, which is usually eclipsed by the scholarly interest in the first, allegedly more glorious half of the century, respectively a retrospective historiographical narrative that regards this period as a prehistory of twentieth-century existentialism, was recently made in a persuasive manner by Frederick C. Beiser (2014). Beiser regrettably excluded Husserl and the School of Brentano (despite obvious points of contact, cf. Varga 2016, 96), and the history of philosophical logic – i.e., logic prior to the fundamental metamorphosis of this discipline that was initiated by Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, and their precursors George Boole, William Stanley Jevons, and Ernst Schröder (see, e.g., Peckhaus 1999) – arguably constitutes a twofold neglected field of research, despite pioneering work done by Hansen 2000 and Käufer 2010.

4 Christoph Sigwart is underexposed by the standard biographical reference works. The most detailed biographical expositions are to be found in Maier 1904 and Freytag-Löringhoff 1981. Sigwart forbade posthumous publications of his writings and his *Nachlass* is believed to have been destroyed during the Second World War.

director), and a subsequent decade of academic peregrination – he obtained his doctoral degree *in absentia* in Tübingen in 1854 –, Christoph Sigwart followed in his father's footsteps by being appointed a tutor at the Theological Seminar in Tübingen. Finally, after a short career stop in Blaubeuren in South-Germany, he was invited to the philosophy chair at the Evangelical Theological Seminar of the University of Tübingen in 1863. He was elevated to ordinary professor three years later, and he held this position until his retirement in 1903, despite being shortlisted or proposed for chairs in Würzburg, Berlin, and Göttingen.⁵ Christoph Sigwart boasted virtually the full set of distinctions that were available to state-employed philosophers in the German Empire: He served as the rector of the university in 1875, was bestowed a life nobility,⁶ decorated by the titles of a State Councilor (*Staatsrat*) in 1901 and a Privy Councilor (*Geheimrat*) in 1903. He was also elected as a corresponding member of the Prussian and the Bavarian Academies of Sciences (in 1885, respectively in 1901). As if that were not enough, Sigwart was employed as the private instructor of the royal family of Württemberg, besides serving as public orator at festive university occasions (C. Sigwart 1889a, 1 ff.). It is almost needless to point at the stark contrast between Sigwart's successful academic career and the life of Franz Brentano, who, apart from a brief period between 1874 and 1880, was denied such official opportunities of academic influence building.

Despite the style of Sigwart's academic career which, especially at its beginning, resembled the conditions of the early modern universities rather than the academic trajectories within a modern, Humboldtian university framework – e.g. he neither obtained a habilitation nor served as a *Privatdozent* –, Sigwart gradually developed into a strikingly modern philosopher. Already his early works on theology were marked by the respect for “the faithful observations by the natural sciences,” coupled with a warning against the “false confidence” of a theology “clinging to concepts that are inconsistent with natural sciences” (C. Sigwart 1859, 272–273); and his research interests subsequently shifted to logic and theory of science, which he developed against the backdrop of broad historical knowledge.

At the beginning of his professorial career in Tübingen, Sigwart became involved in a controversy over the merits of Francis Bacon as a natural scientist that was sparked in 1863 by Justus von Liebig (1803-1873), a pioneering professor of chemistry in Munich and a successful popularizer of science. Sigwart's debate with Liebig, which took place partly in highly visible newspapers of

5 In Würzburg in 1872, Sigwart was proposed by the faculty as the second candidate in the second round for the chair that was later awarded to Dilthey (see Dilthey 2011, 635, n. 3). In Berlin in 1880, Sigwart was again *secundo loco* candidate of the faculty for the position which was subsequently given to Lotze (see Lotze 2003, 675, n. 1); thereafter Sigwart was proposed by the faculty as the preferred candidate for Lotze's vacant chair in Göttingen (see Lotze 2003, 694), which was given to the novice Georg Elias Müller. The reconstruction of Sigwart's appointment offers based on primary material thus slightly diverges from the picture drawn by secondary sources (see Freytag-Löringhoff 1981, 251).

6 I omit the nobiliary particle from his name, because he reportedly restrained himself from using it and it does not appear in most of his publications either.

general interest, not only helped Sigwart gain public recognition, but also testifies Sigwart's susceptibility to an almost Kuhnian notion of scientific progress. Bacon, says Sigwart, always should be seen "in the midst of specific historical circumstances" (C. Sigwart 1863, 117) and cannot "be made responsible for having lived before Newton" (103). The novelty of Sigwart's approach to the history of science becomes manifest when compared to the simplistic presentism of his opponent who, in his reply to Sigwart, maintained that the "historical research" is only possible on the basis of "the assessment of merit and demerit" from the present scientific point of view (Liebig 1863, 5069; cf. also 5070). Sigwart's philosophical interest in the cutting edge natural sciences of his days is also reflected by his highly popular lecture course, *Die Grundprobleme der Philosophie gegenüber den wichtigsten Ergebnissen und Theorien der empirischen Wissenschaften*, offered in several semesters starting from SS 1865.

Sigwart's miraculous decade was, however, the 1870s, when, in rapid succession, he published a separate treatise on a logical topic (1871), as well a comprehensive exposition of philosophical logic in two volumes (1873, 1878). Already the former, dedicated to the specific nature of hypothetical judgements, is worth of our attention as it already exposed the sore spots of the traditional theory of judgements that came to the fore during the controversy. Hypothetical judgements are either conceived as qualified assertions (*bedingte Behauptung*) of their main clauses or, following the Stoic logicians, as simple judgements about the order of two propositions (cf. 1871, 12). Sigwart's survey of historical and contemporary theories illustrates that what was at stake is whether hypothetical judgements "represent a different kind of synthesis" (30) between their subjects and predicates than the categorical ones. Sigwart opted for the second, Stoic conception: hypothetical judgement is "an assertion about two predications that are presented but not performed by the subordinate and main clauses" (38), more precisely the assertion of a necessary connection between the validity of the two clauses (50). His reason for doing so was that an improper, qualified assertion cannot have a truth value, but the price he paid is that hypothetical judgements are necessary positive, i.e., concessive judgements ('Even though...') do not belong to hypothetical ones (cf. 51-52). For the present purposes, it is interesting to observe how the issues that would be discussed during the controversy already came to the fore among the consequences of Sigwart's position: (1) Which kind of judgements are primordial? On Sigwart's account, hypothetical judgements already presuppose categorical ones. (2) Fidelity in descriptive psychology of the "mental process [*Denkprozess*]" (62): Sigwart found fault with Kant's account that regarded categorical and hypothetical judgements as "two coordinated kinds of judging" (60). (3) Metaphysical implications: Sigwart propounded concept empiricism regarding the lower level of our cognition, but higher mental levels can be related "to the ultimate laws of all being, to a higher reality, rooted in the ideal necessity of physical and mental laws, which are not necessarily realized

in empirical existence” (64). Hypothetical judgements, which are of higher order nature, thus played an intermediary role in the teleological process of cognition: they are neither its beginning nor its ultimate aim. On the other hand, the role of hypothetical judgements becomes crucial precisely in natural sciences that belong to this intermediary domain (in other words, natural sciences has less to do with the Aristotelian logic of subsumption). (4) Finally, there is a subtle consequence of all this that was going to come to the fore later: In the intermediary domain, all judgements are hypothetical to a certain extent, insofar as they do not directly assert the existence of the subject “in the sense of external or empirical reality” (64). As Sigwart emphasised, he thus sided with Herbart on the issue of existential import that was going to be a litmus test for competing theories of judgements.

It was Sigwart’s subsequent voluminous exposition of logic that was received very favorably by his contemporaries,⁷ being republished twice, in addition to a further posthumous edition (C. Sigwart 1911) that was reprinted until 1924 (there are unmarked piecemeal or larger alterations between the editions). As if that were not enough, its second edition was also translated into English (C. Sigwart 1895) in 1895 by Helen Dendy (1860-1925), who in the same year married the British Neo-Hegelian philosopher Bernard Bosanquet (1848-1923), who, on his part, had translated Hermann Lotze’s *Logik*.

3 Setting the Stage: A Professorial Alliance in Vienna between Miklosich and Brentano

3.1 The Origins of the Controversy: Franz Miklosich’s Excursus to the Logic of Subjectless Judgements

Sigwart could easily have remained on the periphery of Brentano’s references to contemporaneous philosophers, as he initially belonged neither to Brentano’s contemporaneous philosophical heroes (e.g., J. St. Mill) nor to his early critical interlocutors. In fact, the early references to Sigwart’s oeuvre by Brentano and his disciples – as exemplified by Brentano’s lectures on logic early Vienna years or by Benno Kerry, his early student⁸ – follow the general pattern of interest in Sigwart by

7 In an overview written for English audience, Wundt has e.g. labeled Sigwart’s book as one of “the most remarkable of recent logical works” (Wundt 1877, 518). In 1880 Dilthey described it as a “mature and significant book” (Dilthey 2011, 843). The 1897 edition of the *Ueberweg* handbook of philosophy called it “one of the most excellent [logical handbooks] of our times” (Heinze 1897, 280).

8 In a manuscript that Brentano repeatedly used for his logic lecture courses between WS 1869/70 and SS 1877, “Sigwart” is among the authors recommended to the students by Brentano (Ms. Brentano EL 80, 13.490). Brentano’s *de facto* references to Sigwart, which are not visible in the normalised transcription (see 13.258, 13.270, 13.281), are to be found in an excursus on the views of various ancient and modern authors about the modality of judgements (e.g., apodictic, assertoric, problematic etc.), which Brentano believed is simply rooted in the matter of the judgement (i.e., the underlying presentation), rather than being a formal property of the judgemental intentional relation. For this extrinsic purpose of producing a catalogue of errors, Brentano surveyed “some of the most widely read handbooks on logic” (13.268; the exact editions used by him were: Drobisch 1863; Ueberweg 1868), and later, probably in SS 1877, he extended his scope to the two recent sensational newcomers in the logical literature: Lotze 1874 – Lotze’s preface is date at June 10, 1874, i.e., after the end of SS 1874, when Brentano also lectured on logic – and C. Sigwart 1873. Brentano’s only reference that can be deciphered in details (C. Sigwart 1873, 408–409,

contemporaneous German philosophers who mostly esteemed Sigwart's engagement with contemporaneous scientific theories, which was to be found in the second volume of Sigwart's *Logik* (C. Sigwart 1878). That the history of philosophy took a different turn was not due to Brentano himself, but rather a professorial colleague of him in Vienna, the linguist Franz von Miklosich (1813-1891).

Miklosich had already reached the zenith of his professional career around the middle of the century – he was appointed as extraordinary (1849) and ordinary professor (1850), elected as corresponding (1848) and full (1851) member of the Academy – when he started publishing his *opus magnum*, the quadruple comparative grammar of Slavic languages, which spanned the years between 1852 and 1875. Among the plethora of his preparatory writings on lexicography, grammar, and historical linguistic produced by him during these decades there was a piece dedicated to the linguistic phenomenon called *impersonalia* (in German: *Impersonalien*) or subjectless sentences. Linguists had since centuries been perplexed by such sentences that apparently lack grammatical subject (even if some of them have alternative forms containing a subject or can be complemented in such a way as to express the logical subject): (*ὁ θεὸς*) *ῥεῖ*, *pluit (lapidibus)*, *Es regnet (einen starken Guss)*. In order not to prejudicate, let us confine the initial presentation of this phenomenon to a few examples that were presented by Miklosich, illustrating how pervasive this phenomenon was in the (colloquial) German language of that time, transcending the borders of syntactical and semantical categories:

- *Jetzt gibt es viele Rosen.*
- *Es weht (einen ungestümen Wind).*
- *Mich hungert.*
- *Es brennt.*
- *Es schüttelt mich.*
- *Es geht irre im Haus.*
- *Es mangelt an Geld.*
- *Hier schläft sich's angenehm.*
- *Es wird gelacht.*
- *Mir ist kalt.*

Already in the first iteration of his work, which was orally presented at a meeting of the Imperial

referred at 13.281) is extrinsic from the point of view of Brentano's main argument: even though Brentano could have greeted Sigwart's rejection that mathematical judgements were "judgements of subsumption" (C. Sigwart 1873, 409), he would have hardly agreed with Sigwart in regarding them as Kantian synthetic a priori judgements. The doctoral dissertation by Benno Kerry (or Kohn, 1858-1889), who studied at Brentano starting from WS 1877/78 and defended his dissertation in August 1881 in Strasbourg (see Peckhaus 1994, 3), well exemplifies the trend of referring to the second volume of Sigwart's *Logik* within the context of discussions of recent natural sciences (Kohn [Kerry] 1881, 26, n2, 42, n3, 46, n5, 65, n1, 101, n2, 109, n1, 120–121, 126, n1).

Academy of Sciences in Vienna on February 23, 1865, Miklosich had claimed to “have sought instructions from philosophers” (Miklosich 1865, 199) to secure logical support for his attempt to grant full grammatical citizenship to subjectless sentences; but his attempt came under attack precisely from philosophical angles. He had nobody to blame for it but himself, as his original claim, namely that “there are sentences [*Sätze*] in which the subject is missing” (200), criss-crossed the domains of logic and language, insofar as Miklosich also claimed that such sentences lack the *logical subject* (this is why he also called them “predicate sentences,” 201). The Berliner philologist and philosopher Heymann Steinthal (1823-1899) reviewed the offprint of Miklosich’s treatise and justly remarked that, even though they both agree that “the judgement and the sentence are different objects” (Steinthal 1866, 237), Miklosich failed to implement this distinction. “Subjectless judgements are impossible,” says Steinthal (*ibid.*), because judgements are universally defined as “the relation of two concepts in the form of a subject and a predicate.” From a logical point of view, sentences like “*es blitzt*” are either “rudimentary” sentences (*ibid.*), i.e. they manifest the primordial stage of an underlying metaphysical-logical process that results in fully explicated sentences,⁹ or their logical deep-structure turns out to be binary: “an absolutely posited [*aufgestellt*] concept, which must be considered subject, while its predicate is nothing other than the logical activity of the absolute positing.”¹⁰ Based on these considerations, Steinthal then questioned the validity of Miklosich’s linguistical analyses as well.

Already the early polemical exchange between Miklosich and Steinthal indicates that the phenomenon of subjectless sentences was particularly well-suited to exemplify the intertwining between linguistics and philosophy. From the point of view of the philosophers, it implied that the challenge posed by judgements apparently lacking logical subjects was bound to expose the weak spots and differences of various competing theories of judgements; and it was not different with the controversy that would be ignited by Miklosich’s quest for a philosophical underpinning of his linguistic position. Even though contemporary linguists, unlike Miklosich, are obviously no more under the pressure to provide philosophical legitimation for their descriptive endeavor, the challenge posed by subjectless sentences remains for any philosophy that, akin to Early Phenomenology, harbors the ambition of establishing a descriptive philosophical science of consciousness. At the same time, as I am going to argue, the controversy of the anomaly of judgements apparently lacking logical subjects presents one of the best opportunities to study the interaction between the School of Brentano and the contemporaneous academic philosophy in which the former was embedded.

The fourth – or, third in the order of publication – volume of Miklosich’s *opus magnum*, dedicated

9 What Steinthal had in mind here was likely Trendelenburg 1862, vol. 2, 208 ff., esp. 214; cf. Käufer 2010, 810.

10 In this regard, Steinthal was probably inspired by Herbart 1850, 104 ff.; cf. Steinthal 1866, 238.

to the syntax of Slavic languages, was published between 1868 and 1874. It was in this tome that Miklosich treated the topic of subjectless sentences (Miklosich 1874, 346–369), but he confined his presentation to historical introduction and actual comparative grammatical study, omitting theoretical introduction. He merely remarked that he was grateful for the “privilege of in detail assessment” by Steinthal (369). Yet, in the same year a new professor arrived at the University of Vienna, securing Miklosich a brother-in-arms on the field of philosophy.

3.2 Brentano’s Arrival in Vienna and the Genesis of the *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkte*

The new arrival was the result of a long and complicated historical process that was not devoid of arbitrary turns. First, the faculty had already been in negotiations with notabilities of contemporaneous philosophy like Eduard Zeller (1814-1908; see Wieser 1950, 27 ff.). The specific vacancy created by the retirement of the ailing Franz Lott (1807-1874) in 1872 was also subject to several appointment proposals by various bodies, e.g. a *terna* in March 1872, also supported by Miklosich, which consisted in Julius Baumann (1837-1916), Husserl’s future faculty nemesis in Göttingen (cf. Husserl 1994, V, 99), Ludwig Strümpell (1812-1899), and the rising star Wilhelm Dilthey who, as he himself flaunted it vis-à-vis the Prussian two months later, was included in six appointment proposals “within less than six years” (Dilthey 2011, 633, cf. 635, n. 4). Lott himself, who “considered himself belonging to the School of Herbart and regarded Herbart’s oldest disciples as his personal friends” (Vogt 1874, 14), was initially in favor of Strümpell who obtained his doctoral dissertation under the guidance of Herbart in 1833, as Lott openly admitted it in August 1872, when Lotze, the only academically well-connected benefactor of the early School of Brentano, intervened on behalf of Brentano (see Lotze 2003, 572–573).

As if that were not enough, Brentano was anything but an uncomplicated candidate. The reason why he contacted Lotze in June 1872, during a stopover in Göttingen on the return trip from his study visit to London, was precisely that, upon his arrival in Göttingen, he found “rumors” circulating about his “being against Ultramontanism [the official stance of the Catholic Church after the First Vatican Council], as well against positive Christianity in general,” which “made it impossible” for Brentano, who was a consecrated Catholic priest, to stay in Würzburg in the long term, even though he had just received his appointment as an extraordinary professor there at the end of May 1872.¹¹ In fact, it did not take long for the abounding rumors to spread across the border between South-Germany and Austria. Already on January 14, 1873, the Christian Social *Grazer Volksblatt* reported that Brentano gave up the basic tenets of trinitarian Christology and “strolls

11 Brentano and Stumpf 2014, 78. Compare 78-79 and Lotze 2003, 595–596.

along the way of Fro[h]schammer from Munich.”¹² The analogy with Jakob Frohschammer (1821-1893) must have sounded almost like a threat, since the philosopher Frohschammer, who was, like Brentano, an ordained Catholic priest, came into conflict with the Church’s *magisterium* during the 1850s and – even though he managed to transfer to a philosophical chair in 1855, owing to the personal intervention of Bavarian king – he became marginalized academically.¹³ Within less than two weeks, the influential *Das Vaterland*, the leading Catholic daily of Austria, published a double-edged, if not *mala fide*, rectification, claiming that Brentano “at least” gave no signs of “apostasy,” while simultaneously putting the rumor of Brentano’s “madness” into circulation.¹⁴ It was thus far from being mere paranoia on Brentano’s part that he wrote to Stumpf at the end of this month: “the world is filled with” scandal surrounding him (Brentano and Stumpf 2014, 90). Brentano was aware of the danger of being caught between the front lines: in the eyes of his conservative critics, he usurped the chair of philosophy in Würzburg; “elsewhere, I am going to be considered, if not an ultramontane, but still a [man in] black [contemporaneous nickname for Catholic clericals].”

What makes this microhistorical excursus relevant for the present purposes is the way it was intertwined with the genesis and content of Brentano’s *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkte* (Brentano 1874a), the book that was bound to be Brentano’s signature accomplishment for his contemporaries. Stumpf, who was also in the running for the Vienna position, hinted vis-à-vis Brentano already in May 1873 that it would be “advantageous” for Brentano “to step out speedily with a new book” (Brentano and Stumpf 2014, 97). In November, Brentano seemed to have agreed with baron Max Ludwig von Gagern (1810-1889), an influential Austrian statesman of German origins, who was a family friend of Brentano’s mother, that “a speedy publication of a bigger book, which would gain recognition, could significantly contribute to a decision” in favor of Brentano (108). At that time, Brentano was already working intensively on his manuscript (cf. Lotze 2003, 594), though not without writing blockades, as he confessed in the same letter (Brentano and Stumpf 2014, 108, cf. 119). Brentano was still working on the manuscript when, on January 22, 1874, he was officially appointed to the University of Vienna (cf. Kraus 1919, 131). The revision of

¹² *Grazer Volksblatt* (January 14, 1873) vol. 6 issue 10, p. 2.

¹³ Incidentally, Frohschammer was among Brentano’s teachers when he studied at the University of Munich in 1856-1857 (cf. Brentano’s lecture notes on anthropology: Ms. Brentano FrSchr 57, 102.318-102.352). In an ironic twist to the story, Frohschammer was, as Werner Sauer believes (2000, 130–135), the target for Brentano’s critique in his less-frequently quoted third habilitation thesis (“*Nilominus verum est, sententias Theologia probatas eas esse, quae philosophis quasi stellae rectoris sint*”, Brentano 1929, 136), which defended the Thomistic subordination of philosophy to theology (the third habilitation thesis was already highlighted by Werle 1989, 134–135). There is also a telling historical aspect of the analogy, as both Frohschammer and Brentano seceded from the Roman Catholic Church but resisted the obvious option of joining the Old Catholic Church that grew out of the Old Catholic See of Utrecht and absorbed many of the dissenters against papal Ultramontanism. Even if Brentano avoided being marginalised, his subsequent lack of institutional background lies, I think (cf. Varga 2014, 85–86), at the heart of many peculiar features of the School of Brentano and, maybe, the Early Phenomenology in general.

¹⁴ *Das Vaterland* (January 24, 1873) vol. 14 issue 23, p. 5. Cf. *Grazer Volksblatt* (January 24, 1873) vol. 6 issue 20, p. 3; *Volksblatt für Stadt und Land* (January 26, 1873) vol. 4 issue 11, p. 5 (its caption title, in bold typeface, reads: “Brentano – not insane”); *Grazer Volksblatt* (January 30, 1873) vol. 6 issue 24, p. 2.

the proofs lasted until February (cf. Brentano and Stumpf 2014, 126), and the book itself was published on May 7 (cf. 127), i.e., more than two weeks after Brentano's inaugural lecture (Brentano 1874b) that meanwhile had been printed. Given these circumstances of its origins, Brentano unsurprisingly wished vis-à-vis Lotze that the book "had been published years later" (Lotze 2003, 596). The publisher's announcement, included on the original outer cover of the tome, that "the next volume is going to be published during this year,"¹⁵ remained unfulfilled too, not least because Brentano became critically ill from smallpox (cf. Kraus 1926, 107).

3.3 Brentano's Iconoclast Theory of Judgement in the *Psychologie* and Critics

There were several aspects of Brentano's philosophy that fell short of being properly presented in the book – e.g., Brentano's insistence on immortality or his first-order metaphysics in general (cf. Rollinger 2012) – but, from the point of view of the present investigation, the most relevant of the disproportionately represented themes is Brentano's theory of judgement. In Chapter 7 of Book II, entitled "*Presentation and Judgement: Two Different Fundamental Classes*" (Brentano 1874a, 266 ff., ET: 1995, 156 ff.), Brentano presented a long and complex argument in order to gain support for a surprising and counter-intuitive aspect of his division of mental phenomena. Brentano namely divided mental phenomena into presentations (*Vorstellungen*), judgements (*Urtheile*), and acts of love and hate (*Gemüthsbewegungen*), rejecting the venerable tradition that grouped the former two together under the heading of thinking. Since the traditional classification was rooted in the widespread view that judgements result from the compounding of presentations, the onus of proof on Brentano was to refute this view by showing that presentations alone, no matter how they are combined, do not suffice to constitute a judgement. Brentano's rejection of this basic tenet of contemporaneous philosophical psychology was iconoclast but not unprecedented. A number of modern logicians and psychologists argued against the traditional bipartite view, most notably John Stuart Mill, as quoted by Brentano himself: "we may put two ideas together without any act of belief; as when we merely imagine something, such as a golden mountain; or when we actually disbelieve." Thus, Mill argued, the issue in question is precisely "[t]o determine what it is that happens in the case of assent or dissent besides putting two ideas together."¹⁶ Brentano's position was, however, more complicated, since he was committed not only to the claim that compounding

15 This hitherto unnoticed medial circumstance might have significantly impeded Brentano's otherwise promising English reception, as evident in the *Westminster Review*: "In his 'Psychologie vom Empirischen [*sic!*] Standpunkte' Dr. Franz Brentano breaks ground in a direction with which perhaps English philosophers are more familiar than those of Germany. He has evidently studied with much care the writings of Mill, Herbert, Spencer, Bain, and other English philosophers of the Empirical School, though he consistently maintains an independent position. Only the first volume is at present published, but the second is promised in the course of the present year. We shall look with great interest for the completion of the work, and shall hope to give it a more detailed notice than our space at present permits." (Anonymous 1874, 529.)

16 Mill 1973, 88; cf. Brentano 1874a, 273 ff..

alone does not suffice for a presentation to be a judgement, since in certain cases “mere presentations also have compound objects as their content” but also to the thesis that compounding is not a necessary condition as well: some judgements have “simple ones” (Brentano 1874a, 272, ET: 1995, 172). That these claims are independent is witnessed by none else than Mill himself, who wrote to Brentano in December 1872: “I agree with you that Belief is the essential constituent in a Differentia of judgment, and that the putting together of two ideas is merely a prerequisite or antecedent condition. [...] I cannot, however, think that one idea is a sufficient prerequisite for a judgment. I cannot see how there can be Belief without both a subject and a predicate.” (Mill 1972, 1928.)

In order to understand Brentano’s rationale for holding both theses, let us first look into the actual arguments put forward in the printed text, even Brentano’s first argument is based on the tacit assumption that the distributivity of assent (“when someone affirms a whole, in so doing he affirms each part of the whole as well”; Brentano 1874a, 276, ET: 1995, 161) is applicable at singular judgements as well, including existential ones. If it is so, then Brentano’s own theory is implied by any other theory of judgements. The second argument is based on an even more charitable assumption, namely Brentano’s own theory of inner and outer perception (cf. 278). Its auxiliary argument, which is worth mentioning on its own, claims that the psychological abstraction of the notion of being – which, according to some traditional logicians, serves as the predicate presentation of existential judgements – is circular, since it presupposes the finished psychological constitution of the judgement itself (cf. 279). Fourth, Brentano had recourse to the fact that some of his opponents acknowledged the unitary nature of existential judgements (though Kant, despite his famous dictum of existence not being a predicate, was in a different camp, as Brentano acknowledged: 280). Finally, Brentano presented a completely *ad hoc* argument (cf. 281 ff.): It is usually conceded that in categorical judgements the copula (‘is,’ or ‘is not’) is itself meaningless, does not correspond to a presentation on its own. Brentano then adds a triumphant remark:

“Well then, all we need is this admission from our opponents with regard to the copula to draw the necessary conclusion that no additional function can be ascribed to the ‘is’ and ‘is not’ of the existential judgement either. For it can be shown with utmost clarity that every categorical judgement can be translated without any change in the meaning into an existential proposition, and in that event the ‘is’ or ‘is not’ of the existential proposition takes the place of the copula.”¹⁷

In other words, Brentano believed to have demonstrated the unitary nature of existential judgement – hence, that the compounding of presentations is not even a necessary condition of judgements – based on a concession made by his opponents and relying on transformation he announced *in*

17 Brentano 1874a, 283, ET(mod.): 1995, 165.

passim – even though he was aware of the wide-ranging implications of the transformation he proposed (cf. Brentano 1874a, 302, n. 2, 1895, 39).

With regard the ramifications of Brentano's reception by his contemporaries, the semi-orthodox student of Brentano, Emil Utitz (1883-1956), complained in hindsight about Brentano's literary style in his published works: "Important [ideas] were banished to footnotes or touched upon by few sentences. Brentano's striving for the most concise formulation lead readers to ignore problems and gave rise to the most peculiar misunderstandings." (Utitz 1954, 79.) Utitz's claim applied to Brentano's publications after the *Psychology*, but it is apparently also true of several aspect of Brentano's alleged *opus magnum* as well. From the present point of view, the most annoying aspect of Book II Chapter 7 is that its *ad hoc* arguments completely leave in dark Brentano's underlying fundamental reasons for preferring the unitary existential form, i.e., for insisting on the possibility of a unitary transformation of all judgements. Franz Hillebrand (1863-1926), an orthodox disciple of Brentano, who provided a systematic theory of Brentano's theory of judgements,¹⁸ rightly emphasized (Hillebrand 1891, 28, 31) that Brentano's preference is rooted in the fact that, amongst the many possible *linguistic* forms of judgements, it is the unitary existential one that most clearly expresses the underlying *inner psychological structure*.

It were the Anglophone reviewers of Brentano's books who paid special attention to Brentano's iconoclast approach to the theory of judgements. Robert Flint (1838-1910), a mid-career theologian who would become a decorated member of the British philosophical establishment, published a lengthy review in the opening issue of the *Mind* (Flint 1876), which, even though appreciative in general, criticized Brentano's iconoclast innovations in a very harsh language: "Prof. Brentano does not conceal that he is proud of his classification, and seems to derive considerable enjoyment from anticipation of the *Kopfschütteln*, which he foresees it will occasion. That is fortunate, because, we fear, there are likely to be more shakes than nods for what is original in it." (121.) Flint's disagreement is centered around Brentano's "radical separation of conception [i.e., presentation] and judgement," which, Flint believed, "is almost certainly to meet with extremely little recommendation" (122). Flint also volunteered to exemplify the wave of critique he predicted:

"He [Brentano] congratulates himself that they [the reasons supporting Brentano's classification of psychical phenomena] have led him to original conclusions in Logic, which he promises to expound in a special work, after the completion and publication of his *Psychology*, but these conclusions are so very original indeed that they are far from likely to lessen any distrust [...] If these doctrines can be made out, obviously all logicians from Aristotle downwards have been sheer impostors, but the

18 Brentano's authorisation manifests itself in the alteration Brentano made to Brentano 1874a, 302, n. 2 in Brentano 1911, 72, n. 1 (cf. also 156).

probability is great that they cannot be made out [...].”¹⁹

A follow-up published in the *Mind* by the Dutch orientalist and philosopher Jan Pieter Nicolaas Land (1834-1897) contained a more philosophically inclined critique (Land 1876): Land’s more technical objection concerned the existential import of Brentano’s proposed translation of universal categorical judgements into negative existential ones:

“When we say *No stone is alive*, or *All men are mortal*, we presuppose the existence of stones or of men. Nobody would trouble himself about the possible properties of purely problematical men or stones. Brentano thinks he gives the exact equivalent of those sentences when he maintains *There is not a live stone*, or *There is not an immortal man*, which may be true even if there be no stone or man whatever.”²⁰

There are two aspects of Land’s critique of Brentano that are worth highlighting. First, Land was clearly aware that Brentano’s difficulties stem from his rejection of the solution by the contemporaneous philosophical logic, especially its Herbartian flavor, which believed that categorical judgements have a deeper hypothetical structure. Indeed, Brentano’s argument against Herbart in the *Psychology* (Brentano 1874a, 285) amounts to a *petio principii*: his only reason for claiming that “the existence of a man cannot be deduced from the judgement, ‘All men are mortal’” (285; ET [mod.]: Brentano 1995, 167) is merely the reference to an “existential judgement which is *equivalent* to the categorical judgement” (ibid.; my emphasis).

The second aspect of Land’s critique of Brentano was even more penetrating, insofar as Land challenged the psychological plausibility of the judgemental form preferred by Brentano: “at all events,” Land wrote, Brentano’s proposal “will have the disadvantage which we least expect from an empirical psychologist, of trying to replace a more natural theory by an artificial one” (Land 1876, 292). This kind of objection, in fact, was already contained in the first objection quoted above, in which Land found fault with investigating “the possible properties of purely problematical men or stones.” In other words, the existential import of universal categorical is not merely a logical thesis, but also rooted in descriptive psychological considerations.

It is worth taking a closer look at this issue: Brentano’s alleged “reform of the elementary logic” (Brentano 1895, 39) was, of course, nothing new to traditional logic, insofar as the conversion itself between categorical and existential judgements was already well known under the headword of *Aequipollenz*, as Brentano himself indicated in a footnote to the *Psychologie*.²¹ Brentano criticized the contemporaneous logicians for not regarding the original and the transformed judgement

19 Flint 1876, 122.

20 Land 1876, 291.

21 Ueberweg 1865, 235 ff., quoted by Brentano 1874a, 283, n. 1. Ueberweg (1865, 206–207) provides a plethora of historical references, for another contemporaneous author, see, e.g., Drobisch 1863, 88.

identical. They had, however, precisely a psychological reason for not doing so: Friedrich Ueberweg, who was clearly convinced that the judgement ‘The soul is immortal’ involves the judgement that ‘There is a soul’ (cf. Ueberweg 1865, 150), claimed that the hypothetical implication of universal categorical judgements relies on a “certain dependence of the predicate from the subject” that “can be emphasized and formulated in a hypothetical judgement” in the fashion of ‘If there is a soul, it is immortal’ (235). That the denial of the identity between a universal categorical and a transformed existential judgement rooted in psychological considerations is well demonstrated by Land’s own proposal:

“For instance, when we think of all men to be mortal, we proceed from a notion of man acquired before and maintain (say by generalisation from experience) that in every object answering to this notion the character of mortality exists also. Afterwards, occasion serving, we find that we have made it impossible for us [...] to assert the existence of an immortal men. It may be that we never in our lives speculate upon the supposition of such a being. Brentano would have us to think of this supposition first of all, and reject it at once.”²²

3.4 An Alliance Forged

As a result, Brentano was in need of an ally to demonstrate that his proposed transformed judgemental form is the original one that carries psychological plausibility. Miklosich, on the other hand, was looking for a philosopher ally to demonstrate that the linguistic phenomenon of subjectless sentences, pervasive in Slavic languages, is a genuine one. It was the latter who took the first step of rapprochement. Less than a decade after Brentano’s arrival in Vienna, Miklosich published a revised version of his treatise on subjectless sentences (Miklosich 1883) that, apart from minor changes (compare, e.g., Miklosich 1865, 201–202, 1883, 4), contained significant amendments to its survey of previous research. Besides answering in length to a critique of linguistic nature (Benfey 1865, cf. Miklosich 1883, 13–17), Miklosich also stated his view on Steinthal’s critique (see Section 3.1 above), and in doing so he relied heavily on Brentano’s logical innovations. Miklosich immediately recognized that the best point of attack against the philosophical part of Steinthal’s critique is to opt for a “definition [of judgements] that leaves aside the binary character [*Zweigliedrigkeit*]” (Miklosich 1883, 21). His first line of argument revolved around the interpretation of Herbart, but, in the second place, he invoked a new ally: Franz Brentano who claimed that “it is not even correct to say that there is a combination or separation of presented attributes in all judgements,” but rather a “single feature which is the object of a presentation can be affirmed or denied, too.”²³ Miklosich was mainly interested in expanding the

22 Land 1876, 292

23 Brentano 1874a, 276, ET: 1995, 161; imprecisely quoted by Miklosich 1883, 22.

enumeration of authors supporting his position – hence he also incorporated Brentano’s historical footnote Brentano 1874a, 281, n. 2 (cf. Miklosich 1883, 22–23) – but in the same year, a few days before Miklosich’s seventieth birthday that was to solemnly celebrated on large scale, Brentano published a lengthy review of Miklosich’s booklet in a Viennese daily.²⁴ Brentano fully recognized that Miklosich was criticized “on the grounds of” the “interrelation between psychologists and logicians,”²⁵ but, emphasizing Miklosich’s discussion of Herbart and Trendelenburg, Brentano staged a mutually independent rejection of the bipartite nature of judgements, concealing both Miklosich’s reliance on him and the fact that Miklosich, before he discovered Brentano, had nothing to say against Steinthal’s philosophical critique, as manifest in the third tome of Miklosich’s *opus magnum* (see Section 3.1 above). That the alliance between Miklosich and Brentano fell short of a coincidence between independently discovered positions is also demonstrated by the discrepancies between Brentano’s own theory and Miklosich’s linguistically motivated philosophical digression. Brentano himself highlighted in the second installment of the review that he disagrees with the use of the label ‘subjectless,’ since subject and predicate are “correlative notions.”²⁶ Brentano’s position came down to transforming all judgements to existential ones, what admittedly contradicted to both Miklosich’s denial of the universal nature of subjectless sentences and his reluctance to classify existential judgements as subjectless ones.²⁷

Notwithstanding all these latent discrepancies, the alliance was forged. On the eve of his birthday, Miklosich wrote to Brentano in a more than grateful manner,²⁸ crowning an already harmonious professorial relationship (Miklosich was one of those having a benevolent attitude towards Brentano after the latter’s academic *capitis diminutio* in 1880).²⁹ The philosophical core of this professorial alliance was epitomized by Brentano’s remark in a lecture course:

“Is the existential judgement a categorical judgement? When I say: ‘There is a tree,’ is then being predicated of the tree? Most of the [scholars] believe it to be a categorical proposition. Miklosich wrote a book that there are subjectless judgements, and, if I am right, the existential judgements would belong

24 *Wiener Zeitung* (November 13 and 14, 1883) issues 261, pp. 3-6 and issue 262, pp. 3-6.

25 *Wiener Zeitung* (November 13, 1883), issue 261, p. 4.

26 *Wiener Zeitung* (November 14, 1883), issue 262, p. 3.

27 In this regard, I disagree with Liliana Albertazzi’s analysis who accepted Brentano’s claim of the difference between him and Miklosich being “of minor importance” at its face value (Albertazzi 2006, 182).

28 “*Verehrter Herr Collega [sic!] | Herzlichsten Dank für Ihre dem Inhalt | und der Form nach so ganz ausgezeichnete | Recension meines Schriftchens. Dergleichen | schreibt selbst bei musterhaften Ar-|beiten – zu diesen gehört mein Versuch | nicht – doch nur die Freundschaft. | Für einige Separatabdrücke wäre ich | Ihnen sehr dankbar. | Mit vielen Grüßen | Wien. 19 Nov. 1883. Ihr | ergebenster | Miklosich*” (Ms. Brentano, BrL 2748).

29 In an unpublished letter written already in June 1881, Miklosich invited Brentano to attend an informal meeting of professors (Ms. ÖNB, Autogr. 133/65-5 Han). Though this invitation was denied by Brentano, he accepted another (possibly private) one in July 1882 (Ms. ÖNB, Autogr. 133/65-6 Han). The undated letters between Miklosich and Franz, respectively Ida Brentano (Ms ÖNB, Autogr. 133/65-1, 65-2, 65-3, 65-4, 66-1, 66-2) also testify of a friendly relationship. The expression *capitis diminutio* (or rather: *deminutio*), a term in Roman law denoting the partial or full loss of legal capacity, was used by Brentano himself to describe his new academic situation at the university (Brentano and Stumpf 2014, 205).

to them.”³⁰

Brentano’s remark, preserved by the unpublished lecture notes of the eccentric Hans Schmidkunz, is unmistakably triumphant, as it figures as the twenty-first item in a catalogue of errors by contemporaneous philosophers that Brentano enumerated in order to demonstrate the superiority of his own philosophy. Brentano’s *tour de force*, delivered in the WS 1885/86 lecture course “*Ausgewählte Fragen aus der Psychologie und Aesthetik*,” was also observed by a young doctor of mathematics, called Edmund Husserl. What none of them knew was that thunderclouds were already on the horizon and that a fierce philosophical controversy was going to be caused precisely by Brentano’s innocently looking alliance with Miklosich.

4 The Debate Between Marty and Sigwart: A Philosophical Controversy *in absentia*

4.1 The Structure of the Controversy

Anton Marty (1874-1914), Brentano’s second eldest disciple, was described already by his master as a faithful but unoriginal agent for Brentano’s philosophy (cf. Marty 1918, viii), and the controversy that developed between Marty and Sigwart in the late 1880s indeed looked like a philosophical proxy war. The first major act of hostility was carried out by Sigwart’s treatise on subjectless judgements (1888b), which precisely identified what was at stake both philosophically and academically: “the grammatical theory of sentence and the logical doctrine of judgement are simultaneously put to the test” due to challenge made the dual subject-object structure by Miklosich “following Brentano” (1-2).

Sigwart’s treatise contained an explicit critique of Brentano that was surprisingly benevolent and objective (58-67). Sigwart accepted the distinction Mill and Brentano made between mere combination of presentations (what Sigwart called an “attributive combination”) and judgement (59), but rejected both Brentano’s strict cesura between presentations and judgements, as well as that Brentano’s bipolar scheme of *Anerkennung–Verwerfung* corresponds to the *actual* “psychological genesis of the judgement” (59). The latter, as seen above (Section 3.3), was a painful recurring issue by Brentano’s critics and, in turn, motivated Brentano’s interest in the anomaly of subjectless sentences. Since Sigwart conceived thinking itself as a teleological movement from blind, unreflected psychological necessity towards “objective necessity and universal validity” (1873, 6, ET: 1895, 6), he could easily said that the validity of judgements is

30 Original: “Einundzwanzigstes. Ist das Essentialurteil [recte: Existentialurteil] ein | kategorische? Wenn ich sage: ‚Ein Baum ist‘ – wird da v[on] dem | Baum das Sein prädiziert? Die Mehrzahl glaubt, es sei ein | kategorischer Satz. Miklosich hat ein Buch geschrieben darüber, | daß es subjectlose Urte[il]e gibt. dazu würden die Essential-urte[il]e gehören, wenn meine Ansicht richtig ist.” (Ms. UA Greifswald, Nachlass Hans Schmidkunz 29.1, 79). It also demonstrates that the lecture notes prepared by Eduard Leisching (1858-1938), preserved in the Husserl Archives in Leuven (Ms. Husserl, Y Brentano 6), are incomplete.

rooted in the “unmediated or mediated consciousness of the necessity of those [mental] operations, in virtue of which we relate our presentations to each other in thinking” (C. Sigwart 1888b, 59). Furthermore, Sigwart, as seen above (Section 2), was also in the position to distinguish different strata of judgements that corresponded to different necessities (e.g., the necessity of sensual perception or of intermediary conceptual judgement). Thereby Sigwart was able to occupy a tricky intermediary position: he rejected both Herbart’s thesis that all judgements are implicitly hypothetical and Brentano’s opposite thesis that all judgements are implicitly existential, both of them being, according to him, invalid over-generalizations of the different strata of judgements (60). This was, however, not to imply that Sigwart agreed with all aspects of Brentano’s analysis of existential judgements either. On the one hand, Sigwart insisted on the immediate givenness (“*mit einem Schlage*”, 60) of certain types of judgements (e.g., ‘*Snow is white*’), thus Brentano’s *Anerkennung–Verwerfung* cannot correspond to the actual mental process. On the other hand, the *Anerkennung*, when explicitly present, always exhibits a binary structure, insofar as it is always within a relation that something is accepted or denied (e.g., a concept in relation to its instances or conceivability). Sigwart thus sided with Kant that being is a predicate (more precisely, a relational predicate, rather than a property predicate). At the same time, he could praise Brentano (and Herbart) for fighting the old Aristotelian-Scholastic over-emphasis on judgements of subsumption (cf. 64-65).

So far, Sigwart’s treatise represented a clever configuration within the theories of judgements, though his underlying teleological philosophy might prove less compelling. What turned it into an act of war against the School of Brentano was a seven-pages long footnote (n. 1 at 28 ff.), containing a critique of Anton Marty that was anything but benevolent and objective (even though Sigwart was aware of Marty’s reliance on Brentano and Miklosich, cf. 35, n.). Brentano himself reported to Stumpf that he had not yet read Sigwart’s treatise, directed “against my and Miklosich’s theory of judgement,” but, according to hearsay, “Miklosich and me were treated decently, Marty, on the other hand, in a very disrespectful manner” (Brentano and Stumpf 2014, 278).

Already before Brentano intervened personally, the controversy that sparked off between Sigwart and Marty exhibited a complex bibliographical structure. The target of Sigwart’s aforementioned footnote was a brief critique by Marty (1884a), which, in turn, was directed against § 11 of Sigwart’s *Logik* (1873, 64–66). Marty, understandably, deemed it necessary to answer to Sigwart in the same year (1888), which, though described by Stumpf as “perfectly successful” one that creates “a favorable impression on others” (Brentano and Stumpf 2014, 280), prompted a counter-reply by Sigwart in the same journal (1888a). Already at that point, their debate escalated into a notable public controversy: Stumpf, the arch-disciple of Brentano, was admittedly “troubled” by it (Brentano and Stumpf 2014, 281), and the early disciple Meinong, who in the meantime had fallen

into disgrace at Brentano, inserted a long excursus into an essay of his currently in print (Meinong 1888, 333–337) in order to state his view on the “controversy [*Controverse*] that presumably got under way by” (333) Sigwart’s treatise. Meinong diplomatically tried to please Sigwart without, at the same time, abandoning the basic tenet of Brentano’s psychology, according to which every perception is a judgement (cf. Brentano 1874a, 277): The existential judgement involved in perception is, Meinong claimed referring to a passage in Sigwart’s *Logik* (cf. 1873, 99), implied by the demonstrative pronoun ‘*dieses*,’ rather than by the copula. A “pathetic tail-wagging” in favor of Sigwart, Stumpf commented (Brentano and Stumpf 2014, 281). He might be right in the terms of university politics, but Meinong was merely taking advantage of a philosophical opportunity created by Sigwart’s intermediary position detailed above.

As already this intermezzo illustrates, the controversy between Sigwart and Marty was quick to slide into the terrain of personal insults. In the following, I will explore both the main argumentative threads of the debate, as well as the plethora of minor issues into which it degenerated. The rationale behind doing so is that, as I am going to argue, there was a significant discrepancy between what the belligerent parties believed was at stake versus what impacted other members on the periphery of the School of Brentano, most notably Edmund Husserl.

4.2 The Argumentative Exchanges between Marty and Sigwart

The *casus belli* itself, as presented by Marty, was of inconspicuous nature. In the first installment of an article series, entitled *Ueber subjectlose Sätze und das Verhältniss der Grammatik zu Logik und Psychologie* (Marty 1884a), Marty argued in favor of the separation between logical and grammatical questions and considered three types of theories which are inclined to posit logical subjects that allegedly “underlie” grammatically subjectless sentences (75): the subject is either universal or individual, or else subjectless sentences should be regarded as existential ones. Both of the former solutions were rejected by Marty, while the latter, he argued in Brentanoian fashion, did not necessary support the “dogma of the bipartiteness of judgements” (90). Marty presented Sigwart as a proponent of the second option, because Sigwart conceived subjectless sentences as judgements about “individual impressions” (81). Correspondingly, Marty’s actual argument against Sigwart’s solution is rather brief (86-87). First, relying on Steinthal’s self-critique (cf. Steinthal 1855, 210, 1866, 238), Marty pointed out that, if this were the case, than the corresponding sentences would be constructed using the demonstrative pronoun, rather than the *neutrum* of the personal pronoun. Second, it is easily possible to construct examples of communicative situations involving subjectless sentences that lack any possible basis in corresponding direct impressions.

“Wo bleibt aber diese Zweigliedrigkeit der dem Urtheil zu Grunde liegenden Vorstellung, wenn ich zu einem in seine Arbeit vertieften Freunde in’s Zimmer tretend sage: Es regnet, es brennt in der

Vorstadt? Nach Sigwart könnte dieser den Satz nicht verstehen, ehe er durch's Fenster sehend das Subject zu diesem (vermeintlichen) Prädicat erblickt. Und wohin soll er blicken, wenn ich sage: Es spukt wieder einmal in der Türkei, unserem Freunde in London geht es besser, es fehlt dem Staate an Geld?“ (Marty 1884a, 87)

Marty's argument is far from being convincing: what Sigwart has to do in order to reject it is merely to supply a different, non-sensual basis, as he actually did in his counter-reply: *“In Beziehung auf das impersonale ‚es fehlt an Geld u. s. w.‘ rede ich von einem Gefühl des Bedürfnisses, aus welchem das Bewusstsein des Mangels an den gewünschten Mitteln der Abhilfe folge; dieses Bewusstsein des Entblösstseins finde seinen Ausdruck in einem impersonalen ‚es fehlt‘”* (1888a, 355–356). At the same time, it was this argument that contributed to the escalation of the debate, since Sigwart, by the same token, ironized Marty's example: Marty himself “is too much immersed in his own activity” to adequately understand Sigwart's claims (1888b, 34 n.). Marty, it must be added, was also intent to take up the glove in the same manner (cf. 1888, 242).

What is more interesting philosophically is, though, that already this argument highlights how the debate gradually shifted towards the philosophy of language. In his first reply, Sigwart sought recourse to the general analysis of the communicative function of language, as outlined precisely by Marty in the third installment of his article series (Sigwart's reference was: Marty 1884b, 300 f.) to explain how the friend under consideration can understand the uttered subjectless sentence without looking out of the window: the sentence serves “as an indication of what is presented by the speaker,” which calls upon the hearer to “infer to the psychical life” of the speaker, thus “evoking the same presentations in the hearer” (C. Sigwart 1888b, 35 n.). Even though it was indeed the third installment where Marty first formulated his theory of the communicative function of meaning (see Rollinger 2008, 84–85), Sigwart's ploy did not work, since, as Marty was keen to emphasize in his reply (1888, 244), a special type of intuitions is required in order for Sigwart's analysis to be conclusive, rather than arbitrary ones evoked in the hearer. Sigwart, as mentioned above, finally had to supply a different, suitable basis in order to save at least a portion of the contended impersonal sentences; but this line of exchange already exemplify how the debate metamorphosed into plethora of interrelated controversies stemming from the domain of the philosophy of language.

In this respect Marty, famously nicknamed as “Brentano's Minister for Linguistic Affairs” (Mulligan 1990, 12), was apparently in a superior position, and many of his critiques painfully hit home for Sigwart. What allowed Marty to capitalize on this advantage of him was that he, already in his first article on Sigwart, criticized Sigwart's solution on the grounds of the meaning of the label chosen by Sigwart, namely the word *Benennungsurtheile* (denominative judgements). Marty (Marty 1884a, 81) found that Sigwart's notion was vaguely defined and, instead, he proposed to take it in a common sense meaning (*“die nächstliegende Erklärung, auf die wohl Jeder verfällt”*). It

was probably a fatal error on behalf of Sigwart to acquiesce in Marty's shifting the debate. According to the interpretation proposed by Marty, *Benennungsurtheil* is a judgement about naming conventions (e.g.: 'This flower is called primula'), which he believed Sigwart confused with judgments of subsumptions (82). Sigwart's other strategic failure was to launch an unprepared attack on the new battlefield. He was over-confident enough not only to attack Marty's philosophy of language, but also to charge him with being incompetent in German language (1888b, 31, n.). It is probably needless to say how deep the latter must have hurt the native Swiss German Marty (cf. 1888, 241), but at least he could find consolation in the embarrassing philosophical mistakes made by his interlocutor.

Both Sigwart and Marty distinguished between the *use* and *mention* of terms. The latter function is rooted in the mediaeval *suppositio materialis*, and it was called *terms "as vocal complexes"* (*als Lautcomplexe*) by the belligerent parties. However, Marty acknowledged a further function of terms: any term "N" could be used in a way to designate *something called "N"* (*ein „N“ genanntes*), i.e., to designate something *without having recourse to the meaning of the term*. This idea was developed by Marty as a response to John Stuart Mill's challenge (according to which proper names lack meaning, i.e., connotation), without having to commit himself, as Husserl did, to assigning a full-fledged meaning to proper names (see Rollinger 2010, 123–125); but this idea also proved useful for analyzing ambiguous cases of reference (e.g., the question as to what is meant by the use of an equivocal name)³¹ or, more importantly, judgements involving naming (in Marty's sense). A large part of the actual debate between Sigwart and Marty namely revolved around example sentences like "Jagsthausen is a village and a castle on the Jagst" (*Jagsthausen ist ein Dorf und Schloss an der Jagst*), which, Sigwart claimed, were judgements about naming conventions: Jagsthausen is "the name of a village and a castle on the Jagst" (1888b, 32, n.). In other words, the

31 In this regard, Marty recalled the following insightful mediaeval puzzle: "In einem Korbe unter einem Tuche befindet sich ein Hund im gewöhnlichen, bei den Zoologen noch heute üblichen Sinne dieses Wortes und ein Hund, der äquivoce diesen Namen trägt, nämlich ein Seehund. Nun bewegt sich etwas im Korb. Hat, und in welchem Sinne hat Einer daraufhin das Recht zu sagen, es habe sich ein Hund bewegt [...]? Weder in dem Sinne, dass ich mit dem Namen Hund die gewöhnliche Bedeutung verbinde, noch in dem Sinne, dass ich damit den Begriff des Seehunds verbinde. Somit kann ich, scheint es, in keinem Sinne sagen, dass sich ein Hund bewege. Denn mit der *suppositio materialis* ist hier nicht zu helfen, da von dem Lautcomplex Hund am allerwenigstens gesagt werden kann, dass er sich im Korbe bewegt habe. Vielleicht gibt Sigwart selbst zu, dass hier meine Auffassung allein die Verlegenheit beseitige. [...] wenn ich sage: Ein Hund hat sich bewegt, 'ein Hund genanntes' [ist] der mit dem Subject zu verbindende Begriff." (Marty 1888, 248–249; cf. Marty 2011, 119, resp. 185 concerning possible mediaeval sources). Later Marty proposed a simpler example: When someone says 'I travel to Frankfurt,' the hearer knows that the interlocutor is travelling to 'something that is called *Frankfurt*,' either Frankfurt am Main or Frankfurt an der Oder (Marty 1908, 509).

What makes this puzzle a convincing case for Marty is that, even though the truth condition is undeniably disjunctive (either a dog moved or a harbor seal), the descriptive psychological underpinning (inner linguistic form) of the sentence uttered is arguably a unitary one: I have an individually *determined* (*bestimmt*) but *incomplete* (*unvollständig*) presentation of *something* which moved but which I cannot clearly see through the kerchief. Such inner linguistic forms correspond to the above, rare use of proper and common names, as Marty clearly explained when he returned to exactly the same examples twenty years later (Marty 1908, 1:438, n. 2.).

logical subject of this sentence is, according to Sigwart, a name, i.e., the term “Jagsthausen” is used in *suppositio materialis*. Marty triumphantly retorted that this could not be the case, since the predicates contained in the sentences (e.g., “village”, “castle”) are obviously only applicable to real objects, rather than names. Instead, says Marty, the term “Jagsthausen” designates here *something that is called “Jagsthausen,”* i.e., a part of the real world (rather than of the world of names), which can be rightly conjoined with the above predicates (1888, 249). In other words, here the name “Jagsthausen” does not designate the sign literal itself (*supposition materialis*), nor any meaning that could normally be attached to it (*supposition formalis*), but it rather serves as what is nowadays called a metalinguistic definite description.³² Sigwart, sadly, stubbornly remained inaccessible to reason (cf. 1889b, 27, 1895, 27, 1911, 31).

Marty scored another, though minor victory concerning the question as to whether the meaning conventions are presupposed (*vorausgesetzt*) or co-asserted (*mitbehauptet*) by the corresponding utterances. This question also stemmed from Marty’s misleading rendering of *Bennennungsurtheile* as judgements about naming conventions, which he connected to Sigwart’s notion of *nominal validity* (*nominale Gültigkeit*) of judgements (Marty 1884a, 85). Nominal validity, however, was understood by Sigwart as an equivocal sense of validity of a judgement: Namely, the validity of a judgement can be challenged on the grounds as to whether the speaker’s use of language conforms to the universal norm (1873, 78). In other words, Sigwart introduced this notion to characterize what is lacked in a verbal dispute (*Wortstreit*) – the elimination of which was considered a core mission of late nineteenth century theories of logic and language –, rather than as a feature of a specific type of judgement. But he again acquiesced in shifting the debate to the terrain of the philosophy of language, namely as to whether the nominal validity *as a judgement* is “implicitly co-asserted” (*implicite mitbehauptet*) or merely presupposed, as Marty believed, by the corresponding utterance. Sigwart opted for the former, adding that this question itself constitutes a verbal dispute (1888b, 33 n.). Quite the contrary, as Marty was keen to point out:

„Ich gab und gebe zu, der Urtheilende, der sein Urtheil ausspricht, zeige dabei, dass er *voraussetzt*, man werde die Worte in demselben Sinne, in welchem er sie gebraucht, auch verstehen, aber ich leugne,

³² Mill championed the claim that “[p]roper names are not connotative:” Even if “a town may have been named Dartmouth, because it is situated at the mouth of the Dart,” this is not part of the signification of the name of the town, and Dartmouth would retain its name if “sand should choke up the mouth of the river, or an earthquake change its course” (Mill 1973, 33; I am grateful to Guillaume Fréchet for calling my attention to this example). Contrary to present-day Millian philosophers of language, however, Marty was convinced that on Mill’s view *all* proper names are connotative in the above sense, i.e., as metalinguistic definite descriptions (Marty 1908, 509). On the other hand, he himself was reluctant to follow Mill in this aspect (*ibid.*), and he regarded the connotation of proper names as metalinguistic definite descriptions an anomaly (see note 32 above), the overuse of which he combatted in his lecture course on logic and psychology as a mistake of extreme nominalism (see Marty 2011, 119-120). Conversely, the corresponding general presentation (e.g., “*ein Heinrich- oder Fritzgenanntes*”) was regarded by him as belonging merely to the inner linguistic form (Marty 1908, 439, n.) and, presumably, being context-dependent (cf. Rollinger 2010, 125).

dass dieses auf den Sprachgebrauch bezügliche Urtheil mit zur Bedeutung der betreffenden Aussage gehöre, *in ihr mitbehauptet sei.*“ (Marty 1888, 249)

Far from being a verbal dispute, the stake of this distinction is whether a manifestly contingent part belongs to the meaning of the utterance, which, in certain cases, constitute a “necessary and unchangeable truth” (250). In other words, Sigwart tends to nominalistically overlook that some meanings constitute immutable, eternal truths (e.g., in case of geometry), thus a sharp distinction must be made between meaning itself and the presupposed validity of linguistic conventions.

It is hard to deny that the debate between Marty and Sigwart on subjectless sentences exemplifies the worst sort of philosophical controversies. It escalated almost instantly, and the small original core of Marty’s specific arguments against Sigwart’s interpretation of subjectless sentences quickly inflated into a plethora of diverse issues which no more concerned subjectless sentences as such. None of the adversary parties restrained himself from *argumentatio ad hominem*, Sigwart being on the verge of linguistic chauvinism. There is, however, a philosophical stake carried by this degeneration: Marty’s shifting of the debate concealed the extent and merits of one of Sigwart’s fundamental descriptive notions, namely that of *Benennungsurtheile*.

5 Denominative Judgements: A Different Look at the Descriptive Merits of Sigwart’s *Logik*

Benennungsurtheile are indeed the building blocks of Sigwart’s analysis of impersonal judgements, but impersonal judgements themselves are not simply *Benennungsurtheile*, except for a special case. What is, after all, a *Benennungsurtheil* (denominative judgement)? It is the most elementary form of narrative judgements (*erzählende Urtheile*), i.e. of judgements whose subject is a unitary (not composed) and particular (not universal) presentation (C. Sigwart 1873, 57). Let us look at the description provided by Sigwart: “The subject-presentation is given immediately in the intuition as a unity, the predicate-presentation is mentally [*innerlich*] reproduced, and the act of judging consists in the thought by which the two presentations are consciously unified.”³³ It is important to note that the process described here is different from both the unconscious fusion of two presentations— hence the clarification: “consciously [*mit Bewusstsein*] unified” – and the involuntary reproduction of a former presentation. In other words, the denominative judgement consist in the “the simple coincidence between the present intuition and the remembered presentation” (1873, 60, ET [mod.]: 1895, I: 56), which occurs in simple sentences (‘*Dies ist Sokrates.*’) or exclamations (e.g., ‘*Feuer!*’) Already these descriptions reveal that Sigwart intended to provide a quasi-phenomenological definition aimed at the “inward process” (*innerer Vorgang*),

33 C. Sigwart 1873, 57. When possible, I follow the contemporaneous translation of the second edition (C. Sigwart 1895, I: 53), with modifications to preserve the text variant of the first edition and conform to the modern terminology.

which he subsequently attempted to spell out in more details: “The object before us awakens a presentation left by some former impression, and connected with the word, and the two are unified”(58, ET [mod.]: I, 53). In his separate treatise on subjectless sentences he explicitly called this process a “synthesis” (see, e.g, 1888b, 14), a terminology he also employed throughout the *Logik*.

It is important to keep in mind, furthermore, that denominative judgements are merely one kind of narrative judgements, besides, e.g., judgements of attributes and activities, relational judgements, and, of course, impersonal judgements. The other, more complicated classes of narrative judgements are, in fact, rooted in the iteration of denominative judgements. Every judgement, except when its entire subject is merely a demonstrative pronoun, already contains a “twofold denominative judgement:” “This flower is a rose – first, there is the naming by the word “flower”, which has taken place previously, and of which only the result appears [*niedergelegt ist*] in the verbal expression of the subject; then the naming in which the judgement itself consists [*den Inhalt des Urtheils selbst ausmacht*]” (1873, 62, ET (mod.): 1895, I: 57). Furthermore, in case of judgements of attributes and activities, the judgement does not merely consist in an iteration of denominative judgements, but rather a *new type of synthesis*, which Sigwart called “twofold synthesis:” “it contains not a mere naming [*Benennung*], but rather a statement [*Aussage*] in which the thing as an unity is simultaneously distinguished from its determinations and again unified with them”(63).

It is not by chance that the original section on *Impersonalien* in Sigwart’s *Logik* (§ 11) follows directly after the one analyzed above. What subjectless sentences represent is precisely an anomaly of the two-fold synthesis. It is, namely, possible for the second synthesis to come first into the consciousness, and an impersonal judgement results when the first synthesis – the naming of the subject – simply does not take place (or is merely hinted at). In other words, the linguistic anomaly of subjectless sentences was also assigned a crucial role by Sigwart’s logic, though for different reasons.

Sigwart’s idea of two-fold synthesis came to the fore during Sigwart’s debate with Wilhelm Wundt. In the first edition of his *Logik*, Wundt criticized the traditional theory of judgement as a unity or relation of two different concepts, because it overlooked the psychological genesis of judgements. According to Wundt, namely, the judgement consists in “cutting a unitary perception to concepts,” rather than in the unification of separate concepts (Wundt 1880, 136). In a conciliatory article published in the same year, Sigwart reacted in a benevolent way, emphasizing that he, too, posited a preceding unitary presentation:

„Nehmen wir ein einfaches Beispiel, etwa den Satz: das Schloss brennt. Ausgangspunkt meines Urtheils ist gewiss das Bild des brennenden Schlosses; die Gestalt des Gebäudes und die Flammen, die

herausschlagen, bilden für meine Anschauung ein einheitliches Ganzes. Aber wie komme ich dazu diese Anschauung, statt sie sprachlos anzustarren, in die Worte zu fassen: das Schloss brennt? Wundt sagt: durch Zerlegung. Ganz richtig; ich zerlege das Bild in den einen Bestandtheil, den ich mit ‚Schloss‘ bezeichne, und in den andern, der seinen augenblicklichen Zustand ausdrückt, den ich ‚brennen‘ nenne.“ (C. Sigwart 1880, 459)

Sigwart’s observation might sound trivial, but it is worth taking a closer look on it. What he was aiming at was neither the simplistic explanation of judgements as combinations of presentations nor the mistaken view according to which the process described above amounts to a subsumption. Quite the contrary, what Sigwart aimed at was precisely a description of the synthesis in virtue of which an inarticulate picture could serve as a reinforcement (in phenomenological parlance: fulfillment) of a judgement. Motivated by this controversy, Sigwart significantly reworked the analysis of two-fold synthesis in § 10,1 (compare 1873, 62–63, 1889b, 70–71). The analysis no more concerns a mere isolated synthesis, a “statement [*Aussage*] in which the thing as an unity is simultaneously distinguished from its determinations and again unified with them” (1873, 63), but rather dynamic (in phenomenological parlance: genetic) analysis of the correspondence between a present perception and ideas “already familiar to us:” in each of the two constituents parts distinguished in the inarticulate image “we find again an idea [*Vorstellung*] already familiar to us, and by uniting these two elements in our statement we express just what we have seen as a unity of a thing with its attribute or activity” (1889b, 71, ET: 1895, 58–59). Such a dynamic setup might sound artificial but there is going to be a philosopher preoccupied by a strikingly similar example: “I have just looked out into the garden and now give expression to my percept in the words: ‘There flies a blackbird!’”³⁴ Before looking further into the nature of this type of synthesis, let us follow the historical thread of the controversy which, so far, took place without personal intervention by the head of the School.

6 Brentano’s Intervention: Transforming and Immortalizing the Controversy

Brentano’s intervention in the controversy was two-fold. Already during late 1888, Stumpf was trying to persuade Brentano to “publish something on the issue itself (*impersonalia*), in which you also touch upon the dispute between Marty and Sigwart” (Brentano and Stumpf 2014, 281). Brentano’s response to Stumpf is not preserved, but his correspondence with Marty shows that Brentano indeed became actively involved in diplomatic efforts to secure Marty a chance of publishing a rejoinder in the same journal.³⁵ In fact, manuscript material preserved in the Franz

34 Husserl 1984b, 550, ET: 2001, II, 195.

35 In a letter written on November 3, 1888, e.g., Marty denied having asked Stumpf to intervene at Brentano in his favour. At the same time, the letter reveals that Stumpf was also writing to the editors of the journal on behalf of Marty (Ms. Brentano, BrL 2276).

Brentano Archives demonstrates that the text, nominally published in Marty's name (Marty 1889), was actually written by Brentano himself. Since it constitutes one of the very few published writings by Brentano in the period between his two books in 1874 and 1889, and it has hitherto been misidentified, I publish its original text in the appendix of my paper.

Stumpf's second concern was the "question of priority" (Brentano and Stumpf 2014, 281). Stumpf was right in attaching a philosophical significance to this questions, since, as clearly shown by the review of Sigwart's treatise by the British logician and mathematician John Venn (1834-1923) in the *Mind* (1888), it became entirely neglected that the problem of subjectless sentences, at least from the Brentanoian point of view, is rooted in the primacy of existential judgements (see Section 3.3).³⁶ Brentano finally acted on the urgency of the controversy and included a longer remark on Sigwart in the printed text of a lecture he delivered at the Vienna Law Society on January 23, 1889 (Brentano 1889, 60 ff.), together with printing his review of Miklosich (see Section 3.4) as an appendix to the book.

In the main text, Brentano's remark is attached to a repeated invocation of his alliance with Miklosich, who "has given us a philological confirmation of the results of this psychological analysis" of judgements (1889, 16, ET: 2009, 10); but what Brentano actually said in the remark shifted the debate once again in a significant way. Besides a short refutation of Sigwart's treatise, relying on Steinthal's not entirely critical review of it (1888), Brentano namely focused on Sigwart's relational analysis of existential judgements (cf. Section 4.1). Brentano condemned Sigwart's theory to a death of thousand cuts, but the whole process is less exciting philosophically, given that the majority of Brentano's counter-examples stem from Sigwart's non-existential strata of judgements (cf. Section 3). Though, let it be said in Brentano's defence that the version of critique of Brentano presented in the second edition of Sigwart's *Logik* (1889b, 89, n), published in the midst of the controversy, is also less compelling philosophically: According to Sigwart, a presentation is necessary related to the I who presents it, thus the *Anerkennung-Verwerfung* expressed by the existential judgement could only concern a different relation, namely the "idea [...] that the object forms a part of the world surrounding me, can be perceived by me, and can take effect upon myself and other things" (1889b, 89–90, n., ET: 1895, 72–73, n. 1). Brentano did not specifically argue against this argument by Sigwart, but Sigwart's argument is clearly a *petitio principii*, if its aim is to prove the bipartite (relational) nature of judgements. Another aspect of

36 Despite Venn's Boolean background, according to which "we resolutely interpret every proposition into an assertion of the existence or non-existence of some particular combination," thus the existential form becoming "the universal one" (1888, 413). This slight chance for rapprochement had actually been ruined by that time, as the systematisation of George Boole's (1815-1864) logic by William Stanley Jevons (1835-1882), whose system became widespread in contemporaneous Germany (see Peckhaus 1999, 445), was founded upon the transformation of all judgements into equations (*Gleichung*), i.e., "judgements of identity" (Riehl 1877, 62). The stiff opposition between the logical reforms initiated by Brentano, respectively the English logicians is already visible in Hillebrand 1891, 2.

Sigwart's general critique, however, painfully hits home for Brentano and his orthodox students: As Arianna Betti (2013) has recently argued, Sigwart's insistence that the *Anerkennung-Verwerfung* must concern the real object rather than something that is immanent to consciousness (86) was instrumental in the crystallisation of the content-object distinction (76, 87), as presented by Kazimierz Twardowski's (1866-1938) influential habilitation thesis (1894) and, in a less clear form, by Marty in the resumption of his article series (1894).

The other side of the same coin is, however, that Brentano's intervention and the responses to Sigwart by his disciples thus marked a new stage of hostilities between his School and the contemporaneous academic philosophy in Germany, the focal point of which was not more the *impersonalia*. It is apt not therefore to include the history of this stage under the heading of *Impersonalien* Controversy. This historiographic demarcation is further corroborated by the fact that the another new focal point of Brentano's attack against Sigwart was the theory of negative judgements (1889, 65 ff.), in which regard Sigwart was admittedly sided against both Brentano and other representatives of the German academic philosophy (cf. 1889b, 154, n.). Furthermore, in the published text Brentano hinted at his new idea of double judgements (57), which quickly became the new theoretical cornerstone of the Brentanoian understanding of existential implications, proper names and other problems involved in the original *Ignorabimus Controversy* (cf. Hillebrand 1891, 98 ff.).

At the same time, Brentano's explicit reference to his alliance with Miklosich, together with the reprinted review, made the alleged linguistic underpinning of his theory of judgements to a central tenet of the usual exposition of his philosophy for decades to come (as illustrated by the epigraph of the present paper, which stems from somebody who undeniable was *aufstrebender Privatdozent* – or, more precisely, merely a striving doctoral student, at that time). The *Impersonalien* Controversy, however, did not end here. In order to reveal its real extent, it is worth looking at a thinker at the periphery of the School of Brentano who was gradually making himself independent: Edmund Husserl.

7 Sigwart and Husserl, or What (Else) Do We Owe to Sigwart?

Christoph Sigwart is by far the most frequently cited post-Hegelian philosopher in Husserl's *Prolegomena* (Husserl 1975),³⁷ the first volume of the *Logical Investigations* which was Husserl's most widely read book beyond the narrow confines of the Phenomenological Movement. Brentano,

37 According to my count, Sigwart was cited 47 times (17%) by Husserl. He is followed by John Stuart Mill (32 times, 11%), Friedrich Herbart (27 times, 10%), and Benno Erdmann (18 times, 6%). Bolzano, e.g., is cited 11 times (4%), Stumpf 3 times (1%) and Brentano is merely cited once. These numbers may vary slightly according to the exact methodology adopted, but the broad picture remains the same: it is Sigwart, as well as other less-exposed post-Hegelian philosophers, who dominate Husserl's *public* references, rather than the 'usual suspects' Brentano, Stumpf, and Bolzano.

who had felt himself targeted by Husserl's polemics against psychologism, thus could have had good reasons to be wary of Husserl's reliance on the South-German Protestant philosopher who was perceived by the contemporaries as Brentano's nemesis.

As we all know, Sigwart's role as a protagonist in the *Prolegomena* was a negative one: Psychologism, in its flavour as anthropological relativism, is "the systematically dominant, basic conception of [Sigwart's] work" (1975, 132, ET: 2001, I, 83). Sigwart's direct reply, contained in a text inserted in the third edition of his *Logik*, which published shortly after his death (1904, 23–24), is unconvincing and convincing at the same time. It is unconvincing, insofar as Sigwart resisted to accept the notion of states of affairs, which Husserl inherited from Stumpf (cf. Rollinger 1999, 89 ff.), thus he was ill-prepared to account for the difference between the temporal acts of utterances and the atemporal what is uttered by them. On the other hand, he convincingly pointed out that the strict separation between psychology and logic is untenable, as demonstrated by Husserl's appropriation of descriptive psychology in the second volume (see esp. 1984a, 24, n. 1).

In this regard, as Sigwart pointed out (1904, 24), Husserl's antipsychologism in the first volume is a straw-man argument (or, at least, it is easy to be misconstrued in such a way). Sigwart, despite being ailing, did not belong to the camp of critics who ignored the second volume of the *Logische Untersuchungen*: he studied the tome Husserl sent to him and replied: "I have the impression that, despite your aversion to psychology, we are fundamentally not so far away from each other in logic; I am, for the moment being, satisfied to see that you also consider a preliminary psychological work necessary and I believe to find several agreeable aspects of it" (Husserl 1994, V, 398). In fact, there is a more subtle layer of his critique of Husserl as well: Upon the basis of his teleologically inclined philosophy, he emphasized the problem of reconciling ideal and real laws (1904, 24) that, though ascribed to Lotze rather than Sigwart, in a surprisingly way indeed provided Husserl a considerable impetus to extend his phenomenology into a full-fledged philosophy during these years (see Varga 2013, 197 ff.). Sigwart thus could be credited with simultaneously discovering the philosophically interesting weak spots of Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen*, even if Husserl was probably first made aware of Sigwart's critique of him by Emil Lask's (1875-1915) review of the 1911 posthumous edition of Sigwart's *Logik*.³⁸

In the eyes of his contemporaries, however, it was Husserl's antipsychologism that got the upper hand. "Sigwart," Lask wrote in the aforementioned review, "paid tribute to his psychologistic age, which we have now left behind, and was thus unable to recognize, for instance, the cleaning work performed by Husserl precisely in this regard."³⁹ What Sigwart deserves credit for is, Lask wrote in

38 A stenographic excerpt of Sigwart's critique (1911, 24–25), referred to by Lask (1913, 1558), lay together with an offprint of Lask's review in Husserl's copy of C. Sigwart 1889b.

39 1913, 1558. Interestingly, Lask's assessment coincides with the one voiced by Husserl around the same time (1996,

accordance with the consensus around 1870 (see Section 3.1), therefore merely the “richness of excellent stimuli and individual results” in the second volume (1913, 1561). Husserl’s choice of Sigwart as a psychologistic protagonist in the *Prolegomena* certainly painted a new layer over the already complicated relationship between Sigwart and the Early Phenomenology, but was Husserl’s phenomenology indebted to Sigwart’s role in the specific *Impersonalien* Controversy in any meaningful way? In the famous manuscript occasioned in 1894 by Twardowski’s habilitation thesis (Husserl 1990), Husserl – surprisingly, in view of his public allegiance to Brentano, but unsurprisingly, given the received view of that time – apparently shared the broad Herbartian consensus that categorical judgements have an (implicitly) hypothetical structure (see Varga 2015, esp. 114), and Husserl’s knowledge of his actual interlocutor, Franz Kern (1830-1894), a secondary school director in Berlin, was most probably mediated to him by Sigwart (see 113). Furthermore, a recently published research manuscript by Husserl (2009, 31–59, see esp. 33–34), written before his adoption of a proper notion of intentionality in 1894, indicates that Husserl at least partially sided with Sigwart’s relational analysis of existential judgements (see Varga 2015, 109–111) in the controversy that was triggered by Sigwart’s direct and general attack on Brentano’s theory of judgements (see Section 6). But the question remains: Was Husserl involved in any meaningful way in the early stage of the controversy that I labelled the *Impersonalien* Controversy?

Sigwart was possibly the only philosopher in the case of whom an explicitly dated excerpt by Husserl is preserved which antedates Husserl’s habilitation in June 1887.⁴⁰ Sigwart subsequently figured as a proponent of the fifth alternative theory on the psychological origins of the concept of numbers discussed and rejected by Husserl in the printed part of his habilitation thesis, entitled *Über den Begriff der Zahl* (1970, 318–327). When being sent the amended version of the original full habilitation manuscript that Husserl published in 1891 under the title *Philosophie der Arithmetik. Psychologische und logische Untersuchungen*,⁴¹ Sigwart responded in a friendly manner, emphasizing that he found Husserl’s critique convincing (Husserl 1994, VI, 397). In the second edition he indeed adopted elements from the psychological account provided by Husserl (compare C. Sigwart 1893, 45 and, e.g., Husserl 1970, 74), discussing Husserl and acknowledging his influence in a long footnote (C. Sigwart 1893, 46–47, n.). It is unknown whether Brentano was aware of this early episode of philosophical affinity between his disciple and his academic nemesis, but he must have had every reason to be worried. In any case, Sigwart was a constant point of

26, 352, cf. 2002, 5). For another similar contemporaneous assessment, see the review by Richard Kroner (1884-1974) who would later study at Husserl in Freiburg: “The relationship of logic to psychology can probably no more captured in the way as presented by Sigwart” (1912, 118).

40 See Ms. Husserl K I 35 / 80a-84a (not mentioned in Schuhmann 1977, cf. 19), which is an excerpt from Sigwart’s section about the concept of number (1878, 38 ff.), explicitly dated at March 11, 1887 (Ms. Husserl K I 35/80a).

41 1970, 1–283; on its connection to the original habilitation manuscript, see Ierna 2005, 24 ff. The subtitle’s adjectives are reversed in the critical edition.

reference during Husserl's subsequent philosophical projects on the extension of the concept of numbers, the origins of space etc. in the late 1880s and early 1890s, as demonstrated by Husserl's occasional references and long excerpts from Sigwart's *Logik*.⁴²

Against the backdrop of Husserl's such through acquaintance of Sigwart's *opus magnum*, it seems impossible for Husserl not to have been aware of the *Impersonalien* Controversy with Sigwart. Indeed, the *Impersonalien* Controversy is unambiguously linked to Husserl's occupation with C. Sigwart 1889b, as Husserl noted the "*Marty, Subjektlose Sätze I, 84,*" referring to a passage from Marty's initial critique of Sigwart (see Section 4.2) in which Marty quoted Sigwart's description of his theory of judgements (Marty 1884a, 83–84), on the margin of the quoted sentence itself in his copy of Sigwart's *Logik* (1889b, 62). The underlinings and marginal notes by Husserl clearly reveal the one of the focal points of Husserl's reading of Sigwart's *Logik* was precisely the first part of Sigwart's presentation of denominative judgements (63 ff.), the main definition of § 10 and its part that was modified by Sigwart in response to his debate with Wundt in 1880 (70-71; see Section 5) being the most heavily annotated.

From the point of Husserl's own specific mature theory of judgements presented in the *Logische Untersuchungen*, Husserl's interest in Sigwart's analysis of two-fold synthesis is far from being surprising, as it is highly evocative of Husserl's phenomenological analysis of the fulfillment of empty intentions through perceptual ones in virtue of the partial coincidence between their epistemic essence (manifest in the so-called *Übergangserlebnis*, see 1984b, 566), more precisely evocative of the synthesis that occurs in the fulfillment of empty categorical intending acts to corresponding categorical intuitions.⁴³ That it was not a mere coincidence, but rather Husserl was

42 See esp. 1970, 375, 1983, 252, 285, 403, 411 f., as well as the excerpts from C. Sigwart 1878 in Ms. Husserl K I 28/87b, K I 33/5-16, K I 35/18-20. Given that Husserl's readings marks in C. Sigwart 1889b, 1893, to be discussed below, are disproportionately concentrated to the first volume and the excerpts are confined to the second volume (with the exception of Ms. Husserl K I 31/7a), he either bought the volumes separately or his interest in C. Sigwart 1889b was initiated only by the expansion of his research interest to descriptive psychology in general around November 1893 (Husserl 1979, 452).

43 Guillaume Fréchette has recently highlighted the influence of Stumpf's idea of attention as pleasure (*Lust am Bemerken*) on Husserl's early analysis of the distinction between intuition and representation (Fréchette 2015, 277; cf. also Husserl 2004, 159-189). Stumpf was probably the single most important point of reference for the young Husserl, which makes this hypothesis even more plausible, even though it does not exclude parallel influences, and, furthermore, it raises the question of the extent of Herbartian elements in Stumpf's thinking (cf. Stumpf 1890, § 20), despite Stumpf's strong methodological opposition to Herbart's psychology (e.g. 188). In general, what Fréchette's meticulous reconstruction of the Brentanoian theories of abstraction seems to suggest is, I think, precisely that both the monistic and ennoetic accounts were supposed to *shoulder the burden of* what, in phenomenological parlance, could be called *constitution* (i.e., "the presentations of ordinary objects and of properties" in contrast to that of "single colours and shapes," Fréchette 2015, 268). Arguably, Husserl was intent to go his own way in formulating a descriptive analysis of constitution, which led him to claim in 1937 that Brentano "had no idea [*keine Ahnung*]" about "the problems of constitution" (Husserl 1994, vol. IV, 82). I believe that Sigwart's analysis of denominational judgements could have constituted an important source for Husserl's own theory, especially with regard to the categorial intuitions. The other side of the same coin is that Husserl's own explicit confrontation with the theories of abstraction in the *Logische Untersuchungen* most probably missed its target from the point of view of the contemporaneous state-of-the-art (i.e., weak dualistic) Brentanoian theories, as Fréchette argued (see 2015, 289). After all, Husserl himself was, with hindsight, deeply dissatisfied with the his

actively engaging himself with Sigwart's proto-phenomenological analysis is shown precisely by Husserl's critical marginal comments that try to deepen and clarify Sigwart's insights: First, Husserl tried to open Sigwart's analysis up to perceptual judgements in general. While Sigwart's definition was confined to a "thing [*Ding*]" (1889b, 70), Husserl remarked immediately next to this sentence: "*Warum die Beschränkung auf Dingsubjekte? Ist das Subjekt ein Klang, eine Gesichtsanschauung in ihrer Einzelheit, so ist der Charakter der bezüglichen Urteile doch derselbe!*" Second, there is a recurring critique that finds wanting a strange notion, namely a "three-fold" ("*dreifache*" or "*dreierlei*") "synthesis [*Synthese*]," which, Husserl believes, should actually take place in case of judgements the subject of which are not a demonstrative pronoun (i.e., in those case that, for Sigwart, contain a two-fold synthesis).⁴⁴ This strange claim becomes more comprehensible against a careful reconstruction of Husserl's phenomenological theory of categorical intuition (as pioneered by Dieter Lohmar, for a recent exposition see: 2008). What fulfills the categorical judgement 'This paper is white' is, according to Husserl's analysis, not merely the white "color-aspect" itself, but rather the "being-white paper [*weiß seiendes Papier*]" (Husserl 1984b, 659–660, ET [mod.]: 2001, 272–273), i.e., the specific perception of the paper so-to-speak through its whiteness. In other words, what takes place phenomenologically is not merely a synthesis of different elements pertaining to the subject and the object, as Sigwart proposed. As Husserl wrote following Sigwart's examples: the cloud as a thing, the red as a property, and, then, the red as a property "belonging to the thing [*zwar als zum Ding gehörig*]".

In fact, Sigwart's original idea of an unifying synthesis (see Section 5) was already instrumental for Husserl, as demonstrated by a recently published text in which Husserl went even so far to directly paraphrase Sigwart's example of a burning castle:

"Ich stelle mir also z.B. Feuer in der Marienkirche vor. Und nun sage ich ‚Es ist Feuer‘. Das ist ein ganz eigenartiges und, wie ich glaube, nicht weiter analysierbares Phänomen, dieses ‚ist‘. Expliziere ich mir die Bedeutung des Ausdrucks ‚Es ist Feuer‘, so würde ich vielleicht sagen: Wenn ich vor der Marienkirche stände, würde ich sie brennen sehen. Ich würde dann die der Vorstellung entsprechende Anschauung haben. Ich stelle also die eigentümliche Verstärkung und Befriedigung beim Übergang vom Vorgestellten zum Angeschauten vor." (Husserl 2009, 34)

In this passage, Husserl's appropriation of Sigwart's idea is intertwined with his position in the post-1889 controversy on whether judgements of existence are relational or not. Husserl namely

account in the *Logische Untersuchungen* of the "various 'forms of universality-consciousness'" (Husserl 1994, vol. I, 169).

44 "*Diese Analyse paßt doch nur auf Urteile der Form dies ist rot (nicht rote Farbe!). Sonst haben wir eine dreifache 'Synthese'.*" Or: "*Was heißt Einheit? Es scheint, daß das Verhältnis klassifiziert wird als das von Ding und Eigenschaft. Oder wodurch unterscheidet sich Beschaffenheitsurteil von einem "Benennungsurteil"? Oder sind es nicht 2-3 Erkennungen: die Wolke als Ding erkannt, das Rot als Eigenschaft erkannt, und zwar als zum Ding gehörig [...] Eigentlich doch dreierlei Synthese: 1) diese Wolke, dies ist eine Wolke 2) die ausgeschiedene Farbe als rot benannt: dies ist rote Farbe <3>...> Tätigkeit erkannt (das wird freilich nicht als Benennung gefaßt)[.]"*

claim that this phenomenological experience of “*Übergang von Vorstellung zur Sache*” (35), which corresponds to Sigwart’s synthesis and Husserl’s later notion of *Übergangserlebnis*, is what is accepted or rejected in a judgement logically and thus Sigwart has right logically, but it is Brentano who is right psychologically, since this relation does not belong to what is directly presented by the judgement (34-35). Disregarding Husserl’s intervention in that latter controversy, it seems thus that Sigwart’s idea of a two-fold synthesis was instrumental for Husserl both as a motivating example and for deepening his understanding by overcoming Sigwart.

Finally, Husserl seems to have recognized that what is provided by Sigwart amounts to nothing more than an useful building-block for his own theory, as the entirety of Sigwart’s *Logik* is marred by phenomenological insufficiencies, most notably by the missing distinction between pictorial presentations and presentations in general. Next to Sigwart’s main definitions (C. Sigwart 1889b, 64), Husserl noted “*Die Benennungsurteile “sprechen die unmittelbare Koinzidenz von Bildern aus” 101. Vgl. 67*”. Husserl’s explicit recognition of the pictorial theory of representation is to be found in the text on Twardowski written in summer 1894 (1990, 144), and it is precisely in the continuation of this text, penned down in 1898, where Husserl claimed that Sigwart’s analysis of *Benennungsurtheile*, – or, as Husserl preferred to call them now, of *Anschauungsurteile* – was “not flawless,” being marred by the pictorial theory of presentations (Husserl 1979, 347; concerning its dating: 456).

Already Bernhard Rang, the editor of *Husserliana* vol. XXII, pointed (Husserl 1979, liii, n. 2) to Herbartian influences on the formation of Husserl’s notion of evidence and its fulfillment, which, as is well known, constitutes the main pillar of Husserl’s descriptive theory of judgements in the *Sixth Logical Investigations*. Husserl’s indebtedness to Herbart, not to mention other logicians of the post-Hegelian German academic philosophy, is certainly a multifaceted issue (cf. also Varga 2015, esp. 113), the comprehensive investigations of which is still a *desideratum* of Husserl scholarship. The above results, however, reveal a further aspect of this indebtedness, namely with regard to Husserl’s own theory of judgements and their fulfilment. From this point of view, it is less surprising that there is a non-trivial strata of references to Sigwart in Husserl’s mature oeuvre, in which Husserl mentions Brentano and Sigwart on an equal footing to each other – precisely in regard to the theory of judgements: Already in 1905, Husserl described Sigwart and Brentano as two equally important pioneers who recognized that “the theory of judgements should constitute the central foundations of every scientific logic and epistemology” (2002, 3, cf.102). Four years later, in the report on the habilitation thesis of Adolf Reinach (1883-1917), which Husserl believed was following in the footsteps of his *Logische Untersuchungen*, Husserl not only repeated his thesis of the special role of the theory of judgements within the revival of philosophy around 1870s, classifying Brentano and Sigwart among those “most significant scholars” who made *Urteilstheorie*

their focal point, but also explained why he believed it was relevant for his phenomenology: “Striving for a ‘bottom-up’ philosophy, a philosophical science that ascends from the fundamentals to the heights, one was, above all, referred to the problem of the essence of judgements.” (Husserl 1994, II, 206). This striving, Husserl said, could however only be realized in virtue of the descriptive breakthrough that occurred in his *Logische Untersuchungen*. The same claim was repeated in the iteration of lecture courses on logic and theory of science during his late Göttingen and early Freiburg years (1996, 89) – this time, together with an explicit reference to Sigwart’s treatise on *Impersonalien* (1888b) and Brentano’s counter-critique in Brentano 1889 (cf. Husserl 1996, 481).

8 Outlook: The Historiographical Impact of Reconstructing the *Impersonalien* Controversy

It has been argued that investigating contemporaneous controversies provides a rewarding historiographical approach to post-Hegelian German academic philosophy (*Universitätsphilosophie*): First, such an approach is dictated by the nature of the period in question, which was a creative, revolutionary age of philosophy, “a period dominated by crises and controversies, whereas the first half was one of consolidation and consensus” (Beiser 2014, 2). Furthermore, as Beiser pointed out, such an approach could help both “avoiding the danger of antiquarianism” and “escaping the difficulty of anachronism,” while simultaneously highlighting “new thinkers beyond the standard repertoire” (13). Beiser, following in the footsteps of a book series edited by Kurt Bayertz and his colleagues (see, e.g., Bayertz et al. 2012), identified three of such controversies: the Materialism Controversy, the *Ignorabimus* Controversy, and the Pessimism Controversy. Bayertz et al. also listed the debate on Darwinism as a separate controversy, while Beiser shortly mentioned the “debate between logicism and psychologism” (2014, ix), which had been previously brought into the spotlight by Kusch 1995.

Arguably, the controversy that was ignited by the professorial alliance between Miklosich and Brentano, raged *in absentia* between Sigwart and Marty, was transformed by Brentano’s intervention in 1889, and influenced Husserl in a crucial way constitutes a hitherto uninvestigated controversy that is equally worth of scholarly attention, especially considered as a linking element between the School of Brentano and the *Universtitätsphilosophie*. The problem of demarcation of the School of Brentano had long occupied scholars, starting from to Rudolf Haller’s famous notion of *Österreichische Philosophie* (for a late, revised formulation, see 1996, esp. 152 ff.) to Robin. D. Rollinger’s more recent notion of Austrian Phenomenology (2008, 2 ff.). The promise carried by reconstructing the *Impersonalien* Controversy, as attempted above, is precisely to obtain a building-block for a rich and historically detailed understanding of the demarcation between the School of

Appendix: Brentano's Original Draft for Marty's *Erwiderung*

„Herr Prof. Sigwart erklärt,* daß er sich von d<er> wissenschaftlichen Duell, mit seiner herausfordernden Bemerkungen *<*> gegen mich den Anlaß gegeben, zurückziehe. Er nimmt dabei die Miene des Siegers an, der jeden Streich schon in solcher Weise parierte, daß den Gegner jämmerlich geschlagen auf dem Wahlplatze zurücklaße.

Dem gegenüber erlaube ich mir zu constatieren, daß Sigwart, was das Sachliche anlangt, <es> für räthlich gefunden hat, den <recte: die> hauptsächlichen Fragen ignorierend, auf irgendwelche Kleinigkeiten sich zu werfen, die, <selbst> wenn er darin Recht hätte, wenig zu seinen Gunsten entschieden. Ferner, daß er auch hier bei weitem nicht das geleistet hat, deßen er sich rühme<, > was mich nöthigte, ein Wort von dem, was ich sprach, ungeschrieben zu wünschen; es mußte denn aus dem Grunde sein, weil es einem Manne<, > den ich hochhielt, Gelegenheit gab, zu zeigen, wie auch er unter Umständen es nicht verschmäht zu versuchen, ob das Publicum Behauptungen und persönliche Beschimpfungen, die nicht bloß den intellektuellen sondern auch moralischen Charakter des Gegners herabsetzen, als Aequivalent für sachliche Argumente hinzunehmen <werde>. Hiermit sei auch meinerseits das letzte Wort gesprochen.

Seine früher erworbenen Verdienste mögen dabei seinen Erwartungen günstig sein. Dennoch gebe ich mich der Hoffnung hin, daß gerade die besten vorurtheilslos ein gerechtes Urtheil sich bilden werden.

* Zeitsch<rift> <recte: Vierteljahrsschrift> f<ür> w<issenschaftliche> Ph<ilosophie> S.

<> Über d. Imperson<alien>“

Original: Ms. Brentano, Nachlass Alfred Kastil, A.1.3.18. *Passages omitted from the published form (Marty 1889) are marked by normal underlining, dashed underlining indicates reformulation. Inserted texts are not marked.*

45 With regard to access to primary sources, I would like to express my gratitude to Elisabeth Schuhmann (Jena), Carlo Ierna (Utrecht), and Thomas Binder (Graz), as well as to Ullrich Melle (Leuven) for his kind permission to quote from Husserl's unpublished manuscripts and Thomas Binder for his kind permission to publish Brentano's text in the appendix of my paper. I am also grateful to Guillaume Fréchette (Salzburg) for his patience and kind comments on my text. My research was supported by the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA) project no. PD105101.

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