



NEW DIRECTIONS IN THE STUDY OF THE MIND

research project 2015-2017

 UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE



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Foundation

newdirectionsproject.com

Seminar 19

1. Recap: intentionality and some distinctions
2. Mental Capacities: some background ontology
3. Brentano on intentionality

1. Recap: intentionality & some distinctions

The role of intentionality in this narrative:

An individual's 'mind' is the totality of mental capacities of that individual

What makes a capacity mental?

Intentionality is the 'mark' or distinguishing feature of the mental

Intentionality

The 'mind's direction upon its objects'

The 'aboutness' of the mental

Mental representation (bit more controversial)

Three distinct ideas

(1) Intention (as in: intending to do something)

(2) Intensionality

(3) Intentionality

Intensionality and intentionality

Intensionality: a logical/semantic category

Intentionality: a psychological category

A simple confusion?

‘One of the most pervasive confusions in contemporary philosophy is the mistaken belief that there is some close connection, perhaps even an identity, between intensionality-with-an-s and Intentionality-with-at. Nothing could be further from the truth. They are not even remotely similar. Intentionality-with-a-t is that property of the mind (brain) by which it is able to represent other things; intensionality-with-an-s is the failure of certain sentences, statements etc. to satisfy certain logical tests for extensionality. The only connection between them is that some sentences about Intentionality-with-a-t are intensional-with-an-s.’

John Searle, *Intentionality* (1983) p.24

Searle's diagnosis

The belief that there is a connection between intentionality and intensionality 'derives from a mistake which is apparently endemic to the methods of linguistic philosophy – confusion of features of reports with features of the things reported.'

Searle, *Intentionality* (1983: 24)

A more historical perspective

A number of different ideas and words:

‘intentio’ in Scholastic philosophy

‘intension’ in Leibniz and others

‘intentional inexistence’ in Brentano

Connections

The Scholastic *intentio*, *intentiones*: a technical term for concept, concepts

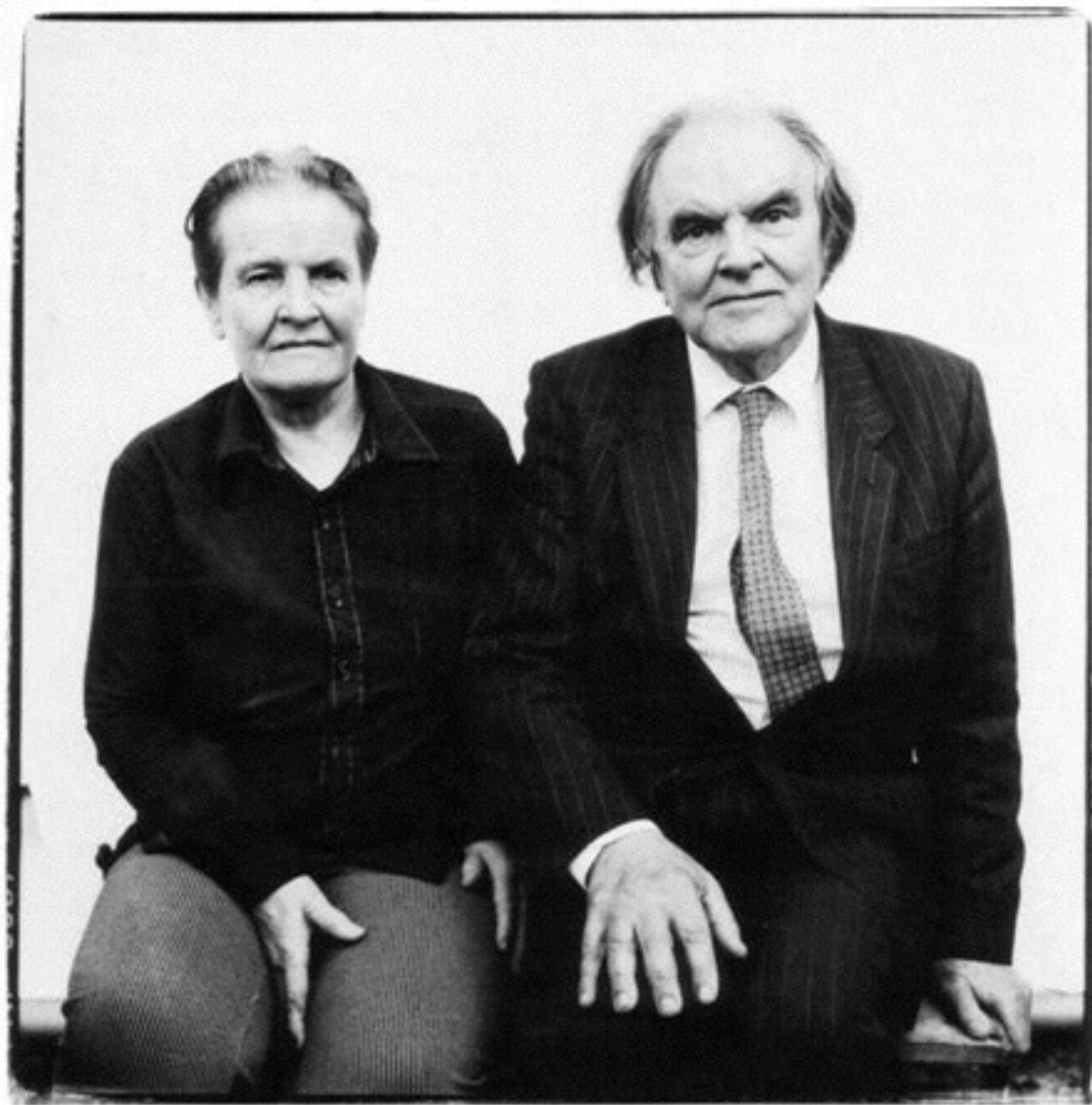
Leibniz's *intension* (Port Royal: *comprehension*) seems to be picking out a feature of concepts other than their *extension*

A family of distinctions

Intension/extension (Church, Carnap)

Sense/reference (Frege)

Connotation/denotation (Mill)



Related but different

Despite this, intentionality and intensionality are not the same

The scholastic theory of intentional existence (or inexistence) is an attempt at a kind of psychological hypothesis

The early modern theory of intension/comprehension is not a psychological hypothesis, but a logical one

A link between intentionality and intensionality?

Are all sentences (and other contexts) describing intentionality intensional?

Do all intensional sentences describe intentionality?

We will return to this....

2. Mental capacities

Capacities of perception, memory, reasoning, imagination, sensation etc.

Distinguish between the capacities and their exercises

Perception and specific perceptual *experiences*

Mental events and states of mind

Events: things that 'happen', with a temporal structure

States: objects having properties

(NB note different uses of the word *event* by Jaegwon Kim, Donald Davidson etc.)

Capacities and their exercises

The exercise of a capacity is an *event*

The result of this exercise can also be a *state*

For example:

Capacity of reason: judgement —> belief

Capacity of the will: decision —> intention

Consciousness

Some exercises of our mental capacities are conscious

Some are not

Exercises of mental capacities are events in the 'stream of consciousness' (William James)

Are there conscious mental states? (See Matthew Soteriou, *The Mind's Construction* 2012)

The mark of mental capacities

There are unconscious mental states, and unconscious mental episodes

Something other than consciousness must be the mark of the mental, its distinguishing feature

This is intentionality

3. Brentano on intentionality

Contemporary discussions of intentionality derive from Brentano's reintroduction of the terminology

But in different ways:

Phenomenology: Husserl, Meinong, Heidegger etc.

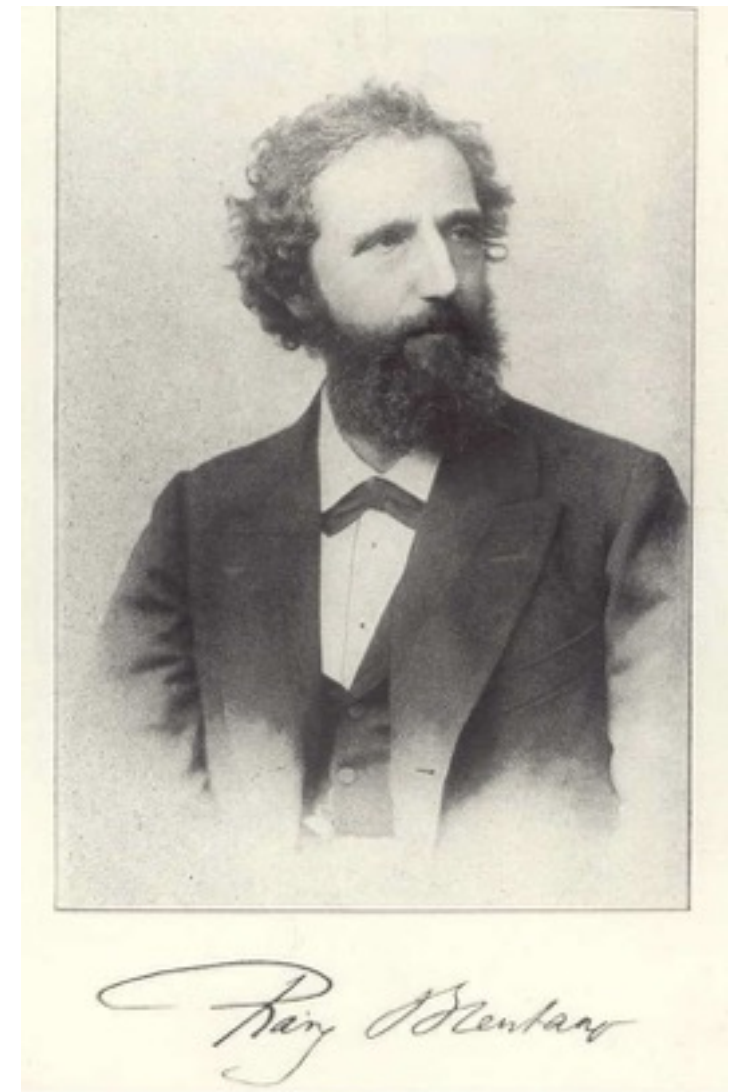
Analytic philosophy: Chisholm, Quine, Davidson etc.

Franz Brentano

1838-1917

Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint
(1874)

§§ on 'The distinction between mental and physical phenomena'



The scholastic idea of intentional existence

Aquinas, following Aristotle De Anima:

In a perception of a goat, the mind receives the 'form' of the goat

But the form does not have 'natural existence' (*esse naturale*) rather, it has 'intentional existence' (*esse intentionale*). Intentio = concept or notion

(Called by Brentano *intentional inexistence*: the object exists 'in' the perception itself.)

Some references

Anthony Kenny, 'Intentionality: Aquinas and Wittgenstein' in Honderich (ed.) *Philosophy through its Past*

Tim Crane 'Intentionality' *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (www.rep.routledge.com) (1998)

Mark Eli Kalderon, *Form without Matter* (2015)

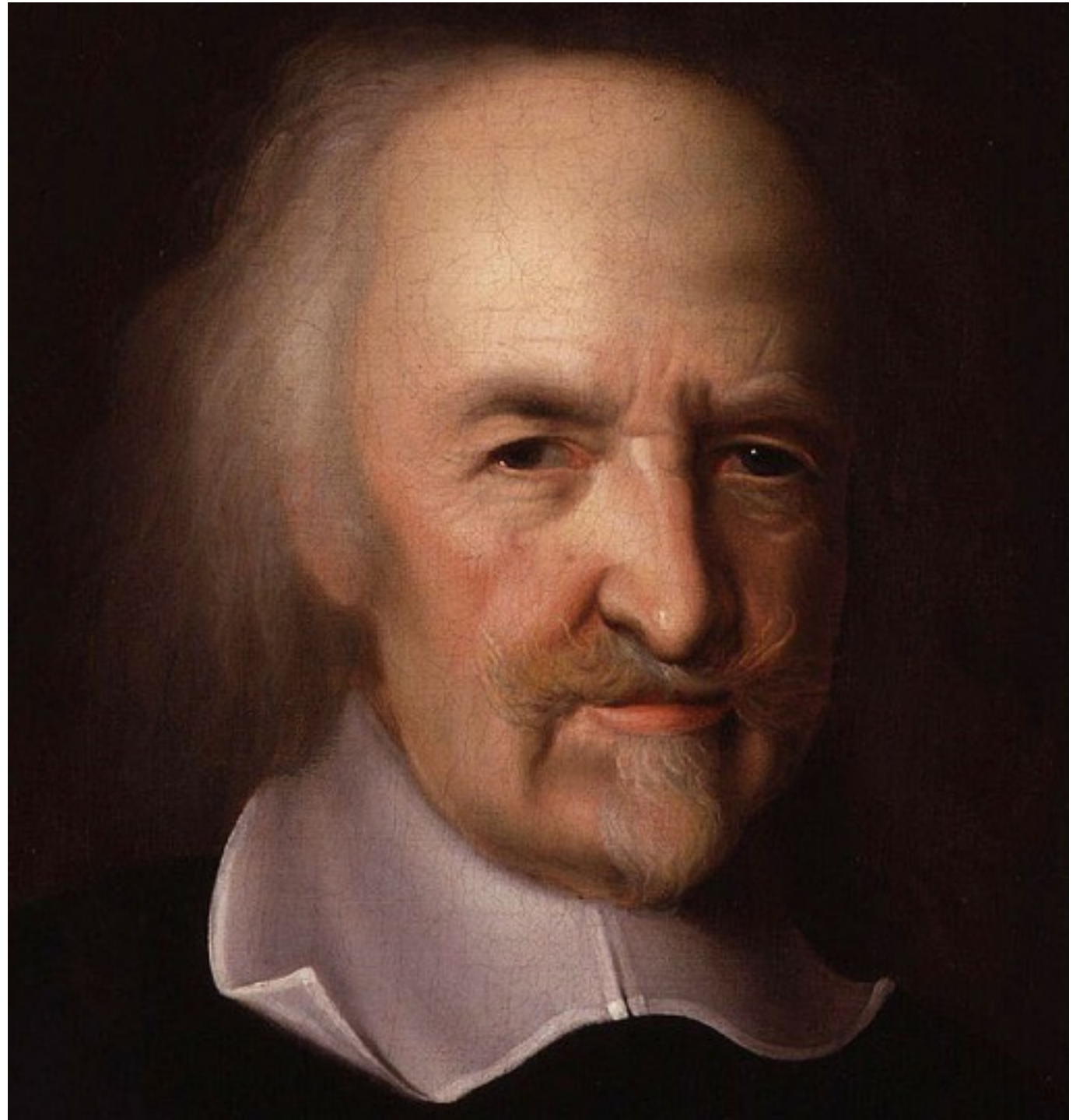
Re-introducing the word or the idea?

The idea of 'the mind's direction on its objects' remained throughout the modern period even if the terminology didn't

After scholasticism

‘entity, intentionality, quiddity, and other insignificant words of the school’

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*



Descartes

‘Formal’ vs ‘objective’ reality of ideas



Kant on judgement

- Bringing intuitions under concepts



What was Brentano up to?

- (1) Distinguish psychology from physiology and philosophy
- (2) Psychology distinguished not by its methods, but by its subject-matter
- (3) The subject-matter of psychology is not the soul, but *mental phenomena*
- (4) Mental phenomena are distinguished from 'physical' phenomena by their intentional inexistence (intentionality)

Intentional inexistence

‘Every mental phenomenon is characterized by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object, and what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously, reference to a content, direction towards an object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a thing), or immanent objectivity. Every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself, although they do not all do so in the same way. In presentation something is presented, in judgement something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on. This intentional in-existence is characteristic exclusively of mental phenomena. No physical phenomenon exhibits anything like it. We could, therefore, define mental phenomena by saying that they are those phenomena which contain an object intentionally within themselves.’

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Terminology

intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object,

reference to a content

direction towards an object

immanent objectivity

Three kinds of mental phenomena

‘Every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself, although they do not all do so in the same way. In presentation something is presented, in judgement something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on’

(1) Presentation — mere consciousness of things

(2) Judgement — affirmation or denial

(3) Emotions (including love and hate)

The mark of the mental

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NB: phenomena!



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