

# **Meinong's Theory of Knowledge**

by

***Marie-Luise Schubert Kalsi***

# Meinong's Theory of Knowledge

by

*Marie-Luise Schubert Kalsi*  
*Southwest Texas State University*

1987 **MARTINUS NIJHOFF PUBLISHERS**  
a member of the KLUWER ACADEMIC PUBLISHERS GROUP  
DORDRECHT / BOSTON / LANCASTER



## Distributors

---

*for the United States and Canada:* Kluwer Academic Publishers, P.O. Box 358, Accord Station, Hingham, MA 02018-0358, USA  
*for the UK and Ireland:* Kluwer Academic Publishers, MTP Press Limited, Falcon House, Queen Square, Lancaster LA1 1RN, UK  
*for all other countries:* Kluwer Academic Publishers Group, Distribution Center, P.O. Box 322, 3300 AH Dordrecht, The Netherlands

## Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

---

Schubert Kalsi, Marie-Luise.

Meinong's theory of knowledge.

(The Martinus Nijhoff philosophy library ; 28)

Bibliography: p.

Includes index.

1. Meinong, A. (Alexius), 1853-1920--Contributions in theory of knowledge. 2. Knowledge, Theory of--History--20th century. I. Title. II. Series: Martinus Nijhoff philosophy library ; v. 28.

B3309.M24S36 1987 121'.092'4 87-12400

ISBN 90-247-3552-1

## Copyright

---

© 1987 by Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Dordrecht.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publishers,

Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, P.O. Box 163, 3300 AD Dordrecht, The Netherlands.

PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

## FOREWORD

In recent years there has been a renewal of interest in Meinong's work; but since the bulk of it is still encased in his quite forbidding German, most students are limited to the few available translations and to secondary sources. Unfortunately Meinong has been much maligned - only in a few instances with good reason - and has consequently been dealt with lightly.

Meinong stood at a very important junction of European philosophical and scientific thought. In all fields - physics, chemistry, mathematics, psychology, philology - revolutionary strides were being made. Philosophy, on the other hand, had run its post-Kantian course. New philosophical thinkers came from different disciplines. For example, Frege and later Russell were mathematicians, Boltzmann and Mach were physicists. Earlier Bolzano and then Brentano were originally theologians, and Meinong was a historian.<sup>1</sup>

The sciences with their new insights and theories offered an enormous wealth of information which needed to be absorbed philosophically; but traditional philosophy could not deal with it. Physics presented a picture of reality which did not fit into the traditional schemes of empiricism or idealism. Ontological and epistemological questions became once again wide open issues. For example, atoms at first were still considered to be theoretical entities. But once they were accepted as real objects, how would the epistemologist deal with them?<sup>2</sup> Moreover, what should be done with objects such as light waves, which occupy time but not space?

There was Frege with his eternal objects, cardinal numbers and sets, and *Gedanken*, whose forerunner had been Bolzano with his *Satz an sich*. There was the beginning of empirical psychology, especially Carl Stumpf and his *Tonpsychologie* which occupied Meinong's thoughts a great deal. Meinong took an active part by founding the first psychological laboratory in Austria at the University of Graz into which he invested all his available finances, including any raise in salary.

There was also Sigmund Freud in Vienna. Even though his theories have been

---

<sup>1</sup> Good descriptions of the intellectual climate of that time are to be found in two books: David Lindenfeld, *The Transformation of Positivism* and J. C. Nyiri (ed.), *Austrian Philosophy, Studies and Texts*.

<sup>2</sup> Meinong, *Ges. Ausg., Ergänzungsband*, p. 169.

very influential, as everyone knows, most philosophers were not so much concerned with his problems as with the problem of reality and our knowledge of it.

From the junction at which, among others, Brentano, Frege and Meinong stood (Frege unfortunately did not directly correspond with Brentano and Meinong), three schools grew forth: phenomenology, analytic philosophy and the philosophy of language. So that junction is very important for modern philosophy and deserves our careful attention. Many philosophers are still influenced by the thoughts of these men. R. M. Chisholm is a prime example of one who owes Meinong and Brentano in equal measure and in whose own philosophy the ideas of both men, especially of Brentano's in recent years, live forth.

My primary interest is the theory of knowledge and consequently the world which it entails. Within its domain the theory of memory has occupied me most of all. Since I had spent many years studying and also translating Meinong's work, I turned again to him. My subject matter turned out to be intriguing and very difficult to get hold of.

### Concerning the Subject Matter of this Book

In this book perception, memory and evidence are discussed. Time and fantasy are intimately connected with them. Except evidence and time, the subject matter of Meinong's philosophizing as it is discussed in this book was not anymore directly inherited from Brentano. Of course, it originated from the problems that were first considered by Brentano.

The purpose of this book is to construct a systematic explanation of Meinong's theory of memory. Memory has always been a fascinating subject for me, and up to now I had not been able to find a suitable treatise of it. My interest does not lie in the reliability and evidence of memory about which Meinong wrote in detail in his paper *"Zu erkenntnistheoretischen Würdigung des Gedächtnisses,"* and which also will be discussed in this book. My main interest lies in the origins and mechanics of memories from the standpoint of psychological philosophy. Meinong did not leave us such a theory. But throughout his work enough material can be found which allows us to construct a truly Meinongian theory of memory. It was very difficult to find access to the subject matter itself. Many other conditions had to be fulfilled before the problem of memory proper could be attacked.

At first it seemed that the knowledge of Meinong's theory of perception, especially the perception of temporally distributed objects, would suffice to gain access to memory. But we do not only remember what we have once perceived externally; we remember many other things, such as dreams and poems, as Meinong also notes.

Then it became obvious that, from Meinong's writings, a concept of time had to be worked out and explained, if at all such a concept was to be found there. Temporal determinations are very important for the discrimination between existing and subsisting objects and especially, of course, for the determination of past, present, and future and for the question if there are in fact a past, a present and a future.

But even the examination of Meinong's concept of time did not suffice. In order to describe the process of remembering, a certain type of ideas needed to be explained. They are fantasy ideas. For at the basis of memory judgments there are exclusively fantasy ideas.

After all these matters will have been researched and discussed, the theory of memory will result from them almost automatically. As is usually the case with Meinong, materials must be searched for, processed, and interpreted; and they had not necessarily been written down by him for the purpose for which they serve here. But they must be utilized in such a way so that a construction of a coherent theory can be accomplished. This is seen in the following.

During his active years Meinong produced bits and pieces of theories of perception, time, and memory which naturally correspond to different periods of his ever evolving psychological research and theoretical work. The pieces he left us do not make a uniform theory. He never maintained that they were consistent. It is the purpose of my book, however, to make a proposal for a Meinongian theory of perception and memory. Then the evidence of perceptual and memory judgments will be discussed according to Meinong's own theory of evidence, which also must be distilled from his work first. It goes without saying that only Meinong's own material will be used for the construction of those theories.

The following concepts are necessary for the understanding of this book but will not be explained again: judgment, assumption, idea, objective, objectum.<sup>3</sup> There are other concepts and theories which were necessary for the construction of the theories which will be proposed in the following. They will be explained and explicitly adapted to our purpose. They are sphere of ideas, sphere of judgments, psychic analysis, idea production. They proved to be sufficient for the construction of a theory of perception. In virtue of them the perception of changing and moving objects and of objects which are seemingly unchanged but are very large can be explained.

I am very grateful to Professor Roderick M. Chisholm for his generous help and critical advice and to Professor Rudolf Haller through whose generosity this project became possible. I thank Dr. Reinhard Fabian and Dr. Hans Zotter, both of the University of Graz, for their help in my studies of Meinong's unpublished literary remains in the manuscript department of the university library. My special thanks go to my friend Barbara Lambert for the final preparation of the manuscript. I thank Todd Horst for his technical effort concerning the software needed to prepare the camera ready copy. I appreciate the many hours which my son, Carle Kalsi, spent working on the index of this book.

---

<sup>3</sup> comp. *Em. Pres.*, Introduction, *M. on O. of H. O.*, Introduction.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATED BOOK TITLES OCCURRING IN THE FOOTNOTES

Alexius Meinong:

*Ges. Ausg.*

*Gesamt Ausgabe*

Volume I:

"H. St. I"

"Hume-Studien I"

"Abstr. u. Vgl."

"Abstrahieren und Vergleichen"

"Empf."

"Über Begriff und Eigenschaften der Empfindung"

"Phantasie"

"Phantasie-Vorstellung und Phantasie"

"Kimpl. u. Rel."

"Zur Psychologie der Komplexionen und Relationen"

"Psy. An."

"Beiträge zur psychischen Analyse"

Volume II:

"H. St. II"

"Hume-Studien II: Zur Relationstheorie"

"Gedächtnis"

"Zur erkenntnistheoretischen Würdigung des Gedächtnisses"

"G. h. O."

"Über Gegenstände höherer Ordnung und deren Verhältnis zur inneren Wahrnehmung"

Volume III:

"Üb. em. Präs"

"Über emotionale Präsentation"

"Werttheorie"

"Psychisch-ethische Untersuchungen zur Werttheorie"

## XIV

### Volume IV:

*Ann. II.*

*Über Annahmen, 2nd edition Ausgabe*

### Volume V:

*"Gegensth."*

*"Über die Stellung der Gegenstandstheorie im System der Wissenschaften"*

*"Erf."*

*"Über die Erfahrungsgrundlagen unseres Wissens"*

*"Kausal."*

*"Zum Erweise des allgemeinen Kausalgesetzes"*

### Volume VI:

*Mögl.*

*Über Möglichkeit and Wahrscheinlichkeit*

### Volume VII:

*Verm. Schr.*

*Selbstdarstellung. Vermischte Schriften*

*Erg.*

*Ergänzungsband*

### Franz Brentano:

*Desk. Psy.*

*Deskriptive Psychologie*

*Psy I.*

*Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt I*

*Psy II.*

*Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt II*

### Roderick M. Chisholm:

**F P**

**The First Person**

**Ess. on Ch.**

**Essays on the Philosophy of R. M. Chisholm**

**Th. of Kn.**

**Theory of Knowledge (2nd. ed.)**

### Kalsi:

**Em. Pres.**

**On Emotional Presentation**

**M. on O. of H. O.**

**A. Meinong on Objects of Higher Order**



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>IX</b>
List of Abbreviations, XIII	
<b>I. Meinong, Brentano, Chisholm</b>	<b>1</b>
A. Alexius Meinong the Person, 1	
B. Meinong and Brentano, 3	
C. Meinong and Chisholm, 17	
<b>II. Perception</b>	<b>27</b>
A. General Remarks, 27	
B. Internal Perception, 32	
C. Sphere of Ideas and Sphere of Judgments, 38	
D. Psychic Analysis, 39	
E. Production of Ideas, 44	
F. Perception of Temporally Distributed Objects, 46	
<b>III. Time and the Temporal</b>	<b>50</b>
A. General Remarks, 50	
B. Subjective Time, 52	
C. Persistence, 54	
D. Objective Object Time, 55	
E. Perception of Temporal Determinations, 57	
F. Additional Remarks, 61	
<b>IV. FANTASY</b>	<b>63</b>
A. Fantasy Ideas and Dispositions, 63	
B. Production of Fantasy Ideas, 66	

## V. MEMORY

71

- A. General Remarks, 71
- B. Judgments of Existence, 72
- C. Memory Judgments of Being Thus-and-So, 74
- D. Assumption Versus Judgment, 76
- E. Memory of Objects of External Perception, 78
- F. Memory of Feelings and Their Objects, 80
- G. Remembering Judgments of Subsistence, 84
- H. Negative Memories, 86

## VI. ON EVIDENCE

88

- A. Introduction, 88
- B. Judgments, 89
- C. Preliminary Description of Evidence, 90
- D. Presumptive Evidence, 91
- E. Evidence for Certainty, 93
- F. Evidence as Property, 96
- G. Evidence as Fundamental Act, 97
- H. Evidence as Content, 99
- I. Absence of Evidence in Judgments Capable of Evidence,  
Unawareness of Present Evidence, 100
- J. Evidence and Truth, 103
- K. Evidence and Linguistic Systems, 105
- L. A Principle of Evidence for Internal Perception, 107
- M. Evidence of Memory Judgments, 110

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

113

## INDEX

120

## I. MEINONG, BRENTANO, CHISHOLM

### A. Alexius Meinong, the Person

In order to get a picture of Meinong as person and as philosopher, it is best to turn to the following writings: *Philosophenbriefe* edited by R. Kindinger, commemorative speeches written by Ernst Mally and Eduard Martinak, and *Meinonggedenkschrift* prepared and edited in Graz.<sup>1</sup> From these writings a philosopher emerges who was careful, always in the process of revising himself, a generous, never-tiring teacher who was strict but respected everyone, who had a droll humor, and who was cheerful company in a small circle of friends. Examples which he used to illuminate a point and incidental remarks in his works show his subtle humor. Reading his mostly dry material, one is occasionally and unexpectedly amused; and through the lines one feels the warmth of the long gone person.

Eduard Martinak describes Meinong as man and teacher in a commemorative speech: He was not a good speaker, he had a high, often sharp voice but was entirely free of pompousness. The almost blind man appeared to be hesitant and uncertain, which is hard to imagine for today's reader who knows him only through his works. He taught without notes, his lectures were an integral part of his thought process. In his seminars he showed great patience in all discussions. He supported his students in all possible ways and saw to it that their publications received due notice.

We know from Mila Radakovic that gifted and interested young women, who were not admitted to the University of Graz, were taught by him privately and their contributions were held in high esteem by him.<sup>2</sup> (Meinong's long-lasting correspondence with Edith Landmann-Kalischer and his frequent literary references to her provide an excellent example of that.)

Martinak says that he was a very sympathetic man. He did not show much interest in politics, but considered himself always truly German, which is to be

---

<sup>1</sup> Mally, *Neue Österreichische Biographie*, vol. VIII 1935, pp. 90-100; Martinak's *Trauerrede* given before the *Wiener Philosophische Gesellschaft*, February 25, 1925; *Meinonggedenkschrift*, Graz, 1952.

<sup>2</sup> *M. Gedenkschrift*.

understood in the context of the Hapsburg monarchy.<sup>1</sup> Toward the end of his life Meinong's hearing became quite bad; but in all of life's situations his wife remained his best co-worker. She was "intellectually and spiritually equal to him."

Also Ernst Mally draws an interesting picture of his teacher for us:<sup>2</sup> Meinong was "a bully as a boy," "the deep, sensitive kindness of the grown man was the kindness of matured raw strength." He neither strove for nor gained popularity. Teaching in seminar surroundings was of great importance to him. Mally agrees with Martinak that Meinong's lectures were a living expression of his research and findings. Didactic dialogue was his great gift. He exercised a "patient but unmerciful art of questioning." He always had time to spare for his students and gave them his personal advice and help. He was completely unpretentious and nourished his strength with his "great talent for enjoyment which comes at small expense." Meinong loved the company of a few friends, and on certain days he, his wife, Benndorf a professor of physics, and his favorite student Stephan Witasek played chamber music. (Some of his compositions are kept at the School of Music in Graz.) He defended and granted everyone's personal freedom and exhibited a "delicate self-discipline." His students prepared for his sixtieth birthday the *Gesammelte Abhandlungen* in two volumes which according to Mally was one of the last great pleasures of Meinong's healthy life. Witasek's death in 1915 and the great collapse of 1918 were personal tragedies for Meinong. His only son lost an eye during the war which added to his grief over the destruction of the old world.<sup>3</sup> Thus, his last years were not only filled with physical pain but also with grief that everything for which he had worked on international levels seemed to have been in vain.

In consideration of the great interest in Meinong, especially by the Anglo-Saxon world, it is amazing to see the condescending criticism with which his philosophy, especially his theory of objects, are treated.<sup>4</sup> Together with Bertrand Russell, Peter Geach, and perhaps G. E. Moore, Findlay stands at the beginning of the newer Meinong literature.<sup>5</sup> I looked for help in Findlay's book when Meinong's *Über emotionale Präsentation* seemed to be unsurmountable, and I owe Findlay my thanks. But in the course of time my interpretation of Meinong deviated from that of Findlay. However, Findlay still influences greatly the Meinong literature of today, and perhaps we must look there for the source of the frequent laments over Meinong's untamed realism or even jungle. At least in America Reinhold Grossmann's book *Meinong* has served as a fountain of information for young students of Meinong in recent times; and through this multilayered, more-critical-than-objective

<sup>1</sup> Compare also *Philosophenbriefe*, p. 222.

<sup>2</sup> *Neue Österreichische Biographie*, 1935.

<sup>3</sup> Compare also *Philosophenbriefe*, p. 222.

<sup>4</sup> Similar amazement is expressed by Karel Lambert in his book *Meinong and the Principle of Independence*, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> *M's Theory of Objects and Values*. Compare M. on O. of H. O. Introduction.

filter, Meinong's philosophy emerges as something almost abnormal.

It is true, if we study an isolated piece of his writings, it is almost incomprehensible.<sup>1</sup> Many of his philosophical beliefs were born within a certain period of his thought process which was constantly evolving: in lecture halls, in seminars, in discussions with his students. It is also true and natural that he often contradicted himself in the course of years and even in the same class.<sup>2</sup> But his fertile mind deserves our greatest attention once we decide to pay him any attention at all, and it is imperative to turn to the original sources and to study with diligence the works which he left us. For example, we often meet the expression "Meinongian universe" which is taken to mean, by those who use it and who have at most a sporadic knowledge of Meinong's writings, something quite strange to the actual Meinongian universe - if indeed there is such a thing at all.

He was an empiricist and considered himself a student of Hume. In this, Brentano showed him the way.<sup>3</sup> He remained an empiricist who never lost himself in global speculations or in those which have the self as their object. It never occurred to him to populate the world with absurd objects, except with objects of thought which are automatically given with thought, because for Meinong every presenting experience has an object which, however, does not imply an untamed ontology.

## B. Meinong and Brentano

Meinong was a student of Brentano. That is essential for our understanding of him and must never be forgotten, for his philosophy started not only with the study of Hume, but also with the study of his teacher Brentano. The relationship between the two men was problematical, and it is not my task to subject it to analysis. It seems to be that Brentano stayed in friendly contact with those students who remained true to his doctrine, but became estranged from those who went their own ways philosophically. Meinong and Husserl are expressive examples of the latter and Brentano's neglect of Husserl, who struggled intensely for the understanding of his teacher, is almost depressing. But one must remember that Brentano, like Meinong, became increasingly blind in the last decades of his life. He had material read to him and dictated his own, thus limiting his reading to the most essential matters. As far as Meinong is concerned, his great sensitivity was also responsible for his estrangement from Brentano. But until his death Brentano never bothered to call Meinong by name in critical remarks aimed at his work.<sup>4</sup> Meinong, on the other

---

<sup>1</sup> Compare Em. Pres, Introduction, and Kalsi M. on O. of H. O.

<sup>2</sup> Nachlass, Carton XII 2nd Epistem. Lect., Leaf 34ff concerning time.

<sup>3</sup> *Philosophenbriefe*, Preface. Wilh. Frankl emphasizes Meinong's empirical attitude which lasted through his whole life; in *Meinonggedenkschrift*.

<sup>4</sup> *Psy. II*, pp. 149, 224, 275f.

hand, addressed Brentano directly in his critical and also appreciative notes. He lacked Brentano's biting style. The strained relationship must have caused him pain as is indicated in the following passages from *Selbstdarstellung*:<sup>1</sup> "...but Brentano, following my request, gave from his wealth with open hands being a diligent teacher and a benevolent advisor, exemplary of the best of me and my own academic activity which stood the test of time. Even though we never became unconditionally close to each other as others did and as C. Stumpf describes it in his reverential *Gedenklätter*, the surviving younger one must take the responsibility for that upon himself, even though direct memory does not support him in that. I have often experienced in later years how students in their fledgling independence tried to hide their independence precisely from their teacher even though it was just that independence which he so untiringly tried to help to bring about. The overpowering personality of a Brentano may have fostered such anxieties which were the beginning of misunderstandings whose consequences remained with me until my more mature years. What in life could not be put right was put right in death, and in my memory is the unforgettable treasure, the radiant figure of my admired teacher in his spiritual beauty gilded by the radiance of his and my youth."

Many of Meinong's philosophical problems were inherited from Brentano, and his method remained descriptive psychology, from which subsequently his theory of objects was derived. In the following, light will be shed on the intellectual relationship holding between these two men, at least as far as it becomes apparent from Brentano's writings, *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt* I and II and partially *Wahrheit und Evidenz*, and as far as they are relevant for this book.<sup>2</sup> There was not much written correspondence between them.

In spite of their mutual animosity, both Brentano and Meinong kept themselves informed about the other's work. It can only be determined by an exact historical analysis which of Meinong's ideas were directly derived from Brentano (or vice versa) after Meinong had finished his studies with Brentano (1872 - 1878). But this is not the place for such an analysis. However, we can trace a certain train of thought in Brentano's works which also becomes apparent in Meinong's work even though he often arrived at completely different solutions. Of course, descriptive psychology originated with Brentano and was adopted by Meinong. Their conclusions differ, but sometimes they differ merely in their formulation.

Perhaps it is best to proceed systematically and to look at certain problems which were thought about and discussed by both men. Concerning his intellectual indebtedness to Brentano and also other thinkers, Meinong says:<sup>3</sup> "Naturally it could have happened that I did not estimate highly enough certain kinships with other thinkers or that I did not express sufficiently those kinships of which I myself was

<sup>1</sup> *Ges. Ausg.*, Vol. VII, pp. 3ff.

<sup>2</sup> Certain very important problems which are discussed in *Desk. Psy.* and in Chisholm's paper "*Die Philosophie Franz Brentanos*" cannot be dealt with here. They are too complex.

<sup>3</sup> *Ges. Ausg.*, vol. VII, pp. 55, 57, 58.

fully aware." He counted Kant among those kinships, but "the new Phenomenology really should deserve special consideration if its author had not made that impossible for me,"<sup>1</sup> and "There is no doubt in my indebtedness to other colleagues who were students of Brentano."

### *Internal Perception*

Brentano did not coin the term *Selbstpräsentation* (self-presentation), but retrospectively the concept is clearly traceable to his internal perception.<sup>2</sup> Brentano says the following about internal perception: "Please, note we said that internal perception, not internal observation, is the primary source," namely the primary source of knowledge.<sup>3</sup> It has the following in common with Meinong's self-presentation: "It is a universally valid psychological principle that we are never able to fixate the object of our internal perception."<sup>4</sup> Also the object of self-presentation cannot be fixed for inspection. The expression "internal perception" is used by Meinong in a much broader meaning than by Brentano, as will be seen in the following chapters. Internal perception of our own psychic phenomena (in Brentano's sense) as the primary source of experience is absolutely necessary for any psychological investigation.<sup>5</sup> Psychic phenomena can naturally be retained in memory where they can be observed as so-to-speak foreign objects, or as Meinong would say, where they can be objects of other-presentation.<sup>6</sup>

### *Evidence*

For Brentano the evidence of internal perception is certain; it is infallible and excludes any doubt. It is immediately or directly evident and even is the only perception in the proper sense of the word.<sup>7</sup> This is a point where Brentano's and Meinong's ways part. For Meinong internal perception confined to self-presentation is also infallible, but only practically infallible. It is still perception and therefore lacks certainty. This point will be discussed in the evidence chapter of this book. It shall merely be mentioned that Meinong maintained that evidence has degrees of intensity, starting with absolute ungraduated certainty of some apriori judgments

<sup>1</sup> This, of course, refers to Husserl.

<sup>2</sup> Each psychic act is accompanied by an idea of the same act. *Psy. I*, pp. 170, 179ff, 203, 218, etc.

<sup>3</sup> *Psy. I*, pp. 40f.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*; compare *Em. Pres.*, Introduction; *Üb. em. Präs.*, Chapter 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Psy. I*, pp. 48, 60f.

<sup>6</sup> *Psy. I*, pp. 60f.

<sup>7</sup> *Psy. I*, pp. 50, 128.

and going down to the weakest presumptive evidence. Meinong realized that when he was dealing with the reliability of memory judgments in his paper "*Zur erkenntnistheoretischen Würdigung des Gedächtnisses*." Brentano reacted to that very critically; Meinong registered his remarks.<sup>1</sup> Brentano writes this:<sup>2</sup> "Just recently we heard . . . Meinong state that there are evident presumptions which very well might be false in spite of their evidence. It is unnecessary to say that I find this absurd; but I want to express my regrets that my lectures in the past, when I believed that degrees of conviction are intensities of judgments, were the cause of such aberrations." It remains open if Meinong's presumptive evidence originated from these early sources or if it developed in the course of his problem solving. But, according to Brentano, Pascal and Descartes had already committed the same mistake by speaking of "more or less evident."<sup>3</sup>

Since for Brentano only internal perception is reliable, it is natural that the concept of truth as a relation of adequacy had to be abandoned. (Meinong was confronted with a similar problem.) It had to be replaced by something which makes a reference to the external world superfluous. The concept of evidence provided the answer. Evidence is inherent in the psychic phenomenon. Each evident judgment is true, but not every true judgment is evident, because there are incidentally true, blind judgments. Evidence is not coercion, Brentano expressly denies that there is coercion in the evident judgment as Sigwart believed.<sup>4</sup> The truth of a judgment is guaranteed by evidence "which it has immediately or obtains . . . by means of a proof through connection with other judgments."<sup>5</sup> Evidence can be isolated by comparing evident judgments with those which are not evident (p. 143). Even though Brentano cannot state what evidence is, he can show when it occurs.<sup>6</sup> He violently opposes the thought that the intensity of a judgment experience is an indicator for the presence of evidence, and he is referring to Meinong without mentioning his name as usual.<sup>7</sup> Since evidence, when it occurs, guarantees the truth of a judgment, it can only be evidence for certainty, simple and without gradation. Therefore he sharply opposes Meinong who, as has already been said, includes presumption into the concept of evidence and makes a much broader effort than Brentano to make the concept clear or to get access to it at all.<sup>8</sup> Also here we see that the problem was inherited from Brentano, but it was

---

1 *Ges. Ausg.*, vol. VII, p. (193), 189.

2 *Wahrh. u. Evid.*, p. 68.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 68.

4 *Wahrh. u. Evid.*, pp. 64 (1889), 141ff.

5 *Wahrh. u. Evid.*, pp. 137 (1915), 139, 148.

6 *Desk. Psy.*, p. 52.

7 *Wahrh. u. Evid.*, p. 144f.

8 Brentano writes a short note in *Desk. Psy.*, p. 46: "Fear of Meinong's relapse concerning evidence."



treated by Meinong in a way with which Brentano did not agree.<sup>1</sup> Later in this book Meinong's concept of evidence will be discussed in detail.

I will add a few remarks concerning internal perception: Following Brentano, Meinong refused the possibility of inner self-observation.<sup>2</sup> Still, internal perception in Brentano's and Meinong's sense yields the material for descriptive psychology which was continued by Meinong. Brentano emphasizes repeatedly that ideas are the presuppositions for all other psychic phenomena. That is, ideas are our basic psychic activity of which we are always conscious. Ideas are the psychological presupposition for *supraordinierte* ideas such as abstract and general ideas, and for two other classes of "psychic phenomena": judgments and love/hate.<sup>3</sup> Meinong almost writes the same in his monograph *On Emotional Presentation*. However, he separates the class of feelings which Brentano calls "love/hate" into two classes which are correlated to the two classes of intellectual presentation (ideas and judgments/assumptions), namely feelings which correspond to ideas and present values, and desires which correspond to judgments and present obligations. For Meinong emotional presentation can be knowledge. Initially he reacted critically to the theory which was originally put forth by Edith Landmann-Kalischer of Basel<sup>4</sup> which is apparent from the very friendly correspondence between the two philosophers.<sup>5</sup> But already in 1910 he revised his attitude, and the revision was crowned by his theory concerning our knowledge of values and obligations to which he even assigns the status of apriori knowledge at the end of the book. The influence which E. Landmann-Kalischer exerted on Meinong cannot be underestimated. For Brentano love and hate have no function as knowledge and are not apriori intentional acts. He also denies pointedly the occurrence of any apriori ideas.<sup>6</sup>

I would like to add two remarks concerning ideas. They are, for Brentano and for Meinong, the most primitive psychic phenomena which can be isolated from their psychic surroundings in an epistemic sense. According to Brentano, we are conscious of each psychic phenomenon. He uses many pages to make his point.<sup>7</sup> According to Meinong, who neither ascertains the same nor states the opposite, it is not much of a subject for discussion, perhaps with the exception of self-presentation. All in all he carefully avoids the question of consciousness or even the unity of consciousness. Some experiences present themselves, as we know when it happens. The disagreement over the consciousness of all psychic acts really seems to be a disagreement about words which becomes apparent in Brentano's differentiation between "notice" ("*bemerken*") and "perceive" ("*wahrnehmen*") in

<sup>1</sup> *Wahr. u. Evid.*, p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> *Em. Prcs.*, chapter 1.

<sup>3</sup> Compare *Psy. I*, pp. 112, 116, 120; *II*, pp. 9, 124, 127, 139; *Deskr. Psy.*, pp. 122, 139.

<sup>4</sup> "Über den Erkenntniswert ästhetischer Urteile," *Arch. f. d. Ges. psychol. V*, p. 1905.

<sup>5</sup> *Philosophenbriefe*, pp. 154f, 160.

<sup>6</sup> *Psy. II*, pp. 89, 210.

<sup>7</sup> *Psy. I*, pp. 141ff, 156ff, 161ff; *Deskr. Psy.*, p. 22f.