Ontology and Psychology in the Work of Liliana Albertazzi

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


   Contents: Liliana Albertazzi: Introduction: back to the origins 1; Liliana Albertazzi: The primitives of presentation. Wholes, parts and psychophysics 29; Martin Kusch: the politics of thought: a social history of the debate between Wundt and the Wurzburg School 61; Riccardo Luccio: Representation in psychophysics 89; Robin D. Rollinger: Lotze on the sensory representation of space 103; Jan Sebestik: Ernst Mach's evolutionary theory of representation 123; Gianni Zanarini: Hermann von Helmholtz and Ernst Mach on musical consonance 135; Salvo D'Agostino: The Bild conception of physical theories from Helmholtz to Hertz 151; Karl Schuhmann: Representation in early Husserl 167; Jens Cavallin: Contents, psycho-physical products and representations 185; Elisabeth R. Valentine: G.F. Stout's philosophical psychology 209; Theo Herrmann and Steffi Katz: Otto Selz and the Würzburg School 225; Serena Cattaruzza: The instrumental model of language in Karl Buhler 237; Alfred Zimmer: The concept of perceptual 'field' and the revolution in cognition caused by Köhler's physische Gestalten 251; David Woodruff Smith: Consciousness and actuality in Whiteheadian ontology 269; Wolfgang Wildgen: Kurt Lewin and the rise of the 'cognitive sciences' in Germany: Cassirer, Bühler, Reichenbach 299; Ruggero Pierantoni: Children's drawings as sensible probes into the realm of representations 333.


   Contents: Acknowledgements ix; Terminological note xi; Introduction 1; Chapter 1. A life. a novel 5; Chapter 2. Brentano and Aristotle 43; Chapter 3. Psychology from an empirical standpoint 83; Chapter 4. Metaphysics and the science of the soul 123; Chapter 5. A woodworm in the intentional relation 155; Chapter 6. Ficciones 189; Chapter 7. Continua 233; Chapter 8. Reverse Aristotelianism: metaphysics of
accidents 269; Chapter 9. Other writings: ethics, aesthetics and history of philosophy 295; Chapter 10. A
history of Brentano criticism 313; Chapter 11. A wager on the future 335; Bibliographic notes 341;
References 355; Index of names 373.

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

Before these publications, I have sought to outline the origin and influence of the theses put forward by
the school of Brentano, and subsequently those of the school of Meinong with colleagues (L. Albertazzi
School of Alexius Meinong, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2001).

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

**Essays**

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

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


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


4. ———. 1996. "Edmund Husserl." In The School of Franz Brentano, edited by Albertazzi, Liliana,

5. ———. 1996. "From Kant to Brentano." In The School of Franz Brentano, edited by Albertazzi, Liliana,


"We owe the concept of formal ontology to Husserl, who called it the 'formal theory' of objects. However,
the concept of formal as used by Husserl in his definition should not be understood in the conventional
sense, since in his thought 'formal' is equivalent to 'categorial'; it is closely connected with the structures
of the intentional acts and, as we shall see, has morphodynamic implications.

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


"A not up-to-date premise. Can metaphysics be a science? The question has long been dismissed as obscurantist and in bad taste, as well as being obfuscatory, impossible to frame and methodologically inadequate. And yet it is an entirely legitimate question when stated in the following simple terms:

(i) what exists?
(ii) what are the best methods with which to describe it?
and, subordinately, why do things sometimes appear differently from what they are?

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

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

Not surprisingly, therefore, several philosophers have given up in the attempt and devoted themselves to the much more reassuring theories of epistemological models and logics of the existent, declaring metaphysics to be 'off limits'. For those who persist in their empirical endeavour, the only option is to adopt a different approach: a minimalist one which analyses the situation to which these terms refer and their genesis in the duration. This is an essentially descriptive approach; it has close ties with psychology and it is, specifically, an experimental phenomenology.  


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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>In</th>
<th>Pages</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
</tr>
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