



Brentano's "Descriptive" Realism

By DENIS SERON
Université de Liège

Abstract Brentano's metaphysical position in *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* is usually assumed to be metaphysical realism. I propose an alternative interpretation, according to which Brentano was at that time, as well as later, a full-fledged phenomenalist. However, his phenomenism is markedly different from standard phenomenism in that it does not deny that the physicist's judgments are *really* about the objective world. The aim of the theory of intentionality, I argue, is to allow for extra-phenomenal aboutness within a phenomenalist framework.

Brentano's metaphysical position in the 1874 *Psychology* is a most controversial matter.¹ The trouble with it is that it seems both realist and anti-realist at the same time. On the one hand, it seems that Brentano at that time endorsed indirect realism about experience. Physical phenomena, he argued, are contents of representations which are caused by things existing in the external world. On the other hand, he declared that only mental phenomena are to be considered really existent — which suggests some psychological variety of phenomenism.

One possible interpretation, offered by Peter Simons and Tim Crane, is that in 1874 Brentano was a metaphysical realist but defended some form of phenomenism for methodological purposes (Simons 1995; Crane 2006). As far as the aim of the 1874 *Psychology* was to lay foundations for descriptive psychology, there was no need to be committed to the existence of any mind-independent reality: mental phenomena were enough. So Brentano could be a

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metaphysical realist while arguing at the same time for a phenomenalist approach to psychological matters.

Another influential interpretation is Liliana Albertazzi's interpretation in terms of "immanent realism" (Albertazzi 2006). It is unclear what the term means to Albertazzi. If I understand the idea correctly, Brentano's immanent realism is a realism in the ordinary sense of a commitment to the existence of mind-independent entities, but it is different from naïve realism in that it takes into account what Albertazzi calls their "immanent and irreducible categorization by the intentional acts" (Albertazzi 2006: 128). The idea is that Brentano affirms both the existence of mind-independent entities and their close connection with inner experience: the external things given in experience really exist, but they can be classified or conceptualized only on the basis of the psychological classification of intentional states.

Clearly, both interpretations are unsatisfactory. The former attributes to Brentano something like the following thesis: there exists some mind-independent reality absolutely speaking, that is, from the metaphysician's third-person point of view, but there exists no mind-independent reality from the psychologist's first-person or phenomenological point of view. This reading is most implausible. At the very least, it seems fairly inconsistent with Brentano's explicit claim according to which the only things that exist in themselves are mental phenomena. "It is wrong, Brentano says, to set phenomena in opposition to what exists in itself." (Brentano 1982: 129/137)¹ As I shall try to show, there are good reasons to believe that Brentano's actual position in the *Psychology* is the exact converse of "methodological phenomenism."

The trouble with Albertazzi's interpretation in terms of "immanent realism" is that it is hardly supported by the text. Arguably, it seems that even the famous text in which Brentano argues for indirect realism is to be interpreted differently than merely as a case for realism, but more on this later.

Since Peter Strawson (1955: 9ff.) it has been usual in metaphysics to distinguish between a "revisionary" and a "descriptive" approach to metaphysical problems. According to the revisionary approach, the task of metaphysics is to determine the metaphysical conditions for truth: such and such theories, for example quantum field theory or the economical theory of value, are assumed to be true, and the task is to specify what must exist for the theory to be true. Quine is the most notable proponent of this approach in contemporary times. From the descriptive point of view, by contrast, the

¹ Original German pagination, followed by pagination of the English translation.

metaphysician does not ask what kinds of entities are needed for our theories to be true, but how the world looks to us in virtue of our conceptual or cognitive systems. Kant is seen as the pioneering figure of this latter approach.

My suggestion is that Brentano's intentionalism in *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* allows to combine the revisionary with the descriptive approach. This combination, I think, is both the very heart of Brentanian intentionalism and what makes it quite attractive in a metaphysical context.

Now, the revisionary-descriptive dichotomy provides a helpful framework in order to clarify the nature of Brentanian realism. As Achille Varzi noticed, the realist attitude seems more natural from a revisionary point of view, and the anti-realist attitude from a descriptivist point of view (Varzi 2008: 47ff.). In what follows, I shall try to show that in this respect Brentano's position is unnatural. My position will be that, conversely, Brentano was a revisionary phenomenalist and a descriptive realist. The reasons I have for thinking so will emerge in the course of this paper.

A phenomenological definition of intentionality

One of the most influential interpretations of Brentano's theory of intentionality and consciousness currently is the so-called self-representational interpretation (Kriegel 2003, 2013, forthcoming; Williford 2006). According to this interpretation, Brentano in the *Psychology* of 1874 managed to define phenomenal consciousness through intentionality. Consciously being in a mental state means having a representation of both its external object and itself. In other words: consciousness is just some kind of representation. It is that *self*-representation which must be included in every conscious representation whatsoever.

At first glance the idea seems very plausible. Unquestionably, Brentano claims that all representation must look both inward and outward, and that the inward-looking intentionality of the intentional state is consciousness. In addition, such an interpretation certainly makes Brentano's theory more easily digested by naturalistic philosophers of mind. Indeed, to define phenomenal consciousness by intentionality is the key purpose of the recent representational theories of consciousness, including self-representationalism. The basic conviction behind most of these theories is as follows: (1) intentionality has been naturalized and therefore is no longer a philosophical problem; (2) by contrast, phenomenal consciousness is hardly or not at all naturalizable, so it is a "hard problem" for philosophers; (3) since it seems

better to explicate the more problematic in terms of the less problematic rather than the converse, consciousness must be defined in terms of intentionality.

In two forthcoming papers, I nonetheless suggested that the self-representationalist interpretation misses the point (Seron forthcoming a, b). My hypothesis was that Brentano's *empiricist* line of thought is the exact converse of the *naturalist* line of thought underlying the self-representational reading. Brentano's psychology is first of all a psychology "from an empirical standpoint." That is, Brentano's aim was not to define consciousness in terms of intentionality, but conversely to define intentionality, and thus the mental, in terms of phenomenal consciousness; not to naturalize consciousness through intentionality, but, so to speak, *to phenomenologize intentionality*.

So I re-read the 1874 *Psychology* and tried to find out what such a phenomenological or empirical definition of intentionality might be. By pulling together some scattered passages found in the *Psychology* (Brentano 1973: 114/81, 124/88, 129/92, 132/94), I eventually obtained this reconstructed formula:

(INT) For all x , x is a representation of A iff x appears and x (really) exists and A does not (really) exist and A appears in x .

Its purpose is to define intentionality, and thus mentality, in phenomenological terms. More precisely: the primitive terms are appearance, real existence, and the pheno-meriological relation "appears in" in virtue of which the method of Brentano's psychology is fundamentally psychological *analysis*. The general idea is that having a representation of something means being conscious of one's own mental state as something "in" which something else appears.

This definition has some difficulties, but I think it is globally better or at least closer to Brentano's actual purposes. I will not discuss that point here. What I'd like to do is to explore some consequences of endorsing (INT) in a metaphysical context. So I will take it for granted and confine myself to a couple of brief remarks.

"... appears" is synonymous with "... is a phenomenon" or "... is subjectively experienced" or "... is given to consciousness" in the most general sense. Obviously, the definition is false if there exist unconscious representations, which Brentano claims is impossible. The expression " A appears in x " refers to what Brentano ambiguously calls "in-existence" (*Inexistenz*) or "intentional existence." The clause " A does not exist" enables

one to distinguish the content A from other components of the mental state, for example partial states. Instead of "... represents A " and " A appears," we could use the more special phrases "... represents A on a certain psychological mode Ψ " (e.g., perceptually, imaginatively, etc.) and " A appears on a certain phenomenological mode Φ " (e.g., as present, as fictional, etc.). The relation between Ψ and Φ — Husserl's "noesis-noema correlation" — raises a whole series of fundamental questions.

The definition allows a more intuitive understanding of certain otherwise puzzling features of intentional facts, especially representational opacity. The crucial point is that both x and A are phenomena, and that appearance does not involve existence. It can seem puzzling that " A exists" does not follow from " x represents A ," or that " x represents B " does not follow from " x represents A and $A = B$." But the ordinary man will see nothing odd or anomalous in the idea that " A exists" does not follow from " A appears," and that " B appears" does not follow from " A appears and $A = B$." (INT) has some other interesting features. Among other things, it should be noted that the only connection between x and A , mental and physical phenomena, is the mereological relation "appears in."

Intentionality and reference

What does all this have to do with Brentano's realism? To begin with, it must be kept in mind that the key questions raised in the 1874 *Psychology* are of an ontological nature. As I will suggest, for Brentano the question of intentionality is basically an ontological matter.

As far as psychological theories are true or false, they presumably refer to something. So the psychologist is presumably committed to the existence of certain entities, while he can leave aside some other entities. In my view, the question of intentionality for Brentano is as follows: given that all mental states must be intentional and that the psychologist must therefore make use of intentional phrases, what do her intentional phrases refer to? What kind of entities must the psychologist assume as existent when she talks of mental facts such as "imagining x " or "believing that p "?

The only purpose of definition (INT), as well as of Brentano's theory of intentionality as a whole, I think, is to provide an answer to this simple question. What the definition tells us is this: Consider all the psychologist talks about, that is, in Brentano's conception: all that appears in the mind. What exists in there? When you say you imagine Pegasus, should Pegasus be said to exist? Or the state of imagining? Or none of them? Or something

else? The whole “problem of intentionality” lies in the simple fact that, among the things given in the mind, some exist while others do not. In other words: the psychologist should recognize some phenomena as existent, and some others as inexistent. So, we could say that the function of the definition is to indicate which parts of the psychologist’s intentional phrases are referential, and which are not.

Let us take an example from Brentano — a very famous one, actually: “The centaur is a poetic fiction.” (Brentano says “*a* centaur,” but for some reasons I prefer “*the* centaur.”) This example was used by John Stuart Mill as an objection against Brentano’s view that every predicative judgment is reducible to an existential judgement. Mill’s objection was that the judgment “the centaur is a poetic fiction” obviously does not commit one to the existence of a centaur.

Now, let’s turn to Brentano’s response. Like Russell later, Brentano thinks that much of the problem of reference is due to grammatical illusions. So what he proposed is to rephrase the sentence. Instead of “the centaur is a poetic fiction,” he argues, it would be clearer to say, “There is a poetic fiction which conceives the upper parts of the human body joined to the body and legs of a horse” (Brentano 1925: 61). What does it mean? The idea is that, *despite appearances*, the former sentence actually refers not to the centaur, but to a mental fact. It is this mental fact actually that is recognized as existent in the corresponding judgement. We can, so to speak, use the language of mere appearance and say “the centaur is a poetic fiction,” but if we wish to identify the existential commitments, as Mill certainly did, then we have to use the language referentially and rephrase the sentence as a sentence about the poets’ mental states.

However, Brentano’s response is not fully satisfying. For the word “centaur” appears also in the intentional phrasing “the poets imagine the centaur.” We might be tempted — and it would be quite natural — to construe this latter sentence as relational, that is, in such a way that the corresponding judgment commit us to the existence of the centaur. Since it is absurd, Mill would thus be right in saying that not all judgements are existential judgements.

This brings us to Brentano’s distinction between *modus rectus* and *modus obliquus*. This distinction has something to do with the distinction between referential transparency and opacity. The sentence “some poets imagine the centaur” refers *in modo recto* to some poets’ mental states, and *in modo obliquo* to the centaur. How is such talk about the centaur possible? Why do the words we use sometimes refer to existent objects, and sometimes not? The answer lies in our definition of intentionality: intentional sentences

of the form “*x* represents *A*” confront us with phenomenal data of which some exist and some don’t exist. You can talk about inexistent things which appear to you in your mind, but thereby you won’t refer to them directly.

At first glance, it seems possible to express that idea in terms of indirect reference: there exists no object called “the centaur” of which you may have a direct presentation. Yet oblique or indirect reference is something more than no direct reference. Indirect reference involves there being some direct reference elsewhere, otherwise the notion would hardly make sense. Accordingly, the question is, What does the term “the centaur” directly refer to? Once again, the answer is that the sole existing object referred to here is the mental state. What “the centaur” refers to in the sentence “some poets imagine the centaur” is a certain psychological property of the mental state in virtue of which it is about the centaur. Since nothing outside the mental state is referred to, this property must be an *intrinsic* feature of the mental state. The centaur appears yet does not exist, the sole object the judgment recognizes as existent is the mental state with its intrinsic features, including the property of being about the centaur.

In a word, the *modus rectus-modus obliquus* distinction provides a criterion for identifying the reference of intentional phrases. So it provides a general answer to the question, What is the psychologist ontologically committed to as far as she makes judgments of the form “*x* represents *A*”? But the conclusion to be drawn from this is more general, actually. According to the later Brentano at least, *modus obliquus* is a general feature of every judgement about physical reality. That is, every judgement about physical reality actually refers to phenomena in the mind. He writes in this connection, in the third volume of his *Psychology*:

So it is not what is known (*erkannt*) “as an object” that is really affirmed (*anerkannt*), but only the mental agent who relates to it as its object. (...) It is certain that we — or any other being who, with immediate evidence, grasps something as a fact — cannot thereby have as our object anything else than ourselves. (Brentano 1974: 5-6, my translation)

For example, it can be that you *know* that this table is in wood, but the belief that this table is in wood actually commits you only to the existence of the corresponding phenomena in the mind.

Plausibly, this more general conception can be viewed as a consequence of Brentano’s interpretation of intentional sentences. It seems that Brentano’s train of thinking runs something like this. First, recognizing something as existent requires some immediate evidence of it. Secondly, the

only existence that is immediately evident to me is that of my representations, which is expressed linguistically by intentional sentences of the form “*x* represents *A*.” Now, the reference of sentences of the form “*x* represents *A*” is purely mental. Therefore, mental states are the only entities I am entitled to recognize as existent.

Thus far, it seems that my reading lends support to Crane’s and Simons’ view according to which Brentano’s position in the *Psychology* is “methodological phenomenalism.” For Brentano, we are tempted to conclude, the psychologist deals only with appearances, and what may be called her objects are just those appearances which her judgements about representations recognize as existent. More generally: the only things that exist really or “in themselves” are mental phenomena. This — fairly phenomenalist-flavored — view is explicitly embraced by Brentano in his 1888-1889 lessons on descriptive psychology, which we will be coming back to shortly.

However, Brentano’s position is more complex. Suppose you look at a cup of coffee and believe that it has some objective property *P*, say, the property of being seven centimeters high. Would Brentano’s account of this be phenomenalist? A true phenomenalist would say: “You believe that *P* is a property of some material thing behind the phenomena, but this is a mistake, actually *P* is a property of the phenomena and I can prove it as far as I can define *P* as a complex of phenomenal properties.”

Obviously, this is not exactly what Brentano would say. He would say, I think, that sensory data are not such that they can be seven centimeters high, “seven centimeters high” is a genuine objective property, which nonetheless can be talked about only *in modo obliquo*. True, the object referred to is ontologically no more than a phenomenon in the mind, but the judgement about its being *P*, so to speak, involves some *semantical* extra in virtue of which it is not a judgement about mental states, but about a cup of coffee. There is nothing outside your mind that is a centaur and has a horse tail, but the centaur’s having a horse tail is not a merely psychological fact as are your fictional state’s duration or intensity.

This *anti-phenomenalist* tenet, in my view, is at the basis of Brentano’s theory of intentionality. The idea is that *modus obliquus* is different from direct reference and more than indirect reference. Although the centaur is nothing outside the mind, talk of it and its property of having a horse tail is more than talk of mental phenomena. The statement “the centaur has a horse tail” refers only to mental states, yet it is really about the centaur’s having a horse tail. As a result, intentional aboutness is to be distinguished from the ontological relation of reference (cf. Loar 2003).

A clear illustration of this line of thought can be found in the lecture entitled “Descriptive Psychology or Descriptive Phenomenology” of the years 1888-1889. In this lecture, Brentano, like Husserl later in the first edition of his *Logical Investigations*, declares that the term “descriptive psychology” is equivalent to the term “phenomenology.” This characterization occurs only once in Brentano’s work, one year later he opted for the term “psychognosy” which he used until the end.

The meaning of this identification of descriptive psychology with phenomenology becomes clear if we take a look at definition (INT). The definition means that the psychologist’s judgements of the form “x represents A,” and hence psychology as a whole, actually have to do only with phenomena. As a consequence, the theory to which such judgements belong, namely descriptive psychology, must be a theory of phenomena or phenomenology.

However, (INT) also reveals that there must be two different kinds of phenomena, namely those which really exist, the mental phenomena, and those which don’t really exist, the physical phenomena. Therefore, it seems that phenomenology is somehow broader than descriptive psychology. That is why Brentano says that “by calling the description of phenomena descriptive psychology one particularly emphasizes the contemplation of mental realities” (Brentano 1982: 129/137). But if so, why did he maintain that phenomenology and descriptive psychology are one and the same thing? Clearly, the answer is: because the phenomenologist who talks *in obliquo* about physical phenomena actually refers *in recto* to mental phenomena. Both *refer to* the same mental realities, although they talk *about* different things.

Consequently, it is deceiving to say that phenomenology deals with all kinds of phenomena while descriptive psychology deals only with mental phenomena. In fact, physical phenomena, too, are objects of inner perception and thus belong, in some sense, to the mental realm:

One is telling the truth if one says that phenomena are objects of inner perception, even though the term “inner” is actually superfluous. All phenomena are to be called inner because they all belong to one reality, be it as constituents or as correlates. (Brentano: 129/137)

Conversely, there is a sense in which psychology refers to physical phenomena as well. The psychologist studies physical phenomena as contents or intrinsic features of mental states. As Brentano says in 1874:

With respect to the definition of psychology, it might first seem as if the concept of mental phenomena would have to be broadened rather than narrowed, both because the physical phenomena of imagination fall within its scope at least as much as mental phenomena as previously defined, and because the phenomena which occur in sensation cannot be disregarded in the theory of sensation. It is obvious, however, that they are taken into account only as the content of mental phenomena when we describe the specific characteristics of the latter. (Brentano 1973: 140/100)

One possible consequence of this Brentano's view has to do with logic. Shifting our focus away from Brentano specifically, we could make the following hypothesis: just as the statement "the centaur has a horse tail" can be said to be *in obliquo* about the centaur although only referring to some appearance in the mind, so logical truths can be said to be about logical entities although referring only to psychological entities such as judgements and inferences.

This is, basically, the Brentano-inspired approach promoted by Husserl in his *Logical Investigations*. Logical truths such as the principle of non-contradiction are about propositions, and a proposition is just a "species of judgement," namely some psychological feature which Husserl calls the "intentional matter" of the mental state. So, when the logician enunciates a logical truth about propositions, she actually refers only to mental entities. That is why, as Barry Smith (1989: 62) rightly stressed, Husserl's position in the *Prolegomena* is logical Aristotelism rather than Platonism.

But on the other hand, Husserl rejects logical psychologism. To him, logic really is about propositions in themselves, not mental states, and logical truths are thus independent of psychological truths. "True" and "false" are logical, not psychological features. How can this be? The situation gets much clearer if we say, in Brentanian terms, that mental states provide the *in recto* subject matter of logical truths, and propositions in themselves their *in obliquo* subject matter. Although logical truths refer to no other objects than mental states, they are not about mental states, they are about purely logical entities, propositions in themselves.

Metaphysical consequences

With this in mind, let's return now to our central topic of discussion: Brentano's realism. To begin with, there is surely a sense in which, in Strawson's terms, Brentano is a revisionist metaphysician. Part of his purpose in writing the *Psychology* was to make clear what our judgements really refer to, or

what the furniture of the world is, given the fact that it is immediately evident to me that I have representations.

As we have seen, Brentano's revisionary metaphysics thus understood is typically phenomenalist. However, I do not agree with Crane and Simons that this phenomenism is merely "methodological." As already mentioned, the question is not only what kind of objects are studied in psychology, but also what must exist "in itself" as far as, generally speaking, some of our judgments are true. And most importantly, this clearly applies to the 1874 *Psychology* as well.

The belief that there is some red spot on my shirt is certainly about a physical phenomenon, say, about some particles of wine. But paradoxically, it involves referring to nothing except the mind itself. As Brentano stresses in the *Psychology* of 1874:

We said that mental phenomena are those phenomena which alone can be perceived in the strict sense of the word. We could just as well say that they are those phenomena which alone possess real existence as well as intentional existence. Knowledge, joy and desire really exist. Color, sound and warmth have only a phenomenal and intentional existence. (Brentano 1973: 129/92)

It is surprising how little attention Brentano scholars have paid to such explicit claims. Brentano asserts very explicitly that mental phenomena are the only things that really exist — and yet one continues to read the *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* as a plea for realism. Albertazzi, for example, claims that Brentano's "immanent realism" in the *Psychology* "lies in its attempt to conciliate the presence of an often irreducible transcendent foundation of perception with its immanent and equally irreducible categorization by the intentional acts" (Albertazzi 2006: 128). But where in the *Psychology* does Brentano talk of such an "irreducible transcendent foundation of perception"?

This brings us back to the passage where Brentano seems to advocate indirect realism about perception. Here is the text in question:

We have seen what kind of knowledge the natural scientist is able to attain. The phenomena of light, sound, heat, spatial location and locomotion which he studies are not things which really and truly exist. They are signs of something real, which, through its causal activity, produces presentations of them. They are not, however, an adequate representation of this reality, and they give us knowledge of it only in a very incomplete sense. We can say that there exists something which, under certain conditions, causes this or that sensation. We can probably also prove that there must be relations among

these realities similar to those which are manifested by spatial phenomena shapes and sizes. But this is as far as we can go. In and of itself, that which truly exists does not come to appear, and that which appears does not not truly exist. The truth of physical phenomena is, as they say, only a relative truth. The phenomena of inner perception are a different matter. They are true in themselves. As they appear to be, so they are in reality, a fact which is attested to by the evidence with which they are perceived. Who could deny, then, that this constitutes a great advantage of psychology over the natural sciences? (Brentano 1973: 28-29/19, translation slightly modified)

What's Brentano's thesis in this short passage? There are a number of things worth noting here. Actually, Brentano makes at least three distinct claims:

First, it would be misleading to say that mind-independent things "appear" to us. If there exist such entities, then they don't properly appear. What appears are their "signs" or causal effects in the mind, namely the phenomena. As Brentano declares, "in and of itself, that which truly exists does not come to appear, and that which appears does not not truly exist" (Brentano 1973: 28/19, translation mine).

Secondly, there is no reason to believe in the existence of some "correspondence" relation between phenomena and external reality, besides the sign or causal relation. The existence of phenomena suggests that there may exist external things which cause them, and that their relations may be analogous to phenomenal relations. "But, Brentano says, this is as far as we can go."

The third thesis is that all this does not apply to inner perception and the mental. Necessarily the mental is really so as it appears to be, and appears really so as it is in reality. As a result, Brentano concludes, "mental phenomena are true in themselves," while "the truth of physical phenomena is only a relative truth."

Let's now turn our attention to this last claim: supposing that the natural scientist's judgments are to be called "true," their truth must be only a "relative truth." What does it mean? That something is true or exists in a relative fashion obviously does not mean that it is false or does not exist, but that it is not true or does not exist in itself. On the other hand, the natural scientist's judgements are about physical phenomena like sounds, light, and heat. Just as the latter exist only intentionally, not really, so the former are thus true only relatively, not in themselves. But we have seen that for something to exist in itself means to be referred to *in modo recto*. The natural scientist's judgements are true relatively because they refer to physical phenomena not *in recto*, but *in obliquo*. Their being relatively true thus means something like this: they are about physical phenomena, but actually

refer to, or are made true by, mental phenomena. Your judgement about the cup of coffee's being *P* is not true in itself, but true *for you*, that is, under the condition that it is true in itself that your representation of the cup of coffee as being *P* exists.

This, needless to say, is all but a realist view. But it nonetheless paves the way for some new form of realism. For Brentano, as we have seen, did not consider objective properties reducible to psychological properties. What the statement "the cup of coffee is *P*" means is not merely, as in the phenomenalist view, that something appears with some phenomenal property *Q*. Rather, the statement refers to the fact that the cup of coffee obliquely appears with the objective property *P*, that is, appears to be *P* "in itself." It may be true (in itself) that the cup of coffee is *P*, but only *in obliquo* or *for me*. To put it otherwise: the judgement "the phenomenon *A* appears to me as existent" does not imply that there exists some phenomenon *A* which appears to me; and its appearing true to me does not imply that it is true in itself. Therefore, as definition (INT) clearly shows, there are phenomena which appear to exist yet do not exist, and such phenomena are called "physical phenomena."

This is exactly what Strawson had in mind with his idea of a "descriptive" approach to metaphysical issues. You can certainly be a realist and make true judgements about mind-independent reality, but you ought to know that your judgements will thereby be true only in a relative way, that is, they will be true of physical reality *as it appears in the mind*. So, if there were no mind and hence no appearance in the mind whatsoever, there would be no true judgements at all, whether about mental or physical entities.

Accordingly, if there is a sense in which metaphysical realism is true, then metaphysical realism must be, quite paradoxically, about how the external world *appears to be in itself* in virtue of the nature of the corresponding mental states, not about how the world is in itself. For not the world, but its appearance in the mind exists in itself. To summarize: relative truth about mind-independent reality implies relative realism. In Strawsonian terms: "descriptive" realism.

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