XI*—INTENSIONAL AND INTENTIONAL OBJECTS

By Roger Scruton

The term 'intentionality' has acquired three principal uses, two of which I suggest are unacceptable. Both these uses have been thought to name important properties of mental items. I wish to argue that, in the relevant sense, they name no properties at all.

I

To begin with, I shall make a few remarks about the notion of non-extensionality, which for a variety of good and bad reasons has sometimes been equated with intentionality. These remarks are intended only as a preliminary to my main discussion.

Non-extensionality, or intensionality, is a property of logical contexts: a context is intensional if it is not extensional, and there are three ways in which extensionality can fail: it might fail for referring expressions, for predicates, or for sentences. Thus, if 'C(....)' is an expression for a context-variable (the gap being filled by a predicate, or by a referring expression, or by a sentence), then C(....) is intensional if any of the following conditions should fail to hold:

(i) If 'a' and 'b' are referring expressions, then

(a = b) $\supset (C(a) \equiv C(b))$.

(ii) If $A$ and $B$ are predicates, then

$\forall x (A(x) \equiv B(x)) \supset (C(A) \equiv C(B))$.

(iii) If 'p' and 'q' are sentences, then

$p \equiv q \supset (C(p) \equiv C(q))$.

Built into this account of intensionality is the Fregean supposition that the extension of a sentence is its truth-value. It might be objected that to explain the notion in this way is to use one word to cover three quite different logical properties, which are related to each other only very tenuously. In particular it seems odd to treat the truth-value of a sentence in the

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*Meeting of the Aristotelian Society at 5/7 Tavistock Place, London, W.C.1, on Monday, 19th April, 1971, at 7.30 p.m.

1 G. Frege: "Sense and Reference", in P. T. Geach and M. Black, The Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege, pp. 64ff.
same manner as the denotation of a name, for on this account a sentence has only two possible extensions, whereas the possible extensions of referring expressions and predicates are infinite.

However, so long as intensionality and extensionality are not supposed to have implications beyond the behaviour of terms in substitution, there are no strong grounds for treating the three kinds of intensionality apart—as Frege saw. We need to show only one thing in order to prove this, namely that every intensional context contains, at least implicitly, a propositional clause. Any sentence of the form $C(a)$, say, where $C$ is an intensional context, is of the form $C'(Fa)$, $C'$ also being intensional. If we can show this, then it follows immediately that for every context $C$ which is intensional for predicates and referring expressions there is a context $C'$ which is intensional for sentences. (Suppose $a = b$, then $C(a) \leftrightarrow C(b)$, therefore $C'(Fa) \leftrightarrow C'(Fb)$; even though $Fa \equiv Fb$.) It can also be shown that every context which is intensional for sentences is intensional for predicates and referring expressions, even causal contexts (such as ‘$A$ brought it about that . . .’), for which this does not seem at first sight to be true. The argument, due to Church, is now sufficiently familiar and I will not restate it.

Most of the alleged counter-examples to the rule that every intensional context contains a propositional clause are contexts mentioning mental items—for instance, ‘$X$ looks for . . .’, ‘$X$ thinks of . . .’, ‘$X$ wants . . .’. I shall argue, however, that there are no compelling reasons for saying that contexts of this kind are intensional. There are sufficient grounds, therefore, for treating intensionality as a unitary concept, with three separate aspects.

By definition the truth-value of a sentence which includes an extensional context depends only on the extension of terms occurring in the context. But we cannot infer from this that the truth-value of a sentence containing an intensional context depends only on the intension of terms in the context. There could be more than one explanation of why extensionality should fail. While ‘intensional’ and ‘extensional’ are defined as mutually exclusive and exhaustive opposites, ‘intension’ and

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'extension' are not; and therefore, while there is no change of meaning between 'extension' and 'extensional' there is a change of meaning between 'intension' and 'intensional'.

None the less, it has been suggested that intensional contexts arise, in general, when it is the intension rather that the extension of terms which governs the truth-value of a sentence. Take the intensional context 'He says that . . .' (oratio obliqua). Frege held that any sentence used to complete this context denotes a proposition, or intensional object. In fact the sentence denotes a proposition which, taken outside the context, it would normally be used to express. 'Denotes' is to be explained here entirely in terms of what can be substituted in the sentence salva veritate. The thesis does not therefore involve the reification of intensions, and presupposes only a notion of synonymy, or sameness of sentence-meaning. It is possible to generalize Frege's view of indirect speech: all sentences in intensional contexts could be supposed to refer to their sense (to the intensional object which they otherwise express).

The "oratio obliqua" theory of intensionality cannot account for the intensionality of contexts created by oratio recta, in which quoted expressions denote not their sense but themselves. However, in explaining the logical character of propositional attitudes the theory has more success than its rival, the "oratio recta" theory derived from Carnap. It therefore figures largely in discussion of intentionality, and I shall refer to it from time to time in order to show how non-extensionality and intentionality connect.

II

This brings me to the main subject of my paper. Here is the familiar passage from Brentano which usually serves to introduce discussions of intentionality:

... psychologists of an earlier period have already directed attention to a particular affinity and analogy which exists among all mental phenomena, while the physical do not

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3 By using the phrase 'intensional object' I mean only to hypostatise sameness of meaning for categorematic expressions.

4 For a discussion of these problems see The Logical Syntax of Language, pp. 240ff., and D. Davidson: "On Saying That", in Davidson and Hintikka (eds.), Words and Objections.
share in it. Every mental phenomenon is characterised by what the scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (and also mental) inexistence (Inexistenz) of an object (Gegenstand), and what we could call, although in not entirely unambiguous terms, the reference to a content, a direction upon an object (by which we are not to understand a reality in this case) or an immanent objectivity.\(^5\)

There seem to be three current uses of the term ‘intentionality’, any one of which might be suggested by this passage. I list them here in the order in which I shall discuss them:

(1) First, Brentano supposes that there is a property which characterises all and only mental items. Accordingly, the word ‘intentionality’ is sometimes used to name a property, or properties, however defined, possessed by all and only mental items. Instead of using the term ‘intentionality’ in this sense I shall speak of ‘the mental property’.

(2) Brentano makes various suggestions as to how (1) may be analysed. These suggestions correspond to two further senses of the term ‘intentionality’. First, Brentano refers to the “intentional in-existence of an object” (or the existence of an object in the mind). This is generally interpreted as follows: there are mental states which have objects, for which two conditions are satisfied:

(a) it is a matter of indifference that there should be any corresponding ‘real’ objects outside the mind; (b) if there is (in any particular case) a real object outside the mind, then it does not follow that this real object is as it appears to be.

The property of mental states given by these two conditions I shall call the Brentano property.

(3) There remains the idea of reference to a content. Here we have something approaching the modern sense of intentionality, as a property of emotions, thoughts and other mental states involving mental reference to an object. This property I shall call intentionality, since it is the only admissible sense of the term. Intentionality is a special case, and the only admissible case, of (2).

\(^5\) Translated in R. Chisholm (ed.): Realism and the Background of Phenomenology, p. 50.
In explaining the first two senses I have spoken in terms of a property (or properties) of mental items. From the modern point of view this is misleading. For the mental property and the Brentano property are discussed almost exclusively in terms of the grammar of sentences in which mental items are referred to. There is a corresponding property of mental items only in the sense that these items are (or, more interestingly, must be) referred to in sentences which possess some given grammatical feature.

What is the reason for giving a grammatical account of the mental property? I think the most compelling reason has been this. If it can be shown that contexts employed in referring to physical processes need not possess the mental property, whereas contexts employed in referring to mental processes must possess it, then this would be an effective argument against any theory which held that for every proposition about a mental item there is a logically equivalent proposition about some physical item(s). (Behaviourism is such a theory.)

Suppose someone claimed to have arrived at a satisfactory definition of the mental property—what tells us that the definition is satisfactory? The only test is that it should fit exactly to our previous notion of the mental: the defined property must belong to all contexts in which a mental item is referred to, and to no other context. In other words the procedure is extensional. There is no requirement that we should establish connexions among the criteria, and attempts to do so in general fail of their purpose. Even if there were this requirement, we still have to answer the question: 'What does this property of contexts tell us about the items referred to?' For example, we would not be able to infer that mental items must be referred to by means of contexts which possess the mental property. The behaviourist is not arguing that we do not use idioms possessing the mental property, although perhaps it is a consequence of behaviourism that these idioms are not necessary.

Here is a parallel example. Suppose we say that contexts referring to abstract entities possess a certain logical property (call it $\phi$), explained as follows: from a proposition of the
apparent form $G(\exists x(Fx))$, where ‘$(\exists x)(Fx)$’ purports to refer to an abstract entity, we cannot infer $(3x)(Gx)$. (For example, from ‘The average plumber has 2·6 children’ we cannot infer ‘There is someone who has 2·6 children’.) Contexts which refer to particulars do not in general possess property $\phi$. All our language about abstractions does seem to possess property $\phi$. However, we can deduce very little of significance from this fact. In particular, we cannot infer that it is impossible to restate what we say using the language of abstract entities in terms that do not possess the property $\phi$. Logical equivalences of the form:

\[
(\text{The average plumber has } 2·6 \text{ children}) \equiv \\
\left( \frac{\text{The number of children of living plumbers}}{\text{The number of living plumbers}} \right) = 2·6
\]

are both permissible and necessary.

This suggests that the discovery of a ‘mental property’ can have little bearing on the analysis of any particular mental concept; if therefore provides no real weapon against behaviourism.

III

Following modern practice, I shall define the Brentano property as a grammatical feature of contents in which certain items are referred to. The items themselves can be said to possess this property only in a derivative sense.\(^7\) I shall argue that this grammatical approach fails to justify the concept of a Brentano property; the property remains merely grammatical, and is not a genuine feature of mental states.

Two characteristics of logical contexts are usually singled out as defining the Brentano property:\(^8\)

(A) Intensionality (in all three senses).

(B) Lack of an existence commitment. (Neither the completed sentence, $G(a)$, nor its contradictory, implies that

\(^7\) This is contrary to Brentano’s thought: “(The immanent object’s) being an object ... is merely the linguistic correlate of the person thinking having it as object ... ”, The True and the Evident, ed. Kraus, tr. Chisholm, p. 78.

there is or is not anything to which the object-expression 'a' applies.)

These features, together with a third which I shall mention shortly, are spoken of as 'criteria' for the Brentano property. But this cannot mean that (A) and (B) are mere indications of a property which they do not completely identify; for how else are we to identify the property? Accordingly (A) and (B) are taken either as separately necessary (jointly sufficient) conditions, or as separately sufficient conditions for a context's possessing the Brentano property.

(A) and (B) are usually discussed in relation to contexts which take an object (in the grammatical sense). The object expression is then said to 'refer to' or 'identify' an intentional object. Understood this way, the Brentano property will always involve referential opacity. Now Quine argues that it is not permissible to quantify into opaque contexts.9 From 'I believe that F(a)', for example, it is not permissible to infer '(∃x) (I believe that F(x))'. For in the quantified sentence the description of x under which I believe that F(x) is no longer specified. (Failure of quantification follows from the fact that opaque contexts do not obey the law \( F(a) \equiv (\exists x) (x = a \& F(x)) \), as can be seen by inspection.)

The argument above might seem to suggest that the lack of an existence commitment is a logical consequence of opacity. It would follow immediately that, if (A) and (B) are necessary conditions for the Brentano property, then the Brentano property is simply intensionality. However, the argument above is not sufficient to establish this. For condition (B) does not state the requirement that quantification should fail, but the stronger requirement that there should be no existence commitment. For example, quantification into 'It is necessary that F(a)' is impossible, since the truth of this sentence depends on the description under which a appears. On the other hand, we certainly can infer from this sentence that (∃x) (x = a). Nor can it be argued that at least in the case of contexts referring to mental items the failure of quantification and lack of an existence commitment amount to the same thing. From 'I know that F(a)' it cannot be inferred that '(∃x) (x = a & I know that F(x))', although it can be inferred that (∃x) (x = a).

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9 See, for example, W. V. Quine: From a Logical Point of View, ch. 8.
It could be retorted that, in the case of psychological contexts such as ‘I know . . . ’ and ‘I perceive . . . ’, there is a suppressed assertion of two separate propositions, only one of which is about a mental item. When I say that John knows that $F(a)$ I say that there is a mental act of John’s in relation to the proposition that $F(a)$, and also that $F(a)$ is true. The psychological component in what I say does lack an existence commitment, and here the indifference to existence is of a piece with the failure of quantification. It is therefore arguable that to take the two conditions as separately necessary is still in effect to treat the Brentano property as though it were non-extensionality, provided always that we confine ourselves to psychological contexts.

It is clear, however, that if we treat the two criteria as separately sufficient conditions then there is no prima facie reason for identifying the Brentano property with non-extensionality. To treat the criteria this way in effect reduces them not to (A) but to (B), since by the argument above (A) is just one way of satisfying (B). This is equally true if we follow Miss Anscombe in adding a third criterion: 10 (C) It is possible that the (grammatical) object following a context possessing the Brentano property should be indeterminate. For example, if I look for an honest man, there may be no particular honest man that I am looking for. (Contrast ‘I met an honest man’.)

Indeterminacy seems to entail indifference to existence. If it is possible for me to be looking for an honest man without there being any particular honest man whom I am looking for, then it must be possible to look for an honest man in the total absence of honest men. Taken as sufficient conditions (A) and (C) are simply ways of satisfying (B). For the purposes of argument, therefore, I will concentrate on condition (B), the ‘Intentional in-existence’ of the phenomenologists. (C) receives only a subsidiary treatment from those philosophers who mention it, partly, I imagine, because the logic of such indeterminacy is far from clear. It is not due to the failure of reference alone; for if it were due to this, then (C) could be considered like (B), as a mere consequence of non-extensionality. Failure of reference is a characteristic of intensional contexts generally.

10 Anscombe, op. cit., p. 159. See also Kneale, cit.
It is clearly not the case that all and only mental items possess the Brentano property (defined as that property for which \((A)-(C)\) are separately sufficient conditions). First, some sentences about mental states—for example the sentence ‘John is conscious’—do not satisfy the criteria. Secondly, many intensional contexts satisfy the criteria and not all of these contain a reference to a mental item. Modal contexts, for example, do not necessarily contain a reference to anything mental. It seems, therefore, that we must discuss the three criteria not as definitive of all psychological contexts, but only as characteristic of some.

How is the possession of the Brentano property to be explained? It is when we try to answer this question that the temptation to construe the criteria as separately necessary conditions is most strong. For if the Brentano property can be thought of as a special case of intensionality then we seem to have a plausible explanation of why so many psychological contexts possess this property. Many mental items contain thoughts (in Frege’s sense): they involve the entertaining of a proposition. Therefore, it is argued, any context used to refer to such an item will include (implicitly or explicitly) some sentence in *oratio obliqua*. The indirect-speech theory of intensionality can then provide the beginnings of an explanation of the Brentano property. Items possessing this property will be said to contain a *thought that* . . . , something which can be true or false but which is reported, when referring to the mental item, not as true or false, but as entertained.\(^\text{11}\)

This line of thought has two drawbacks. Not all mental states which are supposed to involve the entertaining of a proposition are referred to in contexts which take a propositional clause. Such mental items are none the less held to possess the Brentano property, and the theory can give no satisfactory account of this fact. For example, ‘\(X\) is thinking of . . .’ is a context which possesses the Brentano property. The indirect speech theory asserts that thinking of something involves entertaining a proposition about the object of one’s

\(^{11}\) This theory is defended by Kneale (*cit.*) and by R. Wollheim, “Thought and Passion”, *P.A.S.* 1967-8. An *oratio recta* version is obviously possible; ‘saying in one’s heart’ then replaces ‘thinking that’ (*v.* Geach: *Mental Acts*, pp. 79ff.)
thought. But the context is followed by no clause which might refer to the proposition entertained. Indeed, it is hard to see how it could be followed even implicitly by such a clause; to say that someone is thinking of something is to give no indication of what he is thinking about it.

This might lead one to conclude that ‘X is thinking of . . . ’ is extensional—a point of view which would certainly simplify discussions of intensionality. And in fact this is an arguable reply to the above difficulty. But then what becomes of the Brentano property? Most defenders of it would wish to maintain that it characterises all types of thought; it has even been argued that sensory experience possesses the property. It is the attempt to accommodate such examples to Brentano’s theory which causes the three criteria to be treated as separately sufficient conditions; intensionality is then left behind. For it turns out that psychological contexts which lack an existence commitment but whose object is not enclosed, even implicitly, within a propositional clause, are not clearly intensional. It is therefore possible to rule that, in the interests of theory, they shall be counted as extensional after all.

IV

In order to show how the possession of the Brentano property might be explained, when (A)—(C) are taken as separately sufficient conditions, I shall compare statements about sensory experience with statements about emotions. Miss Anscombe has already argued that statements about sensory experience possess the Brentano property, and she takes great care to treat this property as a purely grammatical feature of the language used to refer to sensory experience.12

We must first examine the third and currently favoured sense of the term ‘intentionality’.13 Emotions are intentional, whereas sensory experiences, like other sensations, are not. Sensory experiences do not take objects in the way in which emotions take objects—they are not founded on thoughts about objects, and hence share with emotions only the grammatical feature which Brentano discovered.

12 Anscombe cit.
Of the mental states founded on thoughts not all seem to include definite beliefs (or thoughts that...). Others involve less in the way of judgment, while requiring thoughts of or about their objects. Amusement is an example of such a state, and like other states of this kind it is not usually called an emotion. Emotions proper are founded on beliefs; whenever someone feels an emotion then, necessarily, he believes that there exists an object (which need not be a particular thing), and he also believes certain things to be true of this object. Even when there is no corresponding 'real' object the beliefs are still present as necessary components of the total mental state which we call the emotion. 'Taking an object' is to be analysed in terms of these beliefs. (I ignore borderline cases, such as depression and anxiety; whether we wish to refer to these states as emotions is, it seems to me, the same question as whether we wish to say that they are founded on beliefs.)

This partly explains why emotions can be supported by reasons. In any particular case it is possible to think of reasons which would force a man to abandon the belief on which his emotion is founded. The emotion itself could not be said to survive this change; the belief is essential to the emotion—in describing what he feels we are also saying something about the beliefs which a man has. The belief on which an emotion is founded can be about a particular, a quality, or a state of affairs; it can refer to the past, to the present or to the future; to contingencies, possibilities, necessities. Hence the great variety of objects of emotional states and attitudes is immediately explained. (No such variety exists, of course, among the objects of sensory experience.)

Sensory experiences are not founded on beliefs. On the contrary, it seems that beliefs are ultimately answerable to sensory experience in a way which prevents experience from itself including belief. If an object-expression is introduced to describe a sensory experience, therefore (as when I say 'My visual experience is of a snow-capped mountain'), it is not in order to identify any belief which is integral to the mental state. Nor is it to point to any other thought on which the mental state is founded: the object-description is employed

purely in order to identify the experience. Thus, it is absurd to
give reasons for or against sensory experiences: there is no
belief, loss of which abolishes a sensory state, in the way a
change of belief can abolish an emotion.\footnote{I. Kant: \textit{Critique of Pure Reason}, A. 293.}

Why do we say that the object-description serves to identify
a sensory experience? One argument might be summarised as
follows: we cannot identify experiences (in such a way as to
permit assertions of the form ‘What I have now is the same as
what I had then’, or ‘What I have now is the same as what
you have now’) except by reference to publicly observable
states of affairs. This is, I think, one conclusion of Wittgenstein’s
‘private-language’ argument. In the case of a sensory experience
the state of affairs must be either (a) the total circumstance
under which experiences of the kind in question generally
occur; or (b) the capacity for discrimination among items,
including the ability to name what one sees, which is the
normal \textit{expression} of that experience. In either case what is
normally called the ‘object’ must be mentioned in identifying
the experience. Indeed, since the circumstances will in general
be assumed to be normal, only the object of the experience
need be mentioned in identifying it. The objects of sensory
experience are therefore limited to present items in the external
world, and the phenomenon of ‘taking an object’ has here
nothing to do with intentionality, in its now more usual sense.
There are no thoughts on which sensory experiences are
founded. But sensory experiences possess the Brentano property
since, as we shall see, they must be identified in terms of the
state of affairs under which they normally occur.

A mental state which is founded on belief usually includes
more than the single belief in the existence of its object. Not
just anything can be the object of an emotion $E$—the subject
must believe that the object of his emotion falls under some one
of a range of descriptions characteristic of $E$. There is not space
to attempt a proof of this, but here are a few examples: If $X$ is
envious of $Y$, then $X$ believes $Y$ to be better off than himself in
some respect; if $X$ is jealous of $Y$, $X$ believes that $Y$ has been
preferred in some way to himself. A more difficult example is
that of fear: it is arguable that I cannot consistently fear $O$
and believe $O$ to be harmless or pleasant. Let us assume then
that there is some disjunction of descriptions (such as 'harmful or unpleasant or difficult') one of which I must believe to apply to the object of my fear. Let us call the property defined by this disjunction \( F \). If I am afraid then there is some object \( O \) which I believe to exist, and which I believe answers to some description \( D \) on the basis of which I may rightly affirm it to be \( F \). It follows that (i) I may not know what the description \( D \) is; I may not know how to characterise \( O \) determinately; (ii) I may be wrong in believing that \( O \) exists; (iii) I may not know that \( O \) also uniquely satisfies \( D' \)—hence I may consistently claim not to fear the object which satisfies \( D' \).

Here we have three features corresponding (in reverse order) to the criteria of the Brentano property. We have arrived at them not by studying the grammar of '\( X \) fears . . . ', but by analysing the concept of fear, so that if the context '\( X \) fears . . .' should possess the Brentano property we shall be able to explain this as something more than a merely grammatical feature. The same will be true of any mental state founded on belief, and therefore of any emotion.

Here, however, we must make a distinction. When the context '\( X \) fears . . .' possesses the Brentano property, the object-expression cannot refer to the real (or material) object of \( X \)'s fear.\(^{16}\) In general, when speaking in the third person, we do use this context referentially (so as to refer to the real object of \( X \)'s fear). When I say 'John fears a lamb; which he believes to be a lion', clearly the context 'John fears . . .' does not possess the Brentano property; the reference to the object is not, as it were, enclosed by the context. On the other hand, the first person use of the context—the verbal expression of fear—does as a rule possess the Brentano property. 'I fear . . .' is not a substitution instance of '\( X \) fears . . . '. In the context 'I am afraid of . . .' the object-expression must 'refer' not to the real object but to what we might call the 'notional' object of my fear. The notional object is defined by the totality of the beliefs on which an emotion is founded: it is what is asserted to exist by those beliefs. In the example above, the notional object of John's fear is a lion.

In a sense, notional objects are a species of intentional object. But only in a sense. For in a sense the intentional object

\(^{16}\) Anscombe, cit.
of a mental state is whatever is defined by the description the subject would give of the object of his state. More accurately (that is, grammatically): any context which takes an object in the grammatical sense, and which possesses the Brentano property, has for its object-expression a term characterising an intentional object. There is an intentional object whenever a referring expression is enclosed in a context possessing the Brentano property. If a mental state includes a notional object (i.e., if it includes implicitly the belief in the existence of an object answering to some description), then it is clear that in order to refer to the mental state and speak of its notional object we must employ a context which takes an intentional object-expression. The expression which gives the intentional object will then ‘refer to’ the notional object. In a sense, therefore, notional objects are intentional objects. But let us assert no more than this. Any use of the phrase ‘intentional object’ which departs from the grammatical definition—for example, any use which permits the reification of intentional objects—must be disallowed.

V

Beliefs are referred to in contexts which need to be completed by a propositional clause—some sentence denoting the proposition believed. Therefore, belief-contexts are inevitably non-extensional in just the way that indirect-speech-contexts are non-extensional. There will be no special difficulty in explaining the intensionality of belief, and we have seen that this intensionality can be reflected in certain ways of referring to items founded on belief. For these items, therefore, all three criteria of the Brentano property can occasionally be satisfied.

The case of ‘thinking of . . . ’ is not clear. Certainly, if John thinks of something it is not necessary that the thing of which John thinks should exist. Hence the context ‘X thinks of . . . ’ will lack an existence commitment. But will it be referentially opaque? We have seen already (section I) that it would greatly simplify discussions of intensionality if this context were shown not to be opaque. And in fact we find that there are no clear reasons for ever treating it as other than transparent. In general it seems to be quite in order to say that if John thinks of $a$, and $a = b$, then John thinks of $b$, even when John does not know
that $a = b$. The flimsy status of opacity is such that, if we were to find an apparent instance of it, we could be quite justified in resolving that it should be explained away. Later I will give examples of contexts which seem to be opaque but whose opacity is too fleeting and too frail a feature to survive philosophical scrutiny. This is an area of philosophy where theory must be allowed to dictate the interpretation of apparent counter-instances.

Suppose John is thinking of the composer of *Norma*. In what circumstances would it be clearly false to say that he was thinking of Bellini? Not when he was thinking of Donizetti, whom he wrongly thought to have composed *Norma*, since in this case it is not clear that he is thinking of the composer of *Norma*. The most plausible candidate is the case where John is thinking of the composer of *Norma*, while being indifferent to any other description or name which might be applied to the composer of *Norma*. But, when this case is made strong, it turns out that John is not really thinking of the composer of *Norma* at all, but rather of the attribute of being the composer of *Norma*. And once again there seems to be no failure of extensionality.

In a sense there are definite cases of referential opacity involving the context ‘$X$ thinks of . . .’, when the context is completed by an empty term. For evidently, if I am thinking of Pegasus I am not necessarily thinking of Neptune, although I am thinking of a winged horse. But this is a special case, analogous to fictional contexts. Although fictional contexts, in lacking an existence commitment, are opaque for empty terms, this does not involve any genuine failure of extensionality. It is a consequence of a philosophical trick: all empty terms are made to agree in extension by being made to denote the null class. The phenomenon must therefore be explained in some other way; fictional contexts cannot become intensional simply through being fictional.

As an example of a mental state which involves a thought of some object, consider amusement. If $X$ is not before my mind, then I cannot be amused by $X$. But it is arguable that the connexion with belief is more tenuous. Is there something that I must believe in order to be amused? If so it is difficult to say what it is. It is undeniable, however, that I must think of, or have my attention directed towards, the object of my
amusement.\textsuperscript{17} Perhaps it is this which explains why, in a sense, I cannot be mistaken about the object of my amusement, even when I am mistaken in thinking that the object of my amusement is real. For I cannot be mistaken about what I am thinking of, while I \textit{can} occasionally make mistakes about what I believe.\textsuperscript{18}

VI

I wish now to discuss the suggestion that contexts used to describe sensory experience possess the Brentano property. If this is so, then clearly the explanation of its being so cannot rest on the hypothesis that sensory experiences are founded on belief. When I 'see stars' I make no error of judgment. It is not the judgment that stars exist which makes stars the intentional object of sight. It would be equally wrong, I think, to say that sensory experiences are founded on thoughts \textit{of}, and that this explains their possession of the Brentano property. I need not be attending to what I see when I see stars, nor is it necessary that I should be led by my experience to think of \textit{stars}.

It could be suggested that here the Brentano property is the result of a condensed simile. When I say that I see stars, meaning to characterise my experience, I mean that it is \textit{as though I were} seeing stars.\textsuperscript{19} For if I am to identify my experience I must refer to an objective state of affairs, and hence I must talk of how things look or seem.

It follows from this account that contexts referring to sensory experience will lack an existence commitment. Once again, however, the question of the referential opacity of \textit{X sees \ldots} seems difficult to settle (in a way in which it is not difficult to settle the opacity of the fully intensional construction \textit{X sees that \ldots}). For suppose that my experience is to be described as '(as though I were) seeing Jones', and Jones is the man who killed Smith; then what prevents the inference that my experience is also to be described as '(as though I were) seeing the man who killed Smith'? There is a problem in deciding whether such descriptions are opaque partly because it is difficult to identify an object to which I attribute a certain

\textsuperscript{17} V. B. A. O. Williams: "Pleasure and Belief", in Hampshire, \textit{cit.}

\textsuperscript{18} Cf. D. F. Pears: "Causes and Objects of some Feelings and Psychological Reactions", in Hampshire, \textit{cit.}

\textsuperscript{19} Geach, \textit{Mental Acts}, pp. 125-6.
character in having the sensory experience. It is sometimes suggested, however, that there are cases of opacity arising from uses of ‘X sees . . . ’. For example, it may be quite correct to say that ‘X sees a confused blur on the horizon’, (1) and that ‘The blur is a house’ (2), from which it does not seem possible to infer that ‘X sees a house’ (3), since (3) is no longer the construction of condensed simile employed in (1). But, of course, just because of this construction, we cannot claim to have arrived at (3) by the substitution of identicals in one unchanging context, and so we have no certain evidence of opacity. Even if we were to claim that the context ‘X sees . . . ’ in (3) were the same as ‘X sees . . . ’ in (1), we could not describe the failure of the above inference as showing the opacity of this context. To say this would depend on construing (2) as a statement of identity, whereas there are very good arguments for saying that it is nothing of the kind.\footnote{V. for example, J. M. Hinton, “Perception and Identification”, Phil. Rev., 1967.}

There is a further example of a mental item which satisfies the second criterion of the Brentano property without satisfying the first in the perception of an aspect. If, looking at a picture, I say ‘I see a rabbit’, then clearly I am not attributing the description ‘rabbit’ to anything at all. Therefore it cannot be said that the thing which I call a rabbit also answers to the description ‘duck’ (only I do not “see” the duck), for the “thing” which I call a rabbit is the aspect, and the aspect is constituted by my “seeing” it. In other words, there is not one aspect with two descriptions, but two aspects. Hence although the proposition that I see a rabbit in the picture does not entail that a rabbit exists, it does require that any description of the ‘rabbit’ is a correct description of the aspect which I “see”; hence it can be substituted for ‘rabbit’ in ‘I see a rabbit’.

A final example: ‘I intend to do X’ does not entail that ‘I will do X’. Is this context referentially opaque? Once again it is hard to give a clear answer. For although it does not follow from ‘I intend to do X’ and ‘doing X is (in these circumstances) doing Y’ that ‘I intend to do Y’, it is doubtful that the second of these sentences is a proposition of identity. Identity of events (and hence of actions) is a complicated affair, and redescriptions of this kind are only doubtful statements of
identity. Perhaps it would be more plausible to say that we have a genuine identity statement in ‘Doing $X$ in these circumstances is doing $Y$’. But then, ‘doing $X$ in these circumstances (i.e., the circumstances which make doing $X$ into doing $Y$)’, is not a description of what I intend, unless of course I happen to intend to do $Y$.

VII

I should like now to return to the discussion of the ‘intentionality’ of sensation. If we accept the explanation of the Brentano property in terms of the suppression of a simile, then it becomes reasonable to reject Miss Anscombe’s criticism of the “ordinary language philosophers” of perception. We can no longer say that the ‘intentionality’ of contexts used to refer to sensory states reveals a different sense of ‘see’ from the one employed in straightforward judgments of perception. When someone describing a dream says ‘And then I saw a tiger’, we do not suppose that he is using ‘see’ in a special sense, such that it does not entail the existence of what he claims to have seen. For why not a special sense of ‘tiger’, in which tigers do not exist? What about the words ‘I’ and ‘then’? How can we apply temporal locutions in the description of a dream? And of course all these questions are illegitimate, just as they would be if asked of a piece of fiction. Which is not to say that, in telling a story, one is using words in the same way as in describing a real incident. One is using words differently, but according to their standard meanings. It is as though what one said were preceded by a fiction-making device, such as ‘Imagine the following . . .’. In the case of contexts referring to sensory states there is an ‘as if’ to be understood which alters the way in which what is said is to be taken. The comparison with fictional contexts shows how there need be no failure of extensionality even though the second criterion of the Brentano property is satisfied. Here, of course, lies the strength of the “ordinary language philosopher’s” position: for the word ‘see’ is always followed by an expression which refers to a physical object, even when that expression is used to identify a sensory experience. If there is a characteristic mistake involved in this approach it is in assuming that because the language used to identify sensory experiences is logically secondary to that used to talk of the
perception of physical objects, then sensory experience cannot provide the foundation for knowledge of an external world. Proving that there is no second sense of 'see' cannot dissolve the epistemological problem of perception as it has been traditionally conceived.

It should by now be evident how multifarious are the explanations of the Brentano property. The context 'X sees . . . ', for example, would equally possess this property if it were shorthand for 'X has a sense-datum of . . . '. Again this is not to deny that the context is extensional. The sense-datum philosopher would liken the 'intentionality' (in Brentano's sense) of contexts referring to sensory experience to the 'intentionality' of 'A is a picture of . . . '.

There are various reasons why this last example should be of special interest. For one thing, pictures are physical objects. None the less they seem to 'refer beyond themselves'. Accordingly, we might wish to say that the Brentano property does not belong to the picture simpliciter, but, like the Brentano property of a sentence, arises from the fact that pictures are made by human beings in order to refer to, or depict, their objects. In this case the two constructions of the Brentano property give rise to two separate theories of representation in art: (i) If the Brentano property is construed as non-extensionality, then the painting's relation to its object is most easily thought of as a special case of meaning. The painting means that something; it is about its object in the way a sentence is about its subject;\(^{21}\) (ii) if the Brentano property is given by the criterion of indifference to existence, so that (i) is no longer the only natural explanation of it, then it could be explained in cases of representation if the object of a painting were included in it as an aspect.

It might be said that the Brentano property is present in a picture because it is an expression of intention. This would be natural, I think, if we were to construe representation as a kind of meaning. But this would not rule out the possibility of an item which was like the picture in every respect except that it was not the product of intentional activity. How would such an item be related to the object of the picture? Suppose it were to resemble the object; and suppose the original picture were of a

\(^{21}\) For a theory of this kind, v. N. Goodman, *Languages of Art.*
fictional entity (Venus, say). Then it seems to follow that the new item resembles a fictional entity. Hence, 'X resembles \( T \)' entails neither that \( X \) resembles \( T \) in all respects, nor that \( T \) exists. And yet '... resembles ...' is not an intensional context, nor does it contain reference to anything mental. This shows how far are the three sufficient conditions of the Brentano property from defining any useful philosophical notion.

VIII

I conclude that there is no useful grammatical concept of intentionality, although there is a respectable sense of 'intentional' in which it means 'founded on a thought'. There is also a grammatical concept of intensionality, and intentionality belongs to psychological contexts to the extent that they share the propositional structure of indirect speech. Mental states which include intensional objects also take intentional objects, but not vice versa.

This is not all that needs to be said about the concept of intentionality. There remains a notion—perhaps misleadingly called intentionality, but recurring constantly in discussions of the subject—which merits close attention. This is the idea of immediate knowledge, or knowledge on no basis. Perhaps what is common to all mental items which satisfy the second criterion of the Brentano property is not just the fact of taking an object which is indifferent to existence but also, as Stuart Brown suggests, the fact of involving immediate knowledge of this object.

How far this goes beyond saying that mental items involve consciousness of their objects, when they have objects, is not clear. But perhaps there is some light to be shed on the relation between sensation, emotion and intention through the concept of immediate knowledge. Let us return for a moment to the 'intentionality' of sensation. The Brentano property arises because sensory experiences can only be characterised in terms of items in an external world. At the same time it is a feature of consciousness that I know immediately what the character of my sensory experience is. In other words, I am presented, in my experience, with a description of items in an external world which I may or may not be able to apply. In a sense, therefore, I have an "object" immediately present to consciousness.

Exactly the same phenomenon occurs whenever (a) a mental state must be characterised in terms of its object, and (b) the subject has immediate knowledge of the character of his mental state. It occurs in the case of mental states which involve thoughts of their objects, for example, and in the case of intention, where what I know immediately is given by the description of what I intend to do. But this approach to the idea of intentionality is again artificial. Of course, if there are mental states which are relational (in the sense that their third-person characterisation must involve reference to an object), then immediate knowledge of these states will involve immediate knowledge of an 'object'. But immediate knowledge is a characteristic of consciousness generally. It is the same phenomenon when it is immediate knowledge of pains, tickles, and other states which do not possess the Brentano property, as when it is immediate knowledge of a mental state which is characterised by reference to an identifiable object. It is therefore not a special characteristic of the "directedness" which investigations of intentionality are trying to analyse, however puzzling and surprising a phenomenon it may seem to be.23

23 I am very grateful to John Casey, Thomas Baldwin and Ian Hacking for helpful criticism.