Introduction

The first question one should ask when speaking about negative judgments is: Are negative judgments possible at all? The second question is: Is there a real distinction between negative and positive judgments? Unless both questions can be answered in the affirmative, the question, What is a negative judgment? is not a real question. The most famous negative answer to the first question is that of Parmenides: he denies the possibility of negative judgments. According to Parmenides, we cannot say or know what is not. His thesis appears to be contradicted not only by ordinary judgments, such as ‘Theaetetus is not flying’, but also by the formulation of the thesis itself. How can we express it without using any form of negation? There are several ways to solve this paradox: either we say that on those occasions when we seem to pass a negative judgment, we are in fact doing something else, that is, we reduce the concept of negation to some other notion; or we take negation seriously, that is, as an irreducible notion. If it is conceded that negative judgments are possible, we have to answer the second question: Are we able to give a criterion to distinguish negative from positive judgments?

In this paper I want to show that Chisholm has put forward some important, either original or forgotten, theses concerning negative judgments. Chisholm’s theory of judgment, that is to a certain extent influenced by Brentano’s philosophy, gives a criterion to distinguish negative from positive judgments and gives sense to such a distinction. This is possible in so far as the fundamental notions in Chisholm’s theory, such as proposition and state of affairs, are defined by intentional notions, such as a thinking or judging person.

In section 1, I distinguish several senses that might be given to the term ‘negative judgment’. Because the term is ambiguous, the theses that philosophers have defended concerning ‘negative judgment’ seem to be
incompatible. The moment we see that they speak about different things, we see that those theses are not necessarily incompatible.

1. Different Senses of the Term ‘Negative Judgment’

Is there a way to make sense of the idea that there are no negative judgments at all; that is, of the Parmenidean idea that we cannot say or know what is not? This question should be dealt with together with Parmenides’ thesis that knowledge and being, or truth and being, are one. Although there is a sense of ‘truth’ such that we have to concede that there are both truths and falsehoods, there is also a notion of truth or being which makes the distinction between true and false propositions possible. This notion of truth cannot itself be a property of propositions; therefore, it cannot be said to have a counterpart in there somehow being nonbeing or that which is not. On this level there is neither falsehood nor negation.

The notion of negative judgment has an important place in the traditional theory of judgment. For example, in Locke’s An Essay Concerning Human Understanding (bk. 4, chap. 5) a mental proposition, that is, a complete judgment, is conceived of as a joining or separating of mental signs, that is, of ideas—a separating of ideas being a negative judgment. This idea has a long history stretching back to the famous passage in Aristotle’s De Interpretatione, where a negation is defined as a statement denying something of something (17a25). A central question when we consider the notion of negative judgment is whether such a notion makes sense in any other theory of judgment; if not, the question whether the traditional theory of judgment still makes sense becomes relevant.

An important distinction, which is not clearly present in this traditional theory of judgment, is that between a subjective act of judgment or attitude of belief, on the one hand, and a judged content (Bolzano, Frege) or judged object (Brentano), on the other hand. Given this distinction, we are able to distinguish two different meanings of ‘negative judgment’: a judgment in which the judged content is negative, to be dealt with below, and a negative judgmental act or negative belief-state. There is another ambiguity in so far as a negative judgmental act and a negative belief-state are not to be identified, as is argued by Reinach. According to him, there are special states of negative conviction or disbelief. In contrast to this, a negative judgmental act is nothing but the affirmation of a negative content. Positive and negative judgmental acts do not differ on the act-side (TNU, 134). According to Reinach, a negative conviction
of something positive and a positive conviction of its contradictory are
different, not only from a psychological point of view in so far as the acts
are different, and from an ontological point of view in so far as the
objective contents differ, but also from an epistemological point of view
(TNU, 109 ff., 122-95). A negative conviction, for example ‘This is not
yellow’, has its ground in a so-called ‘negative evidence’, which is
dependent upon the being evident to us of a state of affairs, say, *that this
is red*, which stands in conflict with the one that is disbelieved, that this is
yellow. Whereas a positive conviction can be got by ‘reading off’ a state
of affairs, a negative conviction of a state of affairs presupposes some
other attitude, such as doubting or questioning, towards that state of
affairs. To summarize, Reinach rejects the distinction between positive
and negative in so far as momentaneous acts of judgment are concerned,
but he believes such a distinction to be relevant when we consider states
or attitudes.

In Brentano’s theory of judgment there is not such a clear distinction
between states and acts as in Reinach’s writings. I think that when
Brentano is speaking about judgments he mainly has judgmental acts in
mind. For Brentano, there are two types of such judgmental acts: to
accept (*Anerkennen*) and to reject (*Verwerfen*). To judge that God exists is
to accept God; to judge that God does not exist is to reject God. For
Brentano all basic judgments are of such existential forms. In the case of
more complex judgments like ‘God is almighty’, Brentano says that we
accept a complex object, the almighty God. Later, Brentano acknowl-
edges the existence of so-called *double judgments*. In a judgment like the
one just mentioned we first accept God, and then affirm of him that he is
almighty. Here a new type of judgment is acknowledged, that of
affirming something of something else (*Zusprechen*). This act of affirming
also has a negative counterpart, denying something of something
(*Absprechen*). In judging ‘God does not know everything in advance’ one
accepts God and denies of him having foreknowledge. Any affirming or
denying something of something is dependent upon an act of accepting:
we cannot affirm or deny something of something unless we have
acknowledged the existence of the latter.

Frege argues more vehemently against the traditional theory of
judgment than Brentano. He says that it is not useful to have a theory in
which there is a type of acts of denial besides one of acts of affirmation.
The judgment that there are centaurs and the judgment that there are no
centaurs have something in common. In both cases we hold something to
be true; in both cases we assert something. According to Frege, negation
finds its place not on the act-side. But he does not mean to say that
negation may find its place on the side of the object: what can be negated
is the content judged to be true. The negation of what we judge to be true in the judgment ‘The square root of 2 is rational’ can be expressed by the clause ‘that the square root of 2 is not rational’. What is judged to be true, whether positive or negative, is a proposition (Gedanke), a notion comparable to Bolzano’s concept Satz an sich. A proposition is a kind of entity that is preeminently proper for negation. The primary function of a proposition is its being judged to be true or false, presumably; it fulfills the role of being the bearer of truth and falsehood. Therefore, the negation of a proposition may be defined in terms of truth and falsity; the negation of a proposition is the proposition that is true when the negated proposition is false, and is false when the latter is true.

Frege has a strong argument against the thesis that there are negative acts of judgment. Take the inference ‘If the accused has not been in Berlin at the time of the murder, then he has not been the murderer. The accused has not been in Berlin at the time of the murder. Therefore, he has not been the murderer’.

Suppose the thesis that there are negative acts of judgment is true, then the second premise is the result of a negative act of judging which has the proposition that the accused has been in Berlin at the time of the murder as its content; in the first premise, on the other hand, that the accused has not been in Berlin at the time of the murder is not judged at all, which means that the negation must form part of the content; this antecedent is a proposition which is clearly not the same as the proposition which is denied in the second premise. This means that the inference cannot be accounted for by the rule of modus ponens. If the supposed thesis is true, we need an extra inference rule. In all those cases where propositions are not asserted, for example when they are members of disjunctions or implications, we need negation on the side of the propositional content; if we also acknowledge the existence of negative acts, this leads to unnecessary complications (Verneinung, 153, 154). Another problem if we do not acknowledge negation on the side of the propositional content is that we would need to acknowledge not only negative acts of judgment but also negative acts of asking, supposing, ordering, etc. Strictly speaking, these arguments are not arguments against the acknowledgment of the existence of negative acts of judgment, but arguments for the thesis that negation is at least in some cases a part of the judged content.

From Frege’s point of view, the term ‘negative judgment’ might be said to mean a judgment with a negative proposition as its content. But because such a negative proposition is defined only relatively to another proposition, it is not decided yet that negative judgments form a category of their own. That there is such a special category is denied by Frege, for, he says, we cannot give any criterion to distinguish negative
from positive judgments. In case we say with Brentano that there is a
special act of denial besides one of affirming, it is implied that the
distinction is not merely relative; this means that a criterion to distin-
guish them is needed.
A less obvious way to call a judgment ‘negative’ is to say that a
judgment is negative insofar as the way in which it is verified is different
from the way in which a positive judgment is. To generalize this point, we
might say that the contents of negative and positive judgments are made
ture in different ways; that they have different ‘truth-makers’.

2. CHISHOLM’S THEORY OF JUDGMENT

a. Chisholm’s Propositional Theory of Judgment

In his writings in the sixties and seventies Chisholm associates his theory
of judgment with the tradition that follows the propositional theory of
Frege and Bolzano. Instead of using the term ‘proposition’ which we are
now used to giving as a translation of the terms *Gedanke* and *Satz an
sich*, Chisholm uses, like C. I. Lewis, the term ‘state of affairs’. Already in
1888 Stumpf used the term *Sachverhalt* to refer to the content of our
judgments, and in 1911 Reinach used *Sachverhalt* for timeless and
objective judgmental contents with a propositional structure (for exam-
ple, *that the rose is red*), which he contrasts with something he calls a
*Tatbestand* (here: the red rose). For Chisholm, too, a state of affairs is an
abstract, timeless entity, which exists necessarily, whether or not it
obtains; it is in no way dependent upon any concrete, individual thing,
and it is such that, for example, ‘The author of Waverly being knighted’
expresses a different state of affairs than ‘The author of Marmion being
knighted’ does, although each of the descriptions involved stand for the
same person. Chisholm has a reason not to use the Fregean terminology.
For Frege, propositions are primarily bearers of truth and falsity, and a
proposition does not change its truth-value. Chisholm, on the other
hand, says that states of affairs that now obtain may no longer obtain at
some time in the future. The judgment ‘Some mammals live in the sea’ is
no longer correct when whales have become extinct. Whereas Frege
would say that the judged content has changed, Chisholm says that the
content is still the same, but that its truth-value has changed as time went
on. Chisholm uses the term ‘proposition’ only for those states of affairs
which are not dependent on time for their obtaining or nonobtaining,
such as *two and two being five*. All other judgments have a state of affairs
that is not a proposition as their content.
Because it is artificial to call states of affairs true or false, Chisholm proposes other candidates for being the bearers of truth and falsity. He conceives of judgments—not in the sense of judged contents—as the primary bearers of truth and falsity (Replies, 205). He also says that such judgments are "used with truth" (FP, 44). Here Chisholm probably does not mean to say that the actual acts of judgment are the bearers of truth, for then we have a truth-bearer only when someone actually judges; it is better to conceive of the results of those acts as being the bearers of truth. It is hard to imagine, though, that judging is something different from holding something to be true (or false), which means that this something is the bearer of truth and falsity; a judgment can only be said to be correct or right. Chisholm might answer: Judging is accepting something, or attributing a certain property to something. Applied to states of affairs this gives the following analysis of my judgment that some whales are white: I accept the state of affairs that some whales are white. Under this analysis it is more natural to call the judgment true or false. I think, though, that the notion of acceptance is ambiguous; we should ask: Accept as what? Accept as true, I think. But, then, it cannot be the act or its result which is the bearer of truth. What the truth-bearer is in the case of an attribution will be dealt with in the next subsection.

For Chisholm, the primary role of a state of affairs is that it may be conceived or accepted by someone (FP, 9). He defines a state of affairs partly by this role. The second part of the definition of a state of affairs is that whoever conceives it, necessarily conceives something which is possibly such that it obtains. There being round squares is a state of affairs, because there being squares is necessarily conceived if there being round squares is conceived, and there being squares is possibly such that it obtains.

A state of affairs \( p \) and a state of affairs \( q \) are identical if and only if they entail each other. This means that \( p \) and \( q \) are necessarily such that if the one obtains, then the other obtains, and whoever accepts the one accepts the other (EPS, 30, 31). This identity criterion is very similar to Frege's principle for individuating propositions: two sentences express the same proposition if and only if it is not possible for anyone who understands those sentences to judge the one to be true and the other to be false.¹ Those sentences are standing in a relation of Äquipollenz. Frege adds to this that these sentences should not contain any parts which are immediately evident. Such a criterion cannot be used to determine that two judgments have the same content; it can only be used in a negative sense, to determine that two judgments have different contents. The
criterion makes it possible to distinguish necessary truths, such as mathematical truths, from one another. No calculation is allowed between the two acts of judgment: the second must immediately follow from the first. Chisholm uses the criterion to make sense of the intuition that ‘It is not the case that whales are not mammals’ and ‘Whales are mammals’ express the same state of affairs. (Chisholm presupposes here that negation has a classical meaning.) This example shows that there is not a precise one-to-one correspondence between sentences and the states of affairs they express.

On Chisholm’s account, the predicates being true and obtaining do not apply to different types of entities; for him, propositions are merely a special case of states of affairs. Although Chisholm conceives of propositions as a subclass of states of affairs, I will often use the terms ‘states of affairs’ and ‘propositions’ interchangeably, because his notion state of affairs has much resemblance with what is often called ‘proposition’. A state of affairs expressed by a certain declarative sentence obtains, or a proposition is true, if and only if the object (which may be a set consisting of objects) denoted by the subject term exemplifies the property (which may also be a relation) expressed by the predicate (SP. 28). It is clear that this definition only makes sense in the case of states of affairs that may be expressed by atomic sentences. Further, states of affairs are reducible to properties: we can replace that $x$ is $F$ by being such that $x$ is $F$. The obtaining of the state of affairs that whales are mammals can be conceived of as the exemplification by whatever individual of the attribute being such that whales are mammals. In the case of nonobtaining states of affairs no individual exemplifies the property, say, being such that whales are fish. This leaves us with object, property, and the relation of exemplification as primary concepts.

b. Chisholm’s Nonpropositional Theory of Judgment

In his earlier theory of judgment Chisholm drew a distinction between two types of judgment: those where a proposition is judged to be true, called de dicto judgments, and de re judgments, which are attributions of a property to an object (PO, 165ff.). And he argued that de re judgments are reducible to de dicto judgments. At the end of the seventies, Chisholm introduced a new type of judgment. At first sight the judgments falling under this type seem to be a special case of de re judgments, for a property is attributed to an object. But this object is a special one; it is the judging person himself. According to Chisholm this means that these judgments are different from de re judgments. What he
has in mind can be explained by making a distinction between the following two judgments. Suppose I am in a store and I see on a television screen that someone is dropping her shawl, at which time I judge: ‘That woman is dropping her shawl’; the next moment I realize that I am that woman and I judge ‘I myself am dropping my shawl’. The latter type of judgment Chisholm calls a direct attribution: an attribution which we express by a ‘he, himself’ locution. I will call them first-person judgments.

These judgments cannot be conceived of as normal de re judgments, for in that case it would be possible for anyone else to make the same judgment about me; neither can they be considered as de dicto judgments, because in that case I judge something about myself under a certain conception. Chisholm does not believe in abstract I-presentations (‘Ich-Vorstellungen’ as Frege calls them) as parts of propositions or states of affairs. He agrees with Brentano that we never grasp any individuating properties (FP, 16), that is, properties which belong essentially to one individual (haecceitas). Neither do individuals themselves form part of propositions. Conceiving states of affairs as abstract entities, Chisholm believes that they cannot be dependent upon a concrete entity. It is true that the terms ‘I’, ‘he’, ‘that’, or any proper name do not have meaning in the same way as, for example, ‘the highest mountain’ has, but that does not imply that the meaning of these entities is identical with the individual they stand for.

For Chisholm, sentences containing indexicals, demonstratives, or proper names do not express states of affairs or propositions at all. Judgments like ‘Jones is brave’ or ‘That horse is a stallion’ do not have a proposition or state of affairs as their content. In a loose sense, we might say that they are attributions of a property to an individual thing: respectively, the man called ‘Jones’ and the horse pointed at. To be more precise, for Chisholm, being a stallion is only the indirect content of such an attribution, and the horse pointed at is only the indirect object. The ultimate or direct object of all attributions is the judger himself. The way we refer to ourselves is essentially different from the way we refer to others. To myself I refer directly; there is no doubt that the reference to myself succeeds when I judge that I feel pain. The knower and the object about which we know something are in this case identical. To someone or something else I can refer only indirectly, namely by attributing a property to myself which implies an identifying relation by which I am able to single out the horse from all other objects around me, and which implies that the object singled out is a stallion. Being a description, it may fail to pick up the right object, or it may pick up no object at all. By
attributing something directly. I attribute something indirectly (FP. chap. 4).

This conception is comparable to what Brentano says: we apprehend or accept something in obliquo by apprehending or accepting something in recto (PES. 3: 37ff.). What we accept in recto, we accept as existing: this is not the case when we accept something in obliquo. Brentano says that when I judge that someone believes in the devil, then I accept the one who believes in the devil in modo recto; the devil I accept in modo obliquo. Or, when I experience something and accept what I experience, then there is an acceptance of myself as experiencing in modo recto, and what I experience I accept in modo obliquo. Brentano believes that all and only psychical phenomena are experienced in inner consciousness with immediate evidence (PES. 1: 128). Or, as Chisholm says, in every judgment we have direct access to ourselves as judging persons. There is a certain kind of reflexivity which characterizes all mental acts.

Not only all attributions, but also all de dicto judgments can be reduced to first-person judgments. The indirect object in the case of a de dicto judgment is the proposition judged; the indirect content is the property being true. The judgment ‘All men are mortal’ is a direct attribution whose content entails an identifying relation by which I single out the proposition that all men are mortal, and which entails that this proposition is true. Here being true is conceived of as a predicate among others.

Chisholm’s attributional theory is not confirmed by our intuitions. When I judge ‘Whales are mammals’, my judgment is not about myself. There are other problems with this theory. Suppose that when I judge that elms are trees, I attribute to myself a certain property; if you then judge that elms are not trees, you attribute to yourself another property. These judgments do not contradict each other, of course. How then can it be accounted for that you were contradicting what I was saying? A possible answer is that the propositions entailed by the attributions contradict each other. This can be defended for de dicto judgments. But it leaves us with the problem how it can be accounted for that ‘The British Library has a copy of Das Kapital’ and ‘It is not the case that the British Library has a copy of Das Kapital’ contradict each other, for these judgments do not contain any propositions or states of affairs on Chisholm’s account. If one defends that (the results of) attributions contradict each other, we have to assume that there is a Being who judges everything—both what is true and what is false: this is probably not what Chisholm wants to defend, if it is defensible at all, for even God cannot judge contradictory things.
A second problem is how hypothetical and disjunctive judgments may find a place when nothing but attributions are admitted. Chisholm would probably answer that the attributed contents are hypothetical or disjunctive. A judgment of the form ‘If the British Library has a copy of *Das Kapital*, then there is still a Marxist in London’ might be analyzed as an attribution to the judger himself of the property *being such that if . . . , then . . .*. This analysis presupposes the concept of a *proposition*, because the property must be analyzable into an antecedental and a consequential part. Another way to analyze the judgment is to conceive of it as an indirect attribution: to the British Library the content *being such that if having a copy of Das Kapital, then there is a Marxist in London* is attributed. Here *having a copy of Das Kapital* is a kind of antecedental property; it is hard to explain, though, what this is without introducing the notion of a truth-bearing entity like a proposition.

What is the form of ‘the British Library has a copy of *Das Kapital*’, when it is not judged? And, has this form something in common with the judgment ‘The British Library has a copy of *Das Kapital*’? This problem shows itself in such an inference as: ‘If the British Library has a copy of *Das Kapital*, then there is still a Marxist in London. The British Library has a copy of *Das Kapital*. Therefore, there is still a Marxist in London.’ If we want the inference to be valid according to *modus ponens*, the antecedent of the first premise must have something in common with the second premise (compare Frege’s argument against negative acts of judgment dealt with in the first section of this paper). But what can this common thing be if the first premise is an attribution whereas in the antecedent nothing is attributed. If we take the answer as given above, that the common part shows itself in the antecedental part of the attributed content, *being such that if having a copy of Das Kapital, it is properties as exemplified by a certain individual, or individuals as exemplifying a certain property, that stand in logical relations. These might also be said to be the common element in judging, asking whether and supposing, say, I am in France. But what is an individual as exemplifying a property? It cannot be meant in any actual sense, for premises and conclusion may be false.

Further, the two judgments ‘I am in Leiden’ and ‘Someone is in Leiden’ must have enough in common to explain that the latter, which expresses a state of affairs, may be inferred from the former, which does not express a state of affairs. We should not have a theory with two types of entities fulfilling the role of being truth-bearer. Indeed, for Chisholm all judgments can be conceived of as attributions. ‘Someone is in Leiden’ can be analyzed as: I attribute to myself the property *being such that*
someone is in Leiden obtains. Now it becomes very difficult to explain what this attribution has in common with the attribution to myself of being in Leiden. It will be a severe complication if we have different inference rules for concluding ‘Someone is in Leiden’ from ‘I am in Leiden’ and for drawing the same conclusion from ‘Peter is in Leiden’.

A third problem concerns the analysis of (negative) existential, singular judgments. Chisholm gives as an example an analysis of ‘Tom does not exist’: “The properties I thought enabled me to single out one thing and a thing that I called ‘Tom’ don’t point to anything” (FP, 69). It is not easy to use this analysis for the judgments ‘I exist’, ‘I do not exist’, or ‘I did not exist, then’. Do we have to say that in judging ‘I exist’, I attribute existence to myself; that is, that we have to treat existence as a first-order predicate? Or is ‘I exist’ not a judgment at all? Of course, these judgments are not easy for any theory to analyze.

A last, important problem which any theory of attribution has to face is a variant of the problem of the unity of the proposition. Every act of attribution, in the sense in which it is a complete act of judgment, consists of partial acts: the act in which the subject is posited, which is the underlying act, and an act of attribution or denial of the predicate. Even in the case in which the subject is himself the judger, an act must be carried out by which the subject of attribution is posited. The awareness of the subject which is an essential part of every intentional act, and which forms therefore a unity with every such act, cannot fulfill this role because an underlying act is needed upon which the act of predication depends. There can be an act of judgment only if there is a unity of the two partial acts of subject-positing and attribution of the predicate; further, this act of judgment has a content of its own, which has a unity that makes it possible to be judged (compare Husserl [LU, vol. 5, §18]). I believe that the partial act which posits something as subject, cannot but posit it in a certain manner. In the case of ‘I, myself . . .’, it is me presented by way of self-reference; this is something repeatable for it is present in all my self-referring judgments. This means that it has a general content, although not generalizable to other judging persons, and that it may form part of a proposition.

The above-mentioned arguments are not so much arguments against a theory of attribution, but rather against a theory which does not acknowledge a proposition in all cases of judgment.

In the changeable world there are not only entities which have an independent existence (ens per se), but also entities which depend for their existence on something else, like this ball’s being blue or this leaf’s falling off a tree. The latter category of entities is called the category of
states. States are not repeatable, although they might be said to recur: Yeltsin's being angry may have disappeared and be there again tomorrow.

The primary role of a state is that of being a truth-maker. Further, states are the entities which are related by causation. The judgment 'I have a toothache' is made true by my state of having a toothache, but it is also made true by my general state or by the state of the actual world. This means that the notion of truth-maker needs some restriction. The notion Chisholm uses is tightly connected to the attribution used by the judger. We might call my having a toothache the minimal truth-maker of 'I have a toothache'. It seems to be artificial to say that 'Jones is brave', which is an indirect attribution about Jones and a direct attribution about the judging person, is made true by a certain state of the judging person. For that would mean that a judgment of that form has as many truth-makers as there are people who make the judgment, which is a happy situation for judgments about oneself, but not for judgments about other things. Therefore, it is more likely that the truth-maker is determined by the indirect attribution, if there is any.

3. Chisholm's Theory of Negation

a. Negation As Something Irreducible

The central question concerning any theory of negation is whether negation is an irreducible concept. If it is, it may find its place on the side of the act or attitude in our judgments, beliefs, questions, wishes, etc.; it may form part of the content of our judgments; or it may find a place on the level of truth-makers.

According to Plato, if we say 'Something is not great', we do not assert something which simply is not, we assert that this particular in as much as it partakes in the Form Other is other than those particulars which partake in the Form Great. Other philosophers have defended the thesis that a negative sentence such as 'this ball is not blue' really means that this ball has a color which is incompatible with blue. The incompatibility is a logical one if it is assumed that any colored thing can have only one color under the same circumstances. On this analysis it is presupposed that it makes sense to say that something is not blue only if it is a colored thing. Therefore this type of negation is called the relative sense of negation, relative to a certain genus or determinable (like color or shape).

In a judgment like 'Happiness is not blue' we do not say that
happiness has a color which is incompatible with being blue. Either we have to say that there is no real judgment because ‘Happiness is not blue’ makes no sense, or we have to take another meaning of negation into account. Anyway, the relative sense of negation, and, thus, the incompatibility analysis, is not enough to explain other types of negative judgment, such as ‘God does not provide’, ‘John does not love Mary’, ‘Unicorns do not exist’, or the order ‘Do not close the window’. In these cases we use a more radical meaning of negation, called the absolute sense of negation. We cannot analyze such judgments with the notion incompatibility because there is no generic property of which the denied property is a specification. When we use these types of judgments, we do not mean to assert that an individual has a property which is incompatible with the one negated in the judgment. In the absolute sense of ‘not’, things which are said to be ‘not red’ are said to be ‘anything but red’, so that all things are either red or not red, whether colored or not. The negation-sign in our inference rules has this absolute sense. We might conclude that the incompatibility analysis captures only a part of the meaning of negation. Besides, the relation of incompatibility or exclusion can only help to explain what negation is. As a reduction of negation to something else it fails, because it contains the concept of negation in the definiens: two propositions exclude each other if and only if they cannot both be true.

It seems natural to apply the incompatibility analysis in the case of truth-makers. On this account, ‘This ball is not blue’ is true in virtue of the actual color of the ball. Here, too, we need to assume that there is a relation of incompatibility or exclusion, namely between states. Two states exclude each other, if an object cannot have both states but can have neither. Again, we can ask: Which state could exclude that there are unicorns, or that God provides?

Chisholm gives the following example to show that the incompatibility analysis of negation will not do: the judgment ‘I do not believe that it is raining in Graz’ is not made true by a psychological state of mine which is incompatible with that belief, for what state could fulfill this role? According to Chisholm, we need both positive and negative truth-makers: my state of not believing that it is raining in Graz is such a negative truth-maker; it is a state with a negative content, not believing that it is raining in Graz, and can thus be called a negative state. Independent evidence for the existence of negative states is that they can stand in causal relations: if John feels affection only for red-haired girls (and only in so far as they are red-haired), Mary’s not having red hair—and not her positive state of having grey hair—causes John’s not being attracted to her. Further, we sometimes want to attribute something to a
state, as when I judge ‘Not being in love is a quiet state we sometimes long for’. Negative states should not be confused with nonoccurring states and events. For Chisholm, the latter simply do not exist. For example, if ‘This ball is not red’ is a correct judgment, the state ‘the ball’s being nonred’ is the truth-maker: there is not a nonoccurring state ‘the ball’s being red’. Nonactualized possibilities form no part of Chisholm’s ontology. If a judgment is incorrect, the false-maker is simply the truth-maker of the contradictory judgment.

b. Negative States of Affairs or Properties and the Relation of Involvement

As is shown above, negative sentences often cannot be said to express a positive proposition or state of affairs together with a relation of exclusion: therefore, we have to acknowledge negative propositions or states of affairs. As I already observed in the first section, according to Frege, we do need a counterpart for ‘not’ on the side of propositions, but we have no means to distinguish negative from positive propositions: being negative is only a relative property of propositions, namely, relative to another proposition. Any theory which says it has a criterion to distinguish negative from positive propositions should be able to answer Frege’s question: Which of the following sentences expresses a positive, and which expresses a negative proposition: ‘Christ is immortal’, ‘Christ is mortal’, ‘Christ does not live forever’, ‘Christ does not live in eternity’? (Verneinung, 150).

Chisholm says that it is possible to distinguish positive from negative states of affairs. The first question to be asked here is: What is the importance of a criterion by which we are able to draw the distinction? In classical logic we need only a relative conception of negation. The question therefore cannot be dealt with independently of another question: To what extent can logic be conceived of as independent of other areas where the distinction between positive and negative is not merely relative? What I have in mind here is that the distinction has some importance from an epistemological point of view, because positive judgments are not verified in the same way negative judgments are. I will come back to this point in section 4. In Chisholm’s writings the importance of the criterion finds its reason in his philosophy of personal realism, as he calls it, or to use another term, in his intentional ontology. In defining the more basic notions of his philosophy such as property and state of affairs, Chisholm makes use of intentional notions such as conceiving and attributing. In contrast with most analytic philosophers, Chisholm does not use the notion of a sentence or of any other linguistic
entity as an undefined term in those definitions. From an intentional point of view the distinction between positive and negative judgments or thoughts is not merely relative. This means that a criterion can be given if intentional notions are used.

Chisholm gives the following criterion to distinguish positive from negative states of affairs: “a state of affairs is affirmative if and only if it does not involve its own negation; otherwise it is negative” (EPS. 37). Two important notions are used here, that of involvement and that of being the negation of something. Chisholm presents his relation of involvement as a counterpart to Bolzano’s relation between a Vorstellung an sich (an objective concept) and its parts. Bolzano says that the concept a land that has no mountains has the concept mountains as a part, and the concept the eye of a man has the concept man as its part; in contrast to this the object ‘land without mountains’ has no mountain as a part, and the object ‘the eye of a certain man’ does not have this man as a part (WL, §63). In the examples given the parts of a concept can be determined linguistically: but is this always the case? Whereas the concept racehorse contains the concept horse, the concept Sunday does not contain the concept sun; we can only determine that the concept sun is not a part of the concept Sunday if we know the meaning of ‘Sunday’. (If this example still causes some doubts because of the etymology of ‘Sunday’, ask yourself whether arch forms a part of anarchist, or art of article.) This means that the parts of a concept cannot be determined linguistically. The way Twardowski, Brentano, and Stumpf conceived of the notion being part of a concept was certainly not linguistic, for they considered the concept color to be part of the concept red.

On the other hand, the notion involvement should not be taken in a subjective, psychological sense. Such a subjective conception of being part of a concept is to be found in Twardowski’s work, as Husserl has rightly pointed out (BT, 354, 355). Twardowski defends, with reference to Bolzano, the thesis that we can use another term for ‘the eye of a man’ in which the term ‘man’ does not appear. Then, he says, we immediately see that the concept man is not a part of the concept the eye of a man. For Twardowski, such a concept as man is only an auxiliary concept (Hilfsvorstellung) for the concept the eye of a man (IGV, 14). In contrast to this, Twardowski says that the concept being extended is part of the concept red. Twardowski uses the term Vorstellungsinhalt; in his words: the Vorstellungsinhalt which is the meaning of the term ‘red’ cannot be without the Vorstellungsinhalt which is the meaning of ‘extended’ (IGV, 11). I think that the necessary relations between these two contents are of a genetic-psychological kind; these relations are not internal relations holding between the concepts red and extended themselves.
Both Bolzano and Chisholm use intentional criteria to determine the parts of a concept: that these intentional criteria are not psychological or subjective has to be argued for. Bolzano says to this: all that has to be thought necessarily in order to think of a certain concept, is a part of that concept. This means, he says, that the concept equality of all sides is part of the concept equilateral triangle, but the concept equiangularity is not part of the latter. It may be the case that whenever we think of the concept equilateral triangle, we think of the concept equality of all angles, but here the relation concerns only the subjective thinking of these concepts, it does not concern the concepts an sich (WL, § 64, p. 83). Bolzano says he owes these ideas to Kant’s distinction between analytic and synthetic truths, and he refers to the definition of analytic truths as those truths of which the predicate is contained as a part in the concept of the subject (WL, § 65, anm. 7). Indeed, for Kant the judgment ‘An equilateral triangle is equiangular’ is a truth that is not analytic; as a geometric judgment it is a synthetic a priori. A tautologous judgment such as ‘An equilateral triangle is equilateral’, or to use Kant’s example, ‘Der Mensch ist Mensch’, is not a typical example of an analytic truth (Logik, § 37). More interesting cases of analytic truths contain the predicate in the concept of the subject in a concealed or implicit way, as in the judgment ‘Bodies are extended’. It is clear that in such cases it cannot be determined linguistically whether a concept is part of another one; and neither is the relation between the concepts body and extended a genetic-psychological one.

If someone introduces the notion being part of a concept or involvement, we should ask whether he thinks that the concept extension is part of the concept body; whether the concept color is part of the concept red; and whether the concept equiangular is part of the concept equilateral triangle. Chisholm does not give any explicit answer to these questions; but his criteria to distinguish negative from positive states of affairs and properties give some clues how he would answer these questions.

Chisholm introduces the relational concept involvement as follows: “The state of affairs p involves the state of affairs q = Df. p is necessarily such that, whoever conceives it, conceives q” (FP, 124). According to the criterion for negative states of affairs, ‘It is false that balls are round’ expresses a negative state of affairs: its negation, that balls are round, must be thought of when entertaining it. Does the state of affairs expressed by ‘It is not the case that it is not the case that balls are round’ involve the one expressed by ‘it is not the case that balls are round’? As I mentioned before, for Chisholm, there is not a one-to-one correspondence between sentences and the states of affairs they express; further, every state of affairs has only one negation. This means that the state of
affairs expressed by 'it is not the case that it is not the case that balls are round', being the negation of *that it is not the case that balls are round*, expresses the same state of affairs as 'balls are round'. A state of affairs expressed by 'it is not the case that not p' does not involve the one expressed by 'not p'; it is rather the other way round.

This is in accordance with Chisholm's identity criterion for states of affairs: whoever accepts *that it is not the case that not p*, necessarily accepts *that p*. This identity may be contrasted with the following nonidentity: *(x) (x = x)* expresses a positive state of affairs, whereas *(Ex) -(x = x)* expresses a negative state of affairs, as conceiving the latter implies conceiving *(Ex) -(x = x)*. Although the two states of affairs are logically equivalent, they are not identical.

Whether a certain state of affairs involves another one, can be seen only when we express it in its proper form. Chisholm says that a sentence mirrors the structure of a state of affairs provided that the principal subordinate components of the sentence express the principal subordinate components of the state of affairs (EPS. 30. 37); 'a state of affairs is the principal subordinate component (p.s.c.) of another one' means that the latter properly involves just what the former involves ('p properly involves q' means that p involves q but q does not involve p). For example, p is a p.s.c. of ¬p and of p & q. (It is not so clear, though, what the p.s.c. of a certain sentence is: do we really have to entertain the sentence 'There are dogs' in order to entertain the sentence 'There are no dogs'? And why is 'no' not a p.s.c. of the latter sentence?) According to Chisholm, each state of affairs can be expressed by a sentence which shows the real structure of that state of affairs; expressed in a proper way we can see whether the state of affairs concerned is a negative one. But how do we know whether we have caught the proper form of a certain state of affairs? For example, according to Chisholm, p is not a p.s.c. of p v q, because such a disjunction really has the form ¬(¬p & ¬q), which means that the p.s.c. is ¬p & ¬q. Chisholm gives no independent argument, but he does not stand alone in this analysis; Brentano classifies disjunctions as negations, too (*WE*, 80). In accordance with his idea to conceive conjunctions as positive and disjunctions as negative, Chisholm gives another criterion to distinguish positive from negative states of affairs: all and only affirmative states of affairs imply their principal subordinate components.

Chisholm defines 'p is a negation of q' as either p denies q, or q denies p: 'p denies q, means that p contradicts q and p properly involves just what q involves; and 'p contradicts q, means that p is necessarily such that it obtains if and only if q does not obtain. Because a negation is used in the last definiens, a reduction of negation is not intended. I wonder
how the following problem can be solved: \(-[(2 + 2 = 5) \& -(2 + 2 = 5)]\), which is a logical truth, is (a denial, and therefore) a negation of \([(2 + 2 = 5) \& -(2 + 2 = 5)]\). The latter is (a denial, and therefore) a negation of \(-(2 + 2 = 5)\), because it contradicts and properly involves just what the mathematical truth \(-(2 + 2 = 5)\) involves (I take these examples from Chisholm [EPS, 35]). Because a state of affairs has only one negation, \(-[(2 + 2 = 5) \& -(2 + 2 = 5)]\) and \-(2 + 2 = 5)\) really are the same state of affairs. But this is not in accordance with the identity criterion for states of affairs: someone who has no knowledge of arithmetic may judge \(-[(2 + 2 = 5) \& -(2 + 2 = 5)]\) to be true, because it is a logical truth, but may not know the truth-value of \-(2 + 2 = 5)\). When you are in doubt about the latter point you may exchange \(2 + 2 = 5\) for a more complex mathematical falsehood. If we hold on to the restriction Frege proposed that the sentences concerned do not contain any immediately evident parts, we can avoid this problem.

According to Chisholm, if the Fregean sentences, like ‘Christ is immortal’ etc., should be read as ‘Christ is such that \(\not\) . . .’, they are all affirmative. Because the sentence contains a proper name, it does not express a state of affairs. Instead we can take as an example ‘Someone is such that \(\not\) . . .’. According to Chisholm, sentences of the latter form all express positive states of affairs; for him, such concepts as being mortal and being immortal are both positive (see below). On the other hand, if Frege’s sentences are read as ‘It is false that Christ (someone) is \(\not\) . . .’, they are classified as negative (EPS, 33).

As I mentioned in section 2, in his later theory Chisholm says that states of affairs are reducible to properties. This means that properties form an essential part of Chisholm’s later theory of judgments. Further, it should be noted that for him all states of affairs have a negation, but that not all properties have one (see subsection 3.c). The thesis that there are negative attributes or negative universals has been argued against by David Armstrong (Universals, chap. 14). One has to give a criterion to distinguish negative properties from positive ones even if one rejects negative properties; the arguments against negative universals given by Armstrong make sense only when such a criterion can be given. Chisholm gives a criterion to distinguish negative properties comparable to that for negative states of affairs: \(P\) is a negative property if and only if there is a \(Q\) such that \(P\) contradicts \(Q\), and \(P\) properly involves \(Q\). Besides, Chisholm gives two other criteria to distinguish negative from positive properties. “Being-F is a negative attribute = Df. One cannot conceive an attribute that excludes being-F without conceiving an attribute that contradicts being-F” (OM, 154). ‘Two attributes exclude each other’ means that it is impossible for anything to exemplify both;
and ‘two attributes contradict each other’ means that it is necessary that everything is either and that it is impossible that anything is both. It is clear from these definitions that we must already know what negation is.

In case we can conceive an attribute that excludes a certain attribute being-\(H\) without conceiving an attribute that contradicts being-\(H\), we can conclude that being-\(H\) is positive. The remaining attributes can then be classified as negative. For example, being red is classified as positive, for being blue excludes being red without contradicting it. This conception of a negative attribute presupposes that negative terms are applicable to things which fall under a genus different from that of the negated attribute. If ‘being nonred’ meant ‘being any color but red’, the attribute expressed would not be classified as negative—for we could then conceive an attribute that excludes being nonred, say being a concept, without conceiving an attribute that contradicts being nonred. The attribute expressed by ‘being nonred’ is classified as positive, because we can conceive an attribute that excludes it, namely being blue, without conceiving an attribute that contradicts it; the attribute expressed by ‘being non-nonred’ is identical with the one expressed by ‘being red’.

What other attributes exclude being nonred? Being crimson and being scarlet do. Because being crimson does not contradict being nonred, it seems as though the criterion says that being nonred is not negative. If we want to save the criterion, we have to say that we cannot conceive crimson or scarlet without conceiving red; for, if we want the criterion to classify being nonred as negative, we have to say that we necessarily think of red, when we think of crimson or scarlet. This, I think, is what Chisholm would like to defend. Similarly, someone who thinks of horse, necessarily thinks of animal. In general, all determinates involve their determinables, and all species involve their genus. It follows that the relation of involvement is not a purely linguistic or formal one.

Is being nonextended a negative attribute according to the above-mentioned criterion? An attribute which excludes it is being a body. If Chisholm wants to defend the idea that being nonextended is a negative attribute, he has to say that being a body contradicts being nonextended, which means that the relation of contradiction is not a formal relation; or he has to say that being a body involves an attribute which contradicts being nonextended, that is, that it involves being extended. The latter fits in beautifully with the tradition. But the next example shows that it is a rather arbitrary decision how strong we take the relation of involvement to be.

What would Chisholm answer to the question whether the attribute being an equilateral triangle involves the attribute being equiangular? Being not an equiangular triangle is not excluded by being equilateral.
any square exemplifies both properties. The attribute being not an equiangular triangle can be classified as negative only if an attribute which excludes it, say being an equilateral triangle, involves one that contradicts it. Chisholm has to say either that being not an equiangular triangle and being an equilateral triangle contradict each other, or that being an equilateral triangle involves being an equiangular triangle. Probably he will choose the first alternative, although, as said above, this implies that the relation of contradiction is not a purely formal relation.

Properties such as being immortal, being mortal, being straight, being crooked are all classified as positive, because none of these pairs of attributes forms contradictory attributes or involves them: nonliving things are neither mortal nor immortal.

So far we can give a definitive answer as regards relations of involvement only with respect to subdeterminates, like being red, and their determinables, here being colored; these are the classical relations of one-sided detachability ("einseitige distinktionelle Abtrennbarkeit" [see BOD]), as put forward by Brentano, and which he expresses sometimes by saying that (seeing) color is a logical part of (seeing) red (DP. 18–21). An analysis of the criterion for negative properties implies that species also involve their genus. This is also in accordance with Brentano in so far as he believes that someone who judges that there is a horse, immediately is able to judge that there is an animal. In Chisholm's terminology: the content of the latter judgment is entailed by the content of the former. Dealing with the paradox of analysis Chisholm is perfectly clear concerning the point that not all predicates which are in the Kantian sense contained in the notion of the subject are involved by the notion of the subject; for if that were the case, no analytic judgment would be informative. The definiens of a cube, that it is a regular solid with six equal square sides, is not thought of when we think of a cube (SP. 34); according to Chisholm, the concept 7 is analyzed by the concept 8 – 1, but neither involves the other. Because being extended is part of the definition of being a body, Chisholm would probably say that the latter does not involve the former. Certainly, being equiangular should not be considered as being involved by being an equilateral triangle; the judgment that all equilateral triangles are equiangular extends our knowledge in the strong Kantian sense that it is a synthetic judgment.

The other criterion Chisholm gives is: a negative property does not entail any property other than itself (OM. 147). "P entails Q = Df P is necessarily such that, for every x and y, if y attributes P to x, then y attributes Q to x" (OM. 144) (see subsection 2.a). I will not deal here with the notion of de re modality; for Chisholm it is an undefined notion.
 Attribution is for Chisholm an undefined notion, too: and he gives few examples of necessary relations between different attributions. A clear relation of entailment is that between $p \& q$ and $p$: probably there is not such a relation between $p$ and $p \lor q$, because the entailment of $p \lor q$ by $p$ seems to imply that $p$ involves $p \lor q$, which is not the case. Thus, most likely, being red entails being colored, and can therefore be classified as positive. Probably, being nonred does not entail being noncrimson. Although being nonred implies being noncrimson, it does not involve the latter; I can perfectly well think of nonred without having the concept noncrimson.

Do those, like myself, who think that Chisholm's criterion for negative states of affairs and properties is sound, have to conclude that Frege was wrong? I do not think so. What Frege meant is that no logical or linguistic criterion can be given to distinguish between negative and positive propositions. Chisholm's criterion is not a purely logical one: for example, the relation of involvement between being red and being colored cannot be accounted for in a purely formal way.

The criterion presupposes a hierarchy of concepts, not a type-hierarchy, but a hierarchy as we may find in the Porphyrian tree. Such a hierarchy cannot fit within an atomistic framework; but I do not think that it brings with it any general philosophical problems. Further, the criterion presupposes the important notion involvement. Using this notion it is possible to give a more fine-grained identity criterion for propositions; logically equivalent propositions need not be identical. Further, the criterion presupposes a proper, essential form of a proposition—or 'state of affairs' as Chisholm calls it—but not in such a way that there is a one-to-one correspondence between propositions and sentences. The problem is: How do we know this essential form? The intentional point of view alone cannot determine this; it gives no answer to the question whether $p \lor q$ really has the form $-(p \& -q)$, rather than the other way round. If we say that $p \lor q$ must be negative because it does not imply its principal subordinate components, we end in a circle, for we have no independent arguments for considering negative propositions as not implying their principal subordinate components.

c. Attribution and Denial

The central question in this subsection is whether Chisholm acknowledges the existence of judgmental negation, besides the existence of propositional negation and property negation. The answer to this question is only implicitly present in Chisholm's writings.
As I noted before, whereas all states of affairs have negations, not all properties have negations. Not all predicates express properties of their own. An example—given by Chisholm—is the predicate in the sentence “The word ‘French’ is inapplicable to itself”: ‘being inapplicable to itself’ cannot express a property of its own, for the assumption that there is a property being inapplicable to itself leads to paradoxical results—try to apply it to itself. There is only the property being applicable to itself. On which level is the negative part to be found here? There are two types of judgment we have to take into account: those which have states of affairs as their content, and those which attribute a property to an individual. An example of the former type of judgment is ‘Some words are inapplicable to themselves’. Because the attribute has to be being applicable to itself, a more proper form of this judgment is: ‘It is false/It is not the case that some words are applicable to themselves’. I deal with this type of judgment below.

If we take “the word ‘French’” not as a name of an abstract, timeless entity—as the word did not exist before Great Britain became inhabited—the judgment “The word ‘French’ is inapplicable to itself” is an attribution. It cannot be the case that the property expressed by the predicate ‘being inapplicable to itself’ is affirmed of the word ‘French’, for there is no such property. It must be the corresponding positive property which is attributed, the property being applicable to itself. Therefore the only way to analyze this judgment is by conceiving of negation as a part of the act of judging. The property being applicable to itself is denied of the word ‘French’. Chisholm at one place explicitly says that he acknowledges two types of attribution. Denying something of something has the form ‘x is not such that it is F’; and affirming something of something has the form: ‘x is such that it is F’ (OPR, 324). The similarity with Brentano’s later theory of double judgments, which I have mentioned in the first section, is striking (cf. also BTJ). Such a theory of negation can be combined with the thesis that there are no negative attributes, if it is able to answer the question what the denial of a denial consists in. But contrary to that position, Chisholm admits negative properties in most cases.

There is also some resemblance with the theory of judgment proposed by Ducasse. Ducasse presents his theory of judgment as a propositional one, defining a proposition as a particular entity, a pair consisting of a certain physical place and an attribute. Such a type of entity Chisholm would not conceive of as a proposition or ‘state of affairs’. But Ducasse’s theory of judgmental acts has much resemblance with Chisholm’s theory of attribution, for Ducasse says that the assertion
of a proposition is the assertion of one of the constituents, the attribute, about the other constituent, a place, or any thing indicated by a name. The latter constituent is identifiable ultimately by indication. Further, there are different ways of attributing: affirmatively, negatively, or in any other ‘mood’, such as questioningly, optatively, hypothetically (see his FTK).

The idea that there are two types of judgmental acts cannot simply be extended to judgments with propositions or states of affairs as their content. In those cases Chisholm does not acknowledge a special negative act of judgment. In contrast to the de dicto judgments Chisholm has dealt with, which have the form ‘p is true’, such a judgment would have the form ‘p is false’. For Chisholm these types of judgment are really attributions, with p as the indirect object and being true as the indirect content. There is no essential extension of his theory if the form ‘p is false’ is added. The question is whether there is any difference between a judgment of the form ‘p is false’ and one of the form ‘¬p is true’. Since Chisholm says that the state of affairs expressed by ‘it is false that p’ expresses the negation of the one expressed by ‘p’, he seems not to make any distinction. For him, the proper form of ‘p is false’ is: ‘¬p is true’.

Here we might contrast Chisholm’s position with that of Brentano who explicitly defends the thesis that there are two types of judgmental acts, Anerkennen and Verwerfen. Brentano says that the judgment ‘A is’ is equivalent to ‘it is false that A is not’, but that the two judgments do not stand in a relation of identity to each other. Such a relation holds between two judgments only if they have the same matter and the same form; that is, the object judged (das Beurteilte) must be the same, and so must be the type of act (LrU, § 34). According to Brentano, the two judgments ‘A is false’, or in existential form ‘A does not exist’, and ‘¬A is true’ cannot be identified. ‘A is false’ is a direct judgment; it is a rejection of a certain object. Only judgments of this type can be immediately evident. For example, I apodictically reject a square that is not a rectangle when I judge ‘All squares are rectangles’. The judgment ‘¬A is true’ is an indirect judgment. Here we can judge only with mediate evidence.

Brentano’s theory does not imply that there is a one-to-one correspondence between sentences and the judgments which they intimate: judgments which stand in a relation of identity may have different linguistic forms. But there must be some kind of structural similarity if two judgments are related by identity, for in that case both matter and form of the two judgmental acts must be the same. Here Brentano’s conception of identity for judgments deviates from the identity-criterion
proposed for propositions by Frege and Chisholm. Congruence cannot be a criterion for the identity of propositions, as Frege says in a letter to Husserl dated 30 October–1 November 1906. On the other hand, Brentano’s conception of structural similarity is not the same as Carnap’s notion of intensional isomorphy. In the first place, Brentano’s conception concerns judgments and not propositions. Further, insofar as the matter of a judgment is concerned, it may be expressed in nonisomorphic ways: for example, Brentano says that the parts of a complex matter may exchange their places. The two expressions ‘Some S are P’ and ‘Some P are S’ intimate the same existential judgment (LrU, §34, section 95).

The question remains what the importance is of the distinction between the judgments ‘A is false’ and ‘¬A is true’. Is the distinction merely psychological, as Brentano sometimes suggests (LrU, 119)? Or is it also of importance from an epistemological and logical point of view? It is clear that the answer to this question cannot be dealt with in isolation. When we try to answer these questions the notion truth-maker especially has to be dealt with.

4. A RECONSIDERATION OF THE PROBLEMS CONCERNING NEGATIVE JUDGMENTS

If we take a judgment such as ‘God does not exist’, we might say that what makes the content of this judgment, the proposition that God does not exist, true is the nonexistence of God. ‘The nonexistence of God’ is an ambiguous phrase. Either it stands for a propositional entity, in which case we have an infinite regress in the explanation of what it is that makes a proposition true: or it stands for a state or moment of a nonactual object. The latter conception involves two problems: we cannot consider ‘being nonexistent’ as a state or moment for that would imply that (non)existence is a first-order predicate: further, this conception presupposes that there are possible objects.

Chisholm rightly argues that we cannot take a positive state together with a relation of incompatibility as the truth-maker for negative, existential judgments. Similarly, the truth-maker for ‘John does not love Mary’ cannot be one of John’s positive states, for it is not necessary at all that John’s love for another girl excludes his love for Mary.

Peter Simons (in his LA) proposes as a truth-maker for the proposition that there are no unicorns, the actual world, the totality of facts. But in that case we are no longer able to distinguish the truth-makers for different negative existentials: that there are no unicorns and that there
are no mermaids have the same truth-maker. In the case of ‘John does not love Mary’, he says, all the facts involving John’s emotions make it true that he does not love Mary. Again, this theory cannot distinguish between the truth-maker for ‘John does not love Mary’ and that for ‘John does not love Sue’. On such an account there must be a good reason why truth-makers for negative existentials are so different from truth-makers for other propositions.

‘The nonexistence of God’ or ‘there not being unicorns’ can be taken also in the sense of the nonexistence of a fact. Or, when we do not want to be committed to an ontology of facts, we can say with the early Brentano: the judgment ‘There is no God’ is true in virtue of there being no God. For Brentano, the nonexistence of an object is nothing more than a correlate of a correct rejection, just as the existence of an object is a correlate of a correct acceptance. The later Brentano explicitly takes the notion of correctness of a judgment as prior to that of existence of an object judged and to that of truth of a judgment: truth belongs to the judgment of someone who judges in the way someone would judge it, who judges it as being evident. Someone’s judgment is true if he asserts what an evidently judging person would assert (WE, 139; LrU, § 42). This conception of truth implies that I may judge correctly, even if that judgment is not evident to me; but in order to be true, it must be evidently judgeable by someone. Brentano takes this primary notion of evidence not in any subjective or psychological sense.

Applied to the question whether there is a distinction between ‘—A is true’ and ‘A is false’, we can now say not only that they are distinguished from a psychological point of view insofar as the acts are different, but that their truth-makers differ, too. According to Brentano, ‘A is false’ is a direct judgment. The rejection of A is a correct judgment if there exists no A. Because, for Brentano, the truth of a judgment cannot be explained by the nonexistence of the judged object, it is better to define this correct rejection in terms of evidence: ‘A is false’ is correct if an evident judger would reject A. ‘—A is true’ is an indirect judgment; it is a judgment about a judgment, or about a judging person. If someone judges ‘—A is true’, he thinks of someone who rejects A, and he declares that he, insofar as he thinks of the so-judging person, thinks of a correctly judging person. Such a judgment cannot be immediately evident, because the judgment of someone else can never be evident to me; it can be mediatly evident, though. In Brentano’s theory the notions truth and truth-maker are not knowledge-transcendent. In general, his theory is relevant to those theories that define truth in terms of provability, for example the theory of Per Martin-Löf, where it is said that the judgment ‘A is false’ is correct if the proposition A cannot be verified (is
unprovable); and ‘\(-A\) is true’ is correct if the proposition \(-A\) can be verified (is provable).

When we concede, on the one hand, to Brentano that there is a special act of judgmental negation, and, on the other hand, to Frege, that there is propositional negation, we acknowledge two forms of negation. Brentano’s position as regards negative judgmental acts implies that there is an absolute distinction between positive and negative acts, and that we have to find a criterion to distinguish negative from positive judgments. Here we might use Chisholm’s criterion. The advantage of using the criterion here over using it for propositions is that the latter application presupposes a proper form for each proposition. The criterion as used for distinguishing negative from positive judgmental acts presupposes some structure of judgments, but not more than that it consists in a positive act and a content, or a negative act and a content.

If we acknowledge negative acts, why not say that there are hypothetical, conjunctive, and disjunctive acts, too? The problem is that in these cases we do not merely need two propositions and an act which unifies them in a certain way; what is judged must have a unity of its own, for this unity is the truth-bearer. In contrast with this, the content of a negative act is a proposition which already has a unity; this proposition is said to be false. Further, positive and negative acts are acts of holding true and acts of holding false. In contrast to this, we do not have a special hypothetical truth-value or a disjunctive truth-value.

A theory which takes the notion of evidence or proof as a primary notion, that is, primary to truth and existence, has to keep clear of the company of relativists. This can be done only by introducing a notion of correctness which accounts for the difference between real evidence and apparent evidence, and between real proof and apparent proof. Without such a notion we are not able to distinguish between true and false propositions, and we cannot account for the fact that we may err. This notion of correctness is what I have called the Parmenidean notion of truth.

An interesting question is whether Chisholm has a comparable notion in his philosophy. That is, a notion of truth or existence which does not have a counterpart, that is, a notion of asymmetric truth. Chisholm’s notion of obtainment cannot fulfill this role. Both obtaining and nonobtaining states of affairs exist in the same way. Is there a more fundamental notion on Chisholm’s account; that is, a notion which makes the distinction between true and false propositions, or that between obtaining and nonobtaining states of affairs, possible, and which has no opposite? For Chisholm, exemplification is one of the most fundamental notions. It has no opposite: a simple state of affairs obtains,
if an object exemplifies a certain attribute. In the case of a nonobtaining state of affairs, there is not a parallel situation, because there is no relation of nonexemplification between the object and the attribute concerned: there is just nothing. Therefore, I think that the relation of exemplification is meant to fulfill the role of Parmenidean truth in Chisholm’s writings.

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FEBRUARY 1994

NOTES


2. Chisholm’s answer to the problem, which is not exactly the same as the one I propose here, can be found in FP, 42-44.

3. According to Brentano, this holds also for the otherness analysis: “Die Verschiedenheit erkennen heißt erkennen, daß von zweien eines nicht das andre ist” (WE, 58).

4. “Denn meinem Sinne nach ist alles dasjenige, was man sich nothwendig denken muß, um eine gewisse Vorstellung wirklich gedacht zu haben, auch ein Bestandtheil derselben” (WL, § 65, anm. 2).

5. “Aus dem Urteil ‘es gibt ein Pferd’ läßt sich also das Urteil ‘es gibt ein Tier’ ohne jede Vermittlung folgern” (LrU, 209).

6. That is to say, in most of his writings. In the article ‘Ein zurückhaltender Realismus’, Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie 23 (1976): 190-97, Chisholm says that there are no Negativa at all in ‘Plato’s heaven’.

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