

Judgment: Act and Object

An Introduction by Brian Ball

After many years in the philosophical wilderness, judgment is enjoying something of a resurgence. Traditionally, it has been a central subject of philosophical inquiry. Not only was it discussed by ancient (Perala, 2013) and medieval theorists (Brower-Toland, 2007; see also Nuchelmans, 1973, 1980): it played a prominent role in modern philosophy, both early (Nuchelmans, 1984) and late (Moltmann and Textor, 2017);¹ and indeed, as recently as the early, and even mid-twentieth century, philosophers such as Bertrand Russell (1910, 1912, 1913/1984) and Peter Geach (1957) devoted themselves to developing theories of judgment. In the late twentieth century, however, the topic fell out of favour, with belief becoming the primary target of investigation in this area of philosophical psychology: for instance, ‘belief’ and ‘propositional attitude’ both get lengthy entries in the index of W.V.O. Quine’s enormously influential (1960) book, *Word and Object*; ‘judgment’, by contrast, does not figure.

It is an interesting question why this recent historical situation should have arisen. Was the decline of judgment due to the influence of behaviourism (e.g. Skinner, 1953) and a concomitant emphasis on overt actions (cf. Ryle, 1949)? Or did the philosophical methodology of the ‘linguistic turn’ (cf. Rorty, 1967) direct attention to attitude ascriptions, rather than the attitudes themselves, somehow thereby privileging belief over judgment? Perhaps it was the direct influence of Quine (himself influenced by David Hume - notable amongst the early moderns for treating explicitly of belief rather than judgment) that accounts for the shift in attention. Whatever the reasons – themselves worthy of investigation – what is important here is that the recent neglect of judgment is over.²

The present volume aims to contribute to our understanding of both judgment itself, and the modern history of its philosophy. On the one hand, the notion of judgment appears to be central to any serious intellectual engagement with our own cognitive abilities, and a deeper understanding of it promises to

¹ Obviously, Descartes, Locke, Spinoza, and Leibniz all have accounts of judgment that figure prominently in their work; Kant made it explicitly the subject of one of his *Critiques*; and Hegel also engaged the issue. Likewise, Brentano and Frege discuss judgment at length, as does Brentano’s follower, Twardowski. All of these theorists’ work are discussed in the present volume.

² Two recent debates in particular have seen the notion return to prominence. The first (see e.g. Boyle, 2011; Moran, 2001; A. Peacocke, 2017; C. Peacocke, 2008; Shah and Velleman, 2005; Silins, 2012) surrounds the nature of self-knowledge, and in particular, the so-called ‘transparency’ of belief (cf. Evans, 1982) and, to some extent, other mental states (Byrne, 2011; Moore, 1903). The issue here is that of explaining the ‘peculiar and privileged access’ (Byrne, 2005) we have to our own mental states in general, and to our beliefs in particular: one suggestion has been that we can make progress on this by considering how we know what we are doing when we act (cf. Anscombe, 1957); and accordingly, the act of judgment, and its relation to belief, have come under investigation. The second debate is quite different in character. It derives from a perceived failure to have resolved an issue with which Russell (1903) grappled, namely that of the unity of the proposition (Linsky, 1992) – and, more generally, to develop an adequate account of the metaphysics of these objects of our attitudes. Recently, a number of authors (e.g. Hanks, 2015; King, 2007; Moltmann, 2013; Soames, 2010) have looked to illuminate this issue by appeal to the relation between these objects and certain associated acts, including judgment in particular (see also Moltmann and Textor, 2017). Some of the issues and findings from these debates will be discussed below, along with those of two recent book-length treatments of the subject (Sosa, 2015) and its history (Martin, 2006). Finally, I should also mention a pair of recent collections of essays on related matters, namely, those of Textor (2013) and van der Schaar (2013).

illuminate a range of issues of philosophical interest, including (but not limited to) the nature and acquisition of concepts (Geach, 1957: sections 5-11), the explanation of action (Sosa, 2015: 67-68), the character of self-knowledge,³ the metaphysics of truth and truth-bearers⁴ - even the natures of moral sentiments and aesthetic appreciation (cf. Kant, 1790/2000; Blackburn, this volume) – some of which will be touched on in this volume. On the other hand, our predecessors in the history of philosophy have many insightful, sometimes neglected, things to teach us as we are developing and applying theories of judgment: and new light can be shed on that very history through a consideration of our contemporary discussions of the issues they tackled; thus, both philosophers and historians of philosophy can benefit, in a two-way interaction, from the kind of engagement with the philosophy of judgment and its history offered here.⁵

Before proceeding further, it will be helpful, so as to focus our discussion, to say a few words by way of delineation of our topic. To this end, consider the following passage from the final chapter of William Golding's (1954) novel, *The Lord of the Flies*:

Ralph listened. He... had thought he heard sounds of pursuit. But the hunters had only sneaked into the fringes of the greenery.... He had even glimpsed one of them, striped brown, black, and red, and had judged that it was Bill. But really, thought Ralph, this was not Bill. This was a savage whose image refused to blend with that ancient picture of a boy in shorts and shirt. (Golding, 1954: chapter 12)

In this passage, Golding reports that his protagonist, Ralph, had made a particular judgment (to the effect that a certain hunter he had seen was a particular boy of his acquaintance) before changing his mind (on perhaps somewhat dubious metaphysical grounds). What is pertinent here is that Ralph is reported as having arrived at a kind of doxastic, or epistemic decision regarding what is (or was) the case (i.e. regarding the truth of some matter); he is not, by contrast, reported as resolving a practical deliberation concerning what to do. It is this kind of theoretical judgment that we are primarily interested in here; though we will also have occasion to touch, very briefly, on its relation to practical judgment (see e.g. Hanna, 2016).

With this in mind, we can perhaps say that (such theoretical) judgment is a mental act (Geach, 1957) that is directed towards an intentional object (Brentano, 1874). Thus, like assertion, for example, it is an *act* - something done, or performed,⁶ and whose performance is an occurrence; and it has an *object* - so that something is judged, when one judges, just as something is asserted, when one asserts. Unlike assertion, however, judgment is a *mental* phenomenon – and in this respect it is like the mental *states* of belief and desire (which, arguably, are also object-directed), or indeed sensations like pleasure and pain (which,

³ See previous note.

⁴ Again, see note 2.

⁵ One caveat: as I hinted at the beginning of this paragraph, the historical engagement of this volume is limited to the modern period. There are two things to say about this. First, much contemporary philosophy engages only with its very recent history, dating back to Russell and Frege – yet there is much to be learned from both early and late modern theorists that bears directly on current debates. In this respect my co-editor and I are encouraging increased historical engagement. Second, the modern debates are, in many respects, easier for contemporary theorists to get to grips with and learn from than ancient and medieval ones, with both positions and terminology being more familiar. And, of course, a single volume can only do so much.

⁶ Not necessarily intentionally – see below for further discussion.

arguably, are not). Or so it has been suggested; and these are at least useful hypotheses from which to launch our discussion.

I begin with a discussion of the act of judgment. I then consider the credentials of the act-object analysis, before turning to the nature of the object. Along the way I mention some of the key moments in the history of the philosophy of judgment, and introduce the papers that comprise this volume.

The Act of Judgment

What does it mean to say that judgment is a mental act? Geach, in his (1957) book *Mental Acts*, has surprisingly little to say by way of definition of his titular notion. He writes:

My own use of the term "mental act" may be explained, sufficiently for present purposes, as follows. In historical or fictional narrative there occur reports, not only of what human beings overtly said and did, but also of what they thought, how they felt, what they saw and heard, and so on; I shall call the latter kind of reports "reports of mental acts". (Geach, 1957: 1)

And, by way of general introduction, that is all he says. Thus, mental acts are elucidated only indirectly, through a consideration of the linguistic constructions used for their attribution; and, even then, the characterization is given by way of examples. While this may suffice for us to latch on to the target phenomena, it does not help us to get a deeper understanding of what, if anything, makes the label ‘act’ appropriate in this context. A little later Geach does say something more informative (though not completely general), namely that ‘acts of judgment... are plainly episodic – have a position in a time-series’ (1957: 9). This, it seems, means (at least roughly) that they are events in something like Davidson’s (1967) sense of being particular occurrences.⁷ And much the same could reasonably be said of other mental acts (in the sense hinted at by Geach above). But this will still not serve to distinguish the mental acts from any other mental episodes there might be.⁸ What more is required for an act than an occurrence?

Christopher Peacocke addresses a similar question in chapter 7 of his (2008) book, *Truly Understood*: ‘Within the class of mental events,’ he asks, ‘what makes an event a mental action’ (2008: 249)? He introduces his answer by way of an example, noting that we may imagine a given piece of music deliberately, as a result of our conscious efforts, or it may come to us entirely ‘unbidden’ (2008: 249). In the first case, he suggests, the imagining ‘constitutively involves a trying’ (2008: 249), whereas in the second it does not: moreover, it is precisely this that delineates the class of mental actions (2008: 249) on his view; and he includes judgments in his list of such actions (2008: 245).⁹ We must be careful here though: while I have been concerned with mental *acts*, Peacocke speaks of mental *actions* - and although these might be thought to be the same class of occurrences, it is not clear that they are; indeed, if effortless, unintentional imaginings are mental acts,¹⁰ it seems clear that they are not. In any case, I am now in a

⁷ Whether they are also events in Helen Steward’s (2000) sense of entities having temporal parts (in contrast with states which are wholly present when present) is another question: perhaps, for instance, they are processes as understood by Rowland Stout (2016; cf. Steward, 2012, 2013, 2015). (This issue may be related to the strange temporal profile of judgments noted by Geach (1957: 104-106) and discussed by Matthew Soteriou (2007).)

⁸ Note that Geach’s own account suggests there might not be.

⁹ Here is that (non-exhaustive) list of mental acts in its entirety: decidings; judgments; acceptings; attendings to something or other; calculatings; reasonings; tryings (2008: 249).

¹⁰ As they are, according to Brentano (1874), being what he calls ‘presentations’.

position to answer the question with which I began this section: in calling something a mental act, I do not mean that it is an action that constitutively involves a trying; rather, I mean that it involves an activity of the mind. What precisely this amounts to is itself a question that stands in need of further investigation: but as a first approximation - indeed, one that will suffice for our purposes here – let me simply say that an activity of the mind consists in the exercise, or manifestation, of some mental capacity.¹¹

But is judgment not only a mental act, but also, as Peacocke claims, an (intentional) action? Matthew Boyle (2009) has a very useful discussion, which sheds light on at least some of the issues here – though it is framed primarily (though not exclusively) in the vocabulary of belief, rather than judgment. Boyle notes that there is something of a dilemma facing theorists in this area. On the one hand, our beliefs seem to be, in some sense, under our control – for instance, we are held responsible for them, much as we might be held responsible for our actions, in at least the sense that we can be expected to give reasons, or justifications, for them.¹² But on the other hand, we cannot simply ‘decide to believe’ (cf. Williams, 1970) in the way that we can decide to perform voluntary actions such as raising our hands, if and when we so desire – and so it seems that our beliefs are not under our control after all. The theorist must capture what is right about each of these apparently conflicting insights. Boyle’s own solution is to suggest that ‘the notion of rational activity is broader than the notion of voluntary rational action: the latter stands to the former as species to genus’ (2009: 144); and belief, he claims, belongs to that broader category, thus vindicating the initial thought that it is under our control, while also respecting the (it turns out, only) apparently conflicting point that we cannot believe at will.

Of course, this does not speak directly to the question of whether judging is a voluntary action, rather than some lesser form of mental act; but it does seem to make room for the thought that it might be under voluntary control even if it is not undertaken entirely at our discretion. And this is important since a number of philosophers have wanted to allow some role for the will to play in explaining judgment and belief. René Descartes (1642), for instance, famously held that error is possible, despite God’s (existing, creating us, and) being no deceiver, because we exercise our unlimited will in judging matters that extend beyond our limited understanding. Moreover, he maintained that judgment is an exercise of the will, even in those cases in which the understanding presents us with ‘clear and distinct’ ideas to judge. Thomas Hobbes, of course, objected to Descartes’ invocation of the will in this context, on the grounds that there are many things one cannot, and other things one cannot but, believe (cf. Williams, 1978: 161). And Bernard Williams notes that Descartes’ view raises the prospect of ‘someone who had no evidence whether *p* was true deciding at will to believe that *p*’ (1978: 161).

Whether Descartes was or was not this kind of outlandish voluntarist about belief and judgment (cf. Grant, 1976; O’Hear, 1979), the second point above raises an interesting and distinct worry for volitional accounts of judgment. Williams puts the concern (already raised by Hobbes) as follows: ‘If the evidence is overwhelming, and continues to seem so despite the maximum critical activity, there seems no room left

¹¹ This is perhaps only roughly right. In particular, the proposal here seems to allow that sensation and perception will count as mental acts. (Thanks to Chris Peacocke for drawing this to my attention.) That is, of course, a highly controversial consequence: though it is not without its advocates (see e.g. Kalderon, 2017, who argues that perception is active); and of course, as noted above, it would appear from Geach’s (1957) characterization that it may have been an intended feature of his view.

¹² Of course, it is often said that ‘everyone is entitled to their opinion’: but this might be thought to add more grist to Boyle’s mill; for the notion of entitlement is one that suggests that we are operating within the realm of responsibility.

for the notion of decision at all.’ (Williams, 1978: 165) That is, if, on the basis of the deliverances of the understanding, ‘I can see [that a given proposition] is true – there is nothing else I have to do in order to believe it: I already believe it. The will has nothing to do which the understanding has not already done.’ (1978: 168) In his contribution to this volume, Peacocke addresses a related issue, though in connection with some remarks of Frege’s: he asks how it can be that an inference, made on the basis of the recognition that a certain primitive logical principle is valid, can be rationally justified. The puzzle arises because the principle in question is primitive, yet our recognition of its truth cries out for explanation if it is to be regarded as rationally justified. The solution, as Peacocke sees it, requires acknowledging that the acceptance of the principle is itself an action undertaken for a reason: he locates the reason in an intellectual-seeming; and he claims that this is delivered on the basis of our understanding of the notions involved.

Obviously, I do not take myself to have resolved the issue of whether judgment is a voluntary, intentional action here, but only to have given some indication of how investigation of it might be fruitfully pursued. Nevertheless, I turn now to a quite distinct cluster of issues surrounding the act of judgment, namely how it relates to other intentional states and acts, such as belief, knowledge, wondering, and assertion. To address these issues, it will be useful to have to hand some fairly concrete models of what judgment might be: we will consider two. The first is due to Ernest Sosa, who aims, in his (2015) book, *Judgment and Agency*, ‘to develop and defend a metaphysical account of judgment as an exercise of agency’ (in the words of Ram Neta, 2015). More specifically, Sosa ‘take[s] judgment that *p* to be a certain sort of *alethic* affirmation, *in the endeavor to get it right on [the question] whether *p**’ (Sosa, 2015: 52, emphasis original). This proposal stands in need of commentary.

First, note that on Sosa’s view judgment is a kind of *alethic* affirmation. Sosa contrasts this with pragmatic affirmation, which aims (for instance) at instilling confidence to enhance performance (2015: 52) – e.g. saying ‘you can do it’ to oneself when competing at sport. The idea here appears to be that (theoretical) judgment, as it is sometimes said, ‘aims at truth’ (cf. Williams, 1970), whereas the promotion of confidence does not; and it is, it might be thought accordingly,¹³ correctly undertaken only if the proposition judged is true.¹⁴ Second, Sosa says ‘a certain sort’ of alethic affirmation because he thinks that when one guesses that *p*, one does not judge that *p*, yet one engages in alethic affirmation in the endeavor to get it right on the question whether *p*. Accordingly, judging that *p* requires more: in particular, it requires ‘[a]ffirmation in the endeavor to answer correctly *and also competently, reliably enough, even aptly*’ (2015: 55). This claim requires elucidation. According to Sosa, some acts, or performances, have objectives, or aims. An archer’s shot, for instance, aims at its target: moreover, it ‘might be accurate by hitting its target; it might be skillful or adroit [with or without being accurate]; and, finally, it might be *apt*: accurate *because* adroit’ (2015: 1). Now, on Sosa’s virtue theoretic approach to epistemology, for a belief to constitute knowledge, it must meet the ‘triple-A’ (2015: 1) standard of ‘accuracy, adroitness, and aptness’ (2015: 1): in other words, it must be true, i.e. accurate, *because* the result of the exercise of a capacity for such belief. Given this background, Sosa’s proposal seems to be that to judge that *p* is to affirm that *p* in the attempt to achieve knowledge on the question whether *p*.

¹³ Though see Shah and Velleman (2005), who argue that the fact that belief is subject to a truth norm is not to be explained in terms of its regulation for, i.e. its aiming at, the truth.

¹⁴ It is this which has been held to give rise to explain our inability, discussed above, to simply believe at will (cf. Williams, 1970).

I will say more about Sosa's proposal in due course. But first let us consider an alternative account of judgment which strikes me as worthy of consideration. This second proposal is inspired by Timothy Williamson's (1990/2013) contention that discrimination – the act whereby one distinguishes things – is the activation of knowledge of distinctness. On Williamson's view, in other words, the act of discriminating one thing (*a*) from another (*b*) is the activation of knowledge that they are distinct (i.e. of the knowledge that $a \neq b$). More generally, then, one might take the acknowledgment that *p* to be the activation of knowledge that *p*.¹⁵ And perhaps in a similar vein, but more generally still, it might be said that judgment is the activation of belief. Call this the Belief Activation view.

Like Sosa's view, the Belief Activation view requires some elaboration. First, it seems plausible that we can judge something to be the case when it is not in fact the case: in other words, unlike acknowledgment (as described here), judgment is not factive; that *S judges that p* does not entail that *p*. The current proposal reflects this. Second, belief, like knowledge, is a state: indeed, it is a mental state – as is knowledge according to Williamson (2000), though we need not enter into that further controversial issue here (cf. Fricker, 2009; Nagel, 2013); thus, the proposal is that judgment is the activation of a mental state. What does this involve? In some cases, according to this view, judgment may just be the process of belief formation (cf. Hanks, 2015: 6). But it need not always be: for in other cases one might judge that *p*, thereby reaffirming one's antecedent belief that *p*; in which case the judgment does not produce the belief (which pre-existed it). Nonetheless, it seems that one cannot judge that *p* without the result being an *active* or *occurrent* (as opposed to dispositional – see Schwitzgebel, 2015: section 2.1) belief that *p*: accordingly, judgment is better regarded as the activation, not formation, of belief.^{16,17}

In this connection, it is perhaps worth mentioning the view of Kazimierz Twardowski (1912), according to which, in general, for any given action there is something distinct from it, namely its product, to which it gives rise. On Twardowski's view, some such products are enduring (for example, the letters which result from writings) while others are not, lasting only so long as the corresponding action is under way. Moreover, Twardowski maintains that the products of judgments, which are actions, are certain non-enduring mental items, also called 'judgments', in a distinct but related sense (cf. Betti, 2017: section 3.2). If we identify active beliefs with such judgments-construed-as-products, it seems that the Belief Activation view accords with Twardowski's position. In any case, Twardowski's views on judgment are discussed further in Peter Simons' contribution to this volume, and serve as the springboard for Friederike Moltmann's paper as well.

A second point is also worth making in connection with the Belief Activation view. Williamson (2000) has argued that belief and assertion are subject to knowledge norms – that one must believe or assert that *p* only if one knows that *p*. If the Belief Activation view is correct, then it might be expected that judgment is subject to a constitutive norm too. In particular, it might be hypothesized that judgment is subject to a norm of acknowledgment: one must judge that *p* only if one (thereby) acknowledges that *p*. In other words, acknowledgment, in the factive sense employed here, is the standard of correctness¹⁸ of judgment:

¹⁵ This will not be so for Frege (1893/1964), who defines judgment in terms of the acknowledgement of truth – where this is more like the kind of acknowledgement one engages in when greeting a person!

¹⁶ One might compare here Grice (1989) on assertion under examination: one does not, in such a circumstance, intend to *induce* belief in one's examiner; but one does intend to *activate* it.

¹⁷ This allows the Belief Activation view to accommodate the thought – apparently opposed to a conception of judgment as belief formation – that judgment can be the *expression* of belief (cf. Boyle, 2009: 130; Sosa, 2015: 167).

¹⁸ Not accuracy!

to judge properly is to acknowledge. Now, on Sosa's account, judgment is affirmation in the endeavor to achieve knowledge: thus, according to it too, it seems, judgment will be subject to this norm of acknowledgement. This constitutes a point of agreement between the two views.

By Maria van der Schaar's account (this volume), this also accords, at least roughly, with Leibniz's view, on which judgment can yield either belief or knowledge; but it conflicts with Locke's account, on which we judge only when we must deal in (evidential) probabilities (as with 'opinion', or belief), rather than certainties (as with knowledge). In effect, then, on Locke's view belief entails the absence of knowledge: and judgment necessarily results in belief; so, judgment does not, and indeed cannot – nor therefore should it – result in knowledge. From our contemporary, post-Gricean point of view, however, the premise that belief entails ignorance is problematic: better to explain any failure to use 'belief' when 'knowledge' will do, not in terms of semantic entailment, but rather in pragmatic terms (Grice, 1989). Leibniz, it seems, and not Locke, was right.

A third point to note in Sosa's account of judgment is the central role played by questions. Sosa says, 'Once a question is given... there arises the familiar threefold issue: affirmation, denial, suspension' (2015: 44). I will discuss both questions, and our attitudes towards them, in more detail below, but notice that this seems to make the *theoretical* question of whether *p* appear to the subject under the guise of the *practical* question of what to *do* when confronted with the proposition that *p*: and indeed, Sosa claims that 'in cases of conscious judgment... [t]he epistemic agent faces a choice among three intentional actions' (2015: 44), namely, those mentioned above. Thus – and this is now a fourth point - for Sosa, judgment is intentional, not only in the sense that it is object directed, but also in the further sense that it is 'agential' (2015: 53) and 'volitional' (2015: 54);¹⁹ in short, it is an action in Peacocke's sense. Indeed, what is an endeavor - whether to answer a question, or otherwise - if not something that constitutively involves a trying?

The Belief Activation view contrasts with Sosa's position on both fronts. In particular, regarding the latter, there is no suggestion that belief activation must be an intentional action – though it is open to the advocate of the view to maintain that this is, in fact, how belief is activated (cf. the discussion of Twardowski above). But equally, while Sosa requires, in effect, that one wonder whether *p* - or at least 'endeavor to answer' this question - in order to judge that *p*, the Belief Activation hypothesis imposes no such requirement.

Does judging that *p* require this? One small concern is as follows. One might, it seems, wonder whether there is still a cookie left, and then, on discovering that there is not, proceed to wonder who took the cookie from the cookie jar. As a result of further investigation – an endeavor to find out – one might then judge that Cookie Monster did. But it is not obvious that in such a case one must first wonder whether Cookie Monster took the cookie: perhaps it simply occurs to one that he did, and one regards this as the most plausible answer to the question of who did. If this is indeed possible, then Sosa's proposal suffers from at least a problem of detail. Still, a good question to ask is whether judgment is initiated by having any 'interrogative' or 'question-directed' attitude (Friedman, 2013) at all. Must we entertain some

¹⁹ It is a little unclear exactly what this amounts to. One hypothesis is that it means that judgment is a personal, rather than sub-personal, level act (cf. Dennett, 1969), and under voluntary control, respectively. This raises further avenues of exploration in connection with the question of whether judgment is a mental action – but, due to limitations of space, they will be left to one side here.

question in order to judge a proposition to be true? I will not pursue the issue further here: though I note, again, that Leibniz appears to have thought so (see van der Schaar, this volume).

A final point of comparison requires further comment on one of the fundamental aspects of Sosa's account of judgment. As we have seen, on Sosa's view, judgment is a kind of (alethic) affirmation. 'Affirmation' of this alethic variety, says Sosa, 'can be either public, through assertion, or private, to oneself' (2015: 66). This suggests that an affirmation might take the form of 'assent' (2015: 52; cf. Quine, 1960), revealed in e.g. the use of a sentence to make an assertion, or in certain sorts of responses to others' uses of that sentence (such as saying, 'I agree') or related expressions (for instance, answering 'yes' to the corresponding yes-no question). And of course, assent so understood can be internalized, taking place, as it were, in the privacy of one's own thoughts. Now, assent in this sense is a relation to a sentence, not a proposition: but we might take judgment, as Sosa understands it, to be the relation one bears to a proposition when one assents to a sentence which expresses it; and if so, it will not be an act that is ever performed by non-linguistic animals (just as Sosa himself maintains).²⁰

Such a view of judgment is certainly not unprecedented: for instance, Geach (1957: sections 17-23) endorses what he calls the 'analogical' theory of the concept of judgment, on which it is grasped, or exercised, on analogy with saying; and he seems to think this requires us to deny that animals make judgments.²¹ By contrast, there is nothing built into the Belief Activation view which requires tying judgment to linguistic activity or ability (though it might, of course, be added to it, by way of the theory of belief). In this respect, Sosa's proposal is more restrictive: affirmation is a species of the broader genus delineated by the Belief Activation view; assenting to a sentence is just one way of activating a belief.

I do not intend to resolve the issue of which of the two proposals considered here is more plausible, nor, for that matter, to answer any of the questions I have raised about the act of judgment. And, of course, much more could be said, even by way of introduction. Nevertheless, I turn now to consider the act-object analysis hypothesized above.

The Act-Object Analysis

Is judgment best analyzed as involving a relational, act-object structure? Some initial support for this proposal comes from the semantics of sentences used to report the act. Like beliefs and assertions, judgments can, on the face of it, be reported with sentences of the form '*S* Vs that *p*': and a standard analysis of such sentences suggests that what replaces '*S*' names an individual agent, or subject; the verb replacing '*V*' picks out a two-place relation; and the that-clause designates the object of that relation. In particular, then, we might think that the verb 'said', for instance - at least when used in such constructions (rather than in direct discourse) - stands for the speech act of asserting; the verb 'thinks' picks out the psychological attitude of believing; and the verb 'judges' denotes the mental act of judging. On this

²⁰ One might compare here Williams' (1970) discussion of the relation of belief to assertion. Williams holds that the most straightforward expression of a belief that *p* is an assertion that *p*. But he allows that non-linguistic animals have beliefs in 'a somewhat conventionalized sense' (1970: 140); and he denies that asserting that *p* is either necessary or - and he especially emphasizes this - sufficient for believing that *p*, stressing that one can assert insincerely. And it is, perhaps surprisingly, here that he finds a need for the will in connection with belief.

²¹ Williams (1970) thinks that the notion of belief can be illuminated through its relation to assertion (see previous note); but he explicitly acknowledges that non-linguistic animals can have beliefs. Whether someone sympathetic to this view should extend this line of thought to the case of judgment is, of course, another matter.

semantic approach, it turns out that judgment, like other intentional acts and attitudes, consists in a relation between a subject and an object.

But some might question the act-object account of judgment and its ilk. Uriah Kriegel (2008), for instance, has argued that intentional acts and states in general do not constitutively involve a relation between a subject and an object (though they may do so contingently²²): they consist simply of mentally acting in, or being, certain *ways* (Kriegel, 2008: 84). Kriegel calls this view ‘adverbialism’ about intentionality: but despite its name, it is not so much a linguistic thesis as a metaphysical one; it concerns the nature of intentionality, not – or at least not primarily – the means by which we describe it. In any case, according to Kriegel, intentional acts and states are monadic characteristics of individuals, not dyadic relations between them and certain further entities, their objects.

Nevertheless, an advocate of a view of this kind will need some account of the semantics of reports of intentional acts and states. And he or she might, it seems, accept that such reports have a relational semantic structure (as above), while insisting that the (dyadic) relation expressed by the verb is not that of assertion, belief, or judgment itself – for, after all, he or she will maintain that no such relations exist! Metaphysically speaking, the adverbialist might say, there are just clusters of (monadic) acts subjects may perform, and states he or she may be in: thus, judging that *p*, judging that *q*, and so on, form a family of related mental acts; and believing that *p*, believing that *q*, etc., on the other, constitute a collection of relevantly similar mental states. In this respect, it might be argued, mental acts and states would be not unlike certain physical features (cf. Field, 1980; Stalnaker, 1984; Matthews, 1994, 2007): for instance, there are many masses, or temperatures, that an object may have; the masses, like the temperatures, form a family of properties (Peacocke, 2015). Of course, we might relate a subject to an object in reporting the act she performs or the state he is in: we might say that she judges that *p* or that he believes that *q*. Similarly, we might relate an object to a number in reporting its mass or temperature: thus, we might say that it has a mass of 21 grams, or that it has a temperature of 99.9 Fahrenheit degrees; and this might be construed as the claim that the object stands in the has-a-mass-in-grams relation to the number 21, or the measures-in-degrees-Fahrenheit relation to the number 99.9. It does not follow that the mass or temperature that we thereby ascribe really consists of a relation to a number: indeed, it seems implausible to suppose that these numbers form integral parts of the properties of having 21 grams of mass or measuring 99.9 degrees Fahrenheit; for, what are intuitively the same features of the object might be measured using different scales, in which case our attributions would relate the object to different numbers – its mass in pounds, for example, and its temperature in Kelvin. Analogously, then, the objects of judgment and belief reports, for instance, are not really constituents of the acts and states in question either, on the view under consideration:²³ and if the verb ‘judges’, for example, expresses a relation, it is

²² It strikes me as too strong to hold, as Kriegel appears to do, that it is merely an accidental matter of contingent fact concerning those intentional acts and states which are in fact object-directed *that* they are so. A more moderate position which would nevertheless allow for some such acts and states to fail to be object-directed would maintain that the constitutive relationship between such acts and states, on the one hand, and objects on the other, is *normative*: intentional acts and states are those which (essentially) *ought* to have objects. To the best of my knowledge, this view has not been explored in the literature.

²³ The advocate of such a view would need an account of the intrinsic natures of the families of acts and states the objects in question (*p*, *q*, etc.) serve to measure, just as advocates of the analogous view have independent accounts of the intrinsic nature of mass and temperature properties. (Thanks to Chris Peacocke.)

not that of judgment (recall, there is no such relation on this view); rather, it is something like the judges-in-a-way-that-can-be-measured-by relation.²⁴

In any case, not everyone accepts the above account of the logical structure of the reports of intentionality. ‘The relation involved in *judging* or *believing* must... be taken to be a relation between several terms, not between two’, according to Russell (1912 [1959]: 125); thus, he took ‘judges’ to be variably polyadic, taking different numbers of arguments in different cases. Ludwig Wittgenstein (1914-1916/1979; 1921/1974), however, worried that the logical form of a belief or judgment should not vary with its subject matter, as it would on this proposal (cf. Geach, 1957: 49). Moltmann (2013) suggests, however, that the verbs in act and attitude reporting constructions are not profitably regarded either as expressing two-place relations between a subject and a single object designated by the complement clause, nor as variably polyadic: rather, on her view, they express relations between the subject, on the one hand, and the plurality of entities designated by the various components of the complement, on the other. Accordingly, she advocates a version of the ‘multiple relation theory’, and judgment turns out to be (at least roughly) an act with not one, but many objects, just as Russell suggested.

I will not attempt to decide which, if any, of these views is correct; in what follows I will simply assume the standard act-object analysis for expository purposes. Having done so, we can ask: What is the nature of the (one) object of judgment? It is this question which will exercise us in the next section.

The Object

What is it that we judge, when we judge? If ‘judgments just are beliefs’, as Trenton Merricks (2009: 211) asks us to suppose, then obviously the objects of the former will be the same as those of the latter. But this assumption seems reasonably safe even on much looser conceptions of the relation between the act and the state such as those discussed above. Contemporary work in this area therefore suggests that the object of judgment, like that of belief, is a (truth-apt) *proposition*.²⁵

This has not, however, always been the accepted view. According to Locke, for instance, ‘whatsoever is the Object of the Understanding when a Man thinks’ (1690/1975: book 1, chapter 1) is an idea, i.e. a certain sort of mind-dependent entity. Moreover, as Williams notes, ‘ideas have been introduced’ in Descartes’ (1642) *Meditations* ‘as ideas of (possible or actual) *things*, as the idea of a triangle, of God, of a chimera, etc.’ (1978: 167). Yet Williams is concerned that

²⁴ Alternatively, the sort of metaphysical account of judgment just sketched might be combined with a semantics that rejects the relationality of the verb ‘judges’ altogether. Indeed, Kriegel may be committed to such a view: for his motivation for adopting adverbialism is to avoid ontological commitment to the more dubious objects of certain intentional states – putative objects of thought (like Pegasus), or states of affairs that don’t obtain (like Hillary’s being President); and this, it seems, cannot be achieved while accepting that there are semantic values for the grammatical objects of judgment reports. To say e.g. that the semantic value of the phrase ‘that the fountain restores youth’ measures the way in which the Ponce de Leon judges is to commit to the existence of that semantic value – or at least, so Kriegel seems to think. Accordingly, Kriegel may be stuck with the so-called ‘orthographic accident’ view (Field, 1978: 32) on which it is, in effect, merely a coincidence that the word ‘judges’ occurs in both (e.g.) ‘judges that grass is green’ and ‘judges that snow is white’. If so, this would be a serious cost of the position.

²⁵ Lewis (1979), by contrast, thinks that the objects of the attitudes in general are properties (some but not all of which are propositional).

it makes no sense to say that one can assent to a thing, or to the idea of a thing. I can assent only to something of the nature of a proposition: one believes, or refuses to believe, that such-and-such is the case. (1978: 167)

In short, ideas, as understood by the early moderns, are not truth-apt:²⁶ yet the objects of belief and (assent or) judgment must be truth-apt; so, their objects cannot be ideas, so understood.²⁷

Compelling as this argument may seem to contemporary ears, it would not have been accepted as sound by Franz Brentano: in particular, he would have rejected the second premise; for '[i]t is the mental act of judging,' on Brentano's view, and 'not its object or content, which is the bearer of truth-values' (Brandl, 2014: introduction). Moreover, for Brentano, what we act on in judgment is always an intentional object. Now, Brentano is at pains to stress that the intentional object which is judged need not be a *thing*: it might, for instance, be what Alexius Meinong later (1904/1960) called an objective, or Wittgenstein (1921/1974) called a state of affairs - such an item as *snow's being white* or *God's existing*. Nevertheless, it *can* be a thing: and accordingly, Brentano would not accept that one cannot assent to, or acknowledge, 'a thing, or the idea of a thing' (in Williams' words): for one does so precisely by taking the thing in question to exist, on his view; and one can certainly accept the existence of a thing. This approach provides a good deal of flexibility in Brentano's theory – something that Mark Textor (this volume) regards as a significant advantage over the (now orthodox) Fregean position.

Brentano also held that the intentional object of any mental phenomenon is contained 'within' (1874/1995: 68) the act. But, as Wolfgang Huemer (2017) says, this led some of his students - who included Sigmund Freud and Edmund Husserl, as well as Meinong and Twardowski - to suggest that the ontological status of intentional objects was unclear. In particular, should they be regarded as objective and mind-independent? Or should the immanence of intentional objects be taken as evidence that Brentano took them to be mind-dependent?²⁸ In any case, Twardowski (1894) drew a distinction between the object of a presentation and its content.²⁹ The former was non-mental. The latter was an inseparable (i.e. abstract) part of the mental act of presentation (and so mind-dependent). This distinction is often said (e.g. by Betti, 2017) to be something like a psychologistic version of Gottlob Frege's (1892) distinction between sense and reference (see below). Be that as it may, it seems that Twardowski was an early advocate of the idea that there are two dimensions of content (cf. Chalmers, 2006).

Daniel Morgan discusses a related issue in his contribution to this volume, arguing against the (currently popular) view that there are two different ways in which a parameter can be relevant to the evaluation of a judgment as correct or incorrect. And Paul Redding, in his contribution, also touches on this issue. Redding's primary aim is to show that, Russell's criticisms notwithstanding, G.W.F. Hegel's approach to (temporal and especially) modal judgments offers an alternative to both the extensionalist (but possibilist) approach (e.g. of David Lewis), and more neo-Aristotelian (actualist) approaches (such as that of Kit Fine),

²⁶ As Frege (1918/1956) effectively noted in his criticism of the correspondence theory of truth.

²⁷ This worry, raised by Williams against Descartes, might equally be pressed against Hume's theory of belief.

²⁸ For what it is worth, the former interpretation strikes me as more plausible, given the influence of Aristotle on Brentano, and the fact that for Aristotle *being* is said in many ways. This opens up the possibility that immanent being is distinct from formal being, without the thing that is, in these two different ways, itself differing, i.e. being mind-dependent in one case, and mind-independent in the other. We might compare, in this respect, the medieval distinction between formal and objective reality that is at play in Descartes.

²⁹ As Betti notes, however, the distinction 'was not new in Twardowski's time' (2017: section 2.1).

that is worthy of consideration (and similar in some ways to the actualist idealism of Nicholas Rescher). Nevertheless, along the way he suggests that for Hegel, tensed judgments (such as *that this rose is red*) are not true since, in Twardowski's terms, their contents can be accurate at one time but not at another: times themselves are, at least roughly speaking, only Twardowskian objects of such judgments; whereas in 'reflective judgments' this contextual parameter is integrated into the content. So Hegel, it seems, on Redding's reading, admits this distinction, while Morgan rejects it (or at least a certain application of it).

All of this aside, the standard view nowadays is that propositions are the objects (or contents³⁰) of belief and judgment, and that these are abstract entities, existing independently of any mental or linguistic act, essentially and intrinsically possessing truth-conditions, and therefore susceptible of truth or falsity. This view, which is widely known to have been advanced by Frege (1918/1956), already makes a mature appearance in the work of Bernhard Bolzano (1837). More specifically, Bolzano makes a key departure from theorists of the early modern period in hypothesizing abstract (hence non-mental) representations in themselves and, as a special case, propositions in themselves; in other words, like Frege he rejects psychologism in favour of platonism about intentional objects in general, and the objects of judgments – propositions – in particular. Moreover, according to Jan Sebestik, 'for Bolzano, propositions are primary, undefined objects, and ideas in themselves... are defined as parts of propositions that are not themselves propositions' (2016: section 5). Propositions, for Bolzano, as for Frege, are *sui generis* abstract objects. That said, Sandra Lapointe's contribution offers a reading of Bolzano which softens his commitment to Platonism.

There are, broadly speaking, three standard versions of this orthodox view. According to a first, Tractarian view, propositions are sets of possible worlds; more specifically, the proposition that *p* is the set of worlds in which *p* is true (Wittgenstein, 1921/1974; Stalnaker, 1984; Lewis, 1986). What are possible worlds? According to David Lewis (1973; 1986), they are spatio-temporally maximal concrete objects: that is, the actual world is a thing, just like us, only bigger, including whatever stands in any space-time relation to us whatsoever; and other possible worlds are similar in kind. Such worlds are so specific, or complete, that they decide the truth-value of any given proposition: if one of them contains e.g. (only) red snow, then the proposition that snow is red is true in that world, and it is false there otherwise; thus, on the Tractarian view, a proposition (such as the proposition that snow is red) can be simply identified with the set of those worlds in which it is true (i.e. the set of worlds containing red snow). On an alternative conception of possible worlds due to Robert Stalnaker (1976; 1984), they are not concrete objects, but abstract properties, or universals: in particular, they are ways the world as a whole might have been; accordingly, non-actual possible worlds can exist, without, for example, any red snow existing (though not at any space-time distance from us). This view of worlds is preferred by many who are inclined to respond to Lewis' view that other concrete universes exist with an 'incredulous stare' (Lewis, 1986: 135): but it does not fundamentally alter the argument for identifying propositions with sets of worlds; and accordingly, those tempted by the Tractarian conception of propositions may wish to endorse it. A second, neo-Russellian view treats propositions as metaphysically complex entities having worldly objects and universals as constituents (Russell, 1904/1980) and structured in a way that mirrors, at least roughly, the syntactic structures of sentences expressing them. And finally, a third, neo-Fregean view differs from the neo-Russellian one only in taking the constituents of propositions to be, not worldly items, such as objects and universals, but rather 'modes of presentation' thereof, or senses (Frege, 1892/1948; 1918/1956).

³⁰ In what follows I'll largely use these terms interchangeably.

It is clear that the three views differ, since they end up individuating propositions differently. An immediate consequence of the Tractarian view, for instance, is that necessarily equivalent propositions are identical. For example, although the proposition *that grass is green and 2+2=4* appears to be about the number 2, while the proposition *that grass is green* does not, they are both true in exactly those worlds in which grass is green (since the proposition *that 2+2=4*, being necessary, is true in every world), and so are both identified with the set of those worlds. Similarly, DeMorgan equivalents are (logically, hence) necessarily equivalent, and so on this view the negation of the disjunction *p or q*, for example, is not distinguished from the conjunction of the negations *not p* and *not q*. On the neo-Russellian proposal, by contrast, the number 2 is a constituent of the proposition *that grass is green and 2+2=4*, but not of the proposition *that grass is green*, which is therefore distinct from it; and similarly, the truth-functional operation of conjunction is a constituent of one, but not the other, of the De Morgan equivalents mentioned above, which accordingly cannot be identical. Finally, on the neo-Fregean view, the proposition *that Hesperus is visible in the evening* is regarded as distinct from the proposition *that Phosphorus is*, since the two involve different modes of presentation of the planet Venus; thus, this third view individuates propositions even more finely than does the second, neo-Russellian one.

Whatever its merits, the orthodoxy (in all its versions) has recently come under attack³¹ (Hanks, 2015; King, 2007; Soames, 2010): in particular, a number of theorists have felt that propositions cannot be *sui generis*, primitively truth-conditional entities, and that they must accordingly be *naturalized* (King, 1994); that is, they must be reduced to, or at least explicated in terms of, entities that are recognized by the natural sciences (such as psychology or linguistics). An alternative view has therefore been gaining traction, on which the object of judgment is dependent upon our cognitive or linguistic activities: perhaps, for example, what one judges when one judges is essentially some type of mental or linguistic act, maybe even a type of judgment; much as what one dances when one dances is essentially some type of dance (Ball, 2011; Husserl, 1903; cf. Moltmann and Textor, 2017: x-xi). And while on the standard view, truth-apt propositions can be the objects not only of cognitive acts and attitudes, such as judgment, belief, and knowledge, but also of conative ones, such as desire and intention, so that one and the same thing can be e.g. believed and desired, this is up for grabs on the alternative approach.³² In what follows, I will briefly discuss three versions of this alternative conception of the objects of judgment.

On Jeffrey King's (2007, 2014) view, propositions are ontologically bound up with sentences of natural languages. As Peter Hanks (2014) puts it, 'Very roughly, if you start with a sentence, add the semantic values of the words in that sentence, and then take out the words, you will end up with one of [the] facts' (in the sense of Wittgenstein, 1921/1974) that King identifies with propositions. For instance, the proposition *that Phelps swims* consists of Phelps himself and the property of swimming, bound together by a certain 'propositional relation' (King, 2014: 50) – which, in this case, is the relation a thing stands in to a property just in case the thing and the property are the semantic contents of words themselves standing in a syntactic relation – the 'sentential relation' (King, 2014: 50) – which we understand as expressing ascription, or predication. (Propositions with different numbers or kinds of constituents receive different but similar treatments.) As a result, propositions exist, and possess truth-conditions, on

³¹ Though see Merricks (2015) and Speaks (2014) for two interesting recent defenses, each involving interesting (but different) departures from the standard accounts discussed above. Unfortunately, limitations of space preclude discussion of these works.

³² That said, Merricks (2015) defends the orthodox account of propositions: but, interestingly, his (2009) paper argues that while belief is a propositional attitude, desire (for example) is not – and its object is not truth apt.

King's view, only because there is linguistic activity; and his view might, accordingly, fit nicely with an account of judgment on which this act is intimately related to that of sentential assent.

Scott Soames (2010, 2014), by contrast, holds that propositions are certain mental (specifically, cognitive) event types. In particular, for Soames, the proposition that some particular object *o* is red

is simply the minimal event type in which an arbitrary agent predicates being red of o. This event type is representational because every conceivable instance of it is one in which an agent represents something as being a certain way. (Soames, 2014: 96)

Moreover, the event type is true if, and only if, the thing is the way it is represented to be by the agent in question; and accordingly, the proposition itself is truth-apt. (Soames' account is then extended to more complex propositions.) Such an account would obviously account more readily for judgment and belief on the part of non-linguistic animals, if that should be desired.

Hanks (2015) takes a similar view of propositions to Soames, treating them as types of acts of predication.³³ One crucial difference, however, is that, as Indrek Reiland puts it, 'Hanks thinks that predication is *forceful*... [whereas] Soames thinks [it] is *neutral*' (2017: 133, emphasis original). 'A central component of [the orthodox] Fregean picture', says Hanks, 'is the distinction between content and force' (2015: 9): on this view, for instance, 'there is nothing distinctively assertive about propositional contents' (2015: 9).³⁴ But Hanks thinks 'we should reject... the content-force distinction' (2015: 9). Contents, he maintains, 'are individuated using concepts of force. I think there are assertive, interrogative, and imperative' (2015: 9) contents, he proclaims.

It is certainly odd (at best) to attribute truth or falsity to a question, or a command. But one need not reject the content-force distinction to avoid doing so. Thus, while John Searle (1969), for example, held that the *only* difference between e.g. making an assertion and asking a (yes-no) question is one of force, one might acknowledge that these acts differ in force, while maintaining that there is *also* a difference in their contents - and not because a difference in the former is *ipso facto* a difference in the latter. Rather, one might hold that the objects in question differ in their logico-metaphysical character, much as individuals (which, arguably, are the contents of names) differ from universals (arguably the contents of predicates), and that this explains the fact that they are not truth-apt. More specifically, one might think that the object of an asking is a question, and that of a command is something else again, which Peter Strawson suggests we call an 'imperative' (2000: 206). Semanticists have found it useful to regard the former not as propositions, but as *sets* of propositions - namely, those that answer the question (cf. Hanks, 2009: 147-148):³⁵ while some (e.g. Portner, 2004) have suggested that the latter are certain properties (namely, acts);³⁶ and in neither case are the entities individuated by their forces.

³³ He remains non-committal on the question of whether predication is primarily a linguistic or mental act, or neither.

³⁴ This is what Hanks calls the 'constitutive' version of the distinction. I set aside the 'taxonomic' version.

³⁵ Thus, if propositions are sets of possible worlds, questions are sets of sets of possible worlds. These (former) sets are (typically taken to be) mutually exclusive and exhaustive (so that no world belongs to more than one set, and every world belongs to at least one): accordingly, if the question admits of a 'yes' or 'no' answer (as the question *whether p* does), it partitions the set of all worlds into two subsets (those in which *p* and those in which *not p*).

³⁶ An alternative approach to the objects of commands might treat them as differing from those of assertions not in whether they have subjects, but rather in some way that concerns the differing semantic contributions of finite vs non-finite verb forms. For instance, it might be held that in e.g. 'John told Mary to go to the store', the embedded

Two sorts of consideration might be thought to support a view of this kind. First, just as one can express a proposition without thereby asserting it (cf. Geach, 1965) – say, when it is embedded under an operator such as negation or disjunction – so too, one can express a question without thereby asking it. (If Jules asks, ‘Where’s Catherine?’, it seems that Jim expresses the same question, but does not ask it, in reporting that Jules asked where Catherine is.) Second, just as one can swear that something is the case, or assert, conjecture, or guess that it is, and in doing so apparently express the very same proposition, though one puts it forward less forcefully in each successive case, so too it seems that the difference between commanding someone to do something and requesting it of them, is one of force, not content.

In any case, Hanks’ position is clear: different acts have different objects, distinguished by their forces. More specifically, on Hanks’ view, when one judges that an object has a certain property, one predicates that property of that object – and this combines the two in a way that carries assertive force. By contrast, when one asks whether it does, one combines the property with the object in a different way. The result in the former case is truth-apt, while in the latter case it is not. And Hanks thinks that, when a sentence which could be used to make an assertion is, for instance, embedded under disjunction, we thereby cancel its force – and that is why we do not assert the disjuncts when we assert a disjunction, even though the predication which combines the elements of the propositions together into a structured whole is itself, and contra Soames, forceful. These issues, in their current context, are pursued in further detail by Indrek Reiland in his contribution to this volume; and equally, they are discussed in connection with Spinoza by Martin Lin.

Much more could, of course, be said: but I hope that what I have said will do, for present purposes, by way of survey of the different accounts of the objects of judgments. In particular, though this was not always so, most nowadays will hold that the objects of judgment are propositions. Some maintain that propositions are structured, while others deny this (advocating the Tractarian view); amongst the former, some (neo-Russellians) take propositional constituents to be worldly items, while others (neo-Fregeans) take them to be modes of presentation thereof. But perhaps most importantly, there are orthodox positions on which the objects of judgment are ontologically independent of both mental and linguistic activity; and there are alternatives on which they are not - including views on which the objects themselves carry the force of the act.

Concluding Remarks... and Questions

In this introduction I have noted, but not resolved, a number of issues surrounding judgment, both the act and its object. By way of conclusion, I would like to summarize them in the form of a list of questions which a complete theory of judgment should address. I will also raise two final issues which we were not previously in a position to discuss.

As we have seen, concerning the act of judgment we can fruitfully ask:

clause, ‘Mary to go to the store’ names (something that can be modelled by) a set of worlds, whereas ‘Mary is going to the store’ expresses (something that can be modelled by) a pair of a set of worlds and a world (the one of the context of use). This difference is, arguably, of a logico-metaphysical character, rather than being one of force. That said, the issue might be thought to be somewhat subtle. The key point for present purposes is that one need not spell out the details of the proposal in the way that Paul Porter (2004) does.

- (1) Is judgment an action (in Peacocke's sense of something that constitutively involves a trying)? That is, is it (in Sosa's terms) agential and volitional? Or is it simply the exercise, or manifestation of some mental capacity (and judging an activity)?
- (2) How does judgment relate to belief and knowledge? For instance, is it (the process of) belief formation, or (a matter of) belief expression? Is it the activation of belief in general, or is it rather a particular species of this broad genus? And is it subject to a norm of acknowledgement?
- (3) How does judgment relate to wondering, or asking a question? Is the latter necessary for the former?
- (4) How is judgment related to assertion? Is the former to be understood on analogy with the latter? If so, does this preclude non-linguistic animals from performing judgments?

Two further issues arise, however, in connection with the act of judgment – issues which I did not raise previously, but which I think it worthwhile to consider. These issues concern the relation between judgment and the simpler act of conception, or representation; and once again, they are perhaps best approached through a consideration of Brentano's views.

As is well-known, according to Brentano, intentionality is the mark of the mental, so that all and only mental phenomena exhibit 'direction toward an object' (1874/1995: 68); that is, mental phenomena, on his view, 'are either presentations or they are based upon presentations' (1874/1995: 65), where the latter include judgments, and 'the phenomena of love and hate' (1874/1995: 150). Indeed, on Brentano's view aesthetics is the discipline concerned with presentations, logic deals with judgments, and the phenomena of love and hate are the subject matter of ethics. Simon Blackburn, in his contribution to this volume, finds support for his view that there can be, and often are, reasons which justify the moral and aesthetic sentiments that underpin our judgments in these areas in Brentano's account of the phenomena of love and hate. In particular, he takes it as uncontested that we may have reasons for action: yet he suggests that Brentano makes a compelling case for the thought that there is a continuum of strengths of feeling on the love/hate spectrum, and indeed a continuum which encompasses not just feeling but willing; but then, Blackburn argues, it is difficult to deny that the feelings too can be rationally justified.

In any case, on Brentano's view, like the phenomena of love and hate, judgment exhibits a polar, or oppositional structure.³⁷ In particular, we have seen that Brentano allows that one can accept an intentional object (as existing): but he also held that one can reject it, by denying its existence; that is, he advocated what Johannes Brandl (2014) calls the *polarity thesis*, according to which '[j]udgements are either positive or negative, depending on whether the presented object is accepted as existing, or rejected as fictitious or non-existing' (2014: section 1). Thus, we can ask:

- (5) Are there (irreducibly) negative, as well as positive, judgments?

The orthodox Fregean view, of course, is that there are not. But the idea that there are is not (or not obviously) entirely foreign to the analytic tradition: for instance, Wittgenstein (1921/1974) held that negation is an operator which reverses the sense of a proposition, where this meant its agreement or

³⁷ Hating something, one might think, is the polar opposite of loving it.

disagreement with the various possibilities; and such agreement or disagreement might conceivably be construed as a type of act.³⁸

Brentano clarifies his view that mental phenomena are based upon presentations: ‘By presentation,’ he says, ‘I do not mean that which is presented, but rather the act of presentation’ (1874/1995: 60). Thus, he draws a robust act-object distinction already in the case of the simplest mental phenomena; and he distinguishes the act of presentation from those acts which are based upon it, i.e. those which require its occurrence for theirs.³⁹ This, of course, is now part of the standard, Fregean view of judgment: on the one hand we can entertain a proposition; on the other we may, or may not, endorse it, or judge it to be true. But this relates to another issue, namely, whether judgment is a synthetic act, which unifies disparately given items, a thetic act, which leaves a single given object unchanged, or perhaps even an analytic act, separating out elements, or components, of a single given content.⁴⁰ Thus, for instance, both Locke and the Port Royal logicians appear to have held that judgment is an act of synthesis, bringing together a subject representation and a predicate representation.⁴¹ And Wayne Martin (2006: chapter 3) argues that whereas for Immanuel Kant judgment remains synthetic (as described in Alexandra Newton’s contribution to this volume), for Brentano it is thetic.⁴² Finally, given what we have seen above about his view of propositions, perhaps Bolzano can profitably be regarded as accepting the third possibility, that judgment is an analytic act – one in which ideas in themselves are discerned as constituent parts of propositions in themselves.^{43,44} In any case, we can ask:

(6) Is judgment a synthetic, thetic, or analytic act?

This question seems especially worthy of consideration in the current climate, given that virtually all of the reaction to the (thetic) orthodoxy in recent years has been to suggest that judgment – or, in (e.g.) Soames’ case, the force-neutral act of predication – is a synthetic act. The possibility that the metaphysics of propositions might be illuminated by an alternative way of looking at such acts therefore presents itself.

Having explored the nature of the act – an investigation which has been further extended here, in these concluding remarks - our discussion then led us to consider the act-object analysis of the structure of judgment. And on this subject, but related (in ways that should be apparent) to the previous question, we asked the following, which concerns that analysis:

³⁸ A Wittgensteinian proposition *might* be regarded as a yes-no question (in the sense described above of a set containing two sets of worlds), together with a sense. And Brentano’s polarity thesis plays an important role in his account of negation. Nevertheless, any connections there may be between Wittgenstein’s view and Brentano’s do not seem to have been explored in the literature.

³⁹ As Robin Rollinger (2009) notes, it was unusual, in the nineteenth century, to have a theory of presentations – whereas in contrast, theories of judgment were common at this time.

⁴⁰ The first two terms here are due to Martin (2006); the third is an obvious addition (see below).

⁴¹ Indeed, the view can be traced to Aristotle’s term logic – as Redding suggests in his contribution to this volume.

⁴² More specifically (and precisely), he argues that it is in order to resolve a crisis in the theory of judgment as a synthetic act engendered by Kant’s own account of existential judgments that, after a series of innovations due to less well-known figures, Brentano arrives at view that judgment is thetic.

⁴³ Of course, there is nothing to preclude combining the Bolzanian theory of propositions with the view that it is in some act distinct from judgment in which one discerns their parts.

⁴⁴ Equally, it seems worth exploring whether Leibniz held such a view: after all, the distinction between analytic and synthetic truths, for Leibniz, concerns whether the predicate concept can be revealed to be contained within the subject concept after finitely or infinitely many steps.

(7) Is judgment, structurally speaking, a relation? If so, how many objects does it have?

Finally, assuming there to be exactly one object of (any given) judgment – as against both adverbialist and multiple relation theories, on which there are zero and many, respectively - we raised such questions about it as:

(8) Is the object of judgment propositional (and truth-apt)?

(9) Are propositions structured complexes? If so, what kinds of things are their constituents? and

(10) Are propositions ontologically independent of mental and linguistic acts?

I have not done much more than broach these questions in this introduction. But the papers that follow engage at least some of them and their histories in more detail – as, we may hope, will future scholarship in this area.

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