V.—CRITICAL NOTICES.

Untersuchungen zur Gegenstandstheorie und Psychologie. Mit Unterstützung des k. k. Ministeriums für Kultus und Unterricht in Wien herausgegeben von A. MEINONG. Leipzig: Verlag von Johann Ambrosius Barth. 1904. Pp. xi, 634.

THIS book consists of eleven essays, one by Meinong, the other ten by his pupils. Meinong's and the two which immediately follow it deal with what Meinong calls *Gegenstandstheorie*, and are largely concerned with matters of fundamental philosophical importance. The eighth, "Ueber Vorstellungsproduktion," deals with the relation of the apprehension of a complex to the apprehensions of its constituents, and is thus closely related to Meinong's non-psychological work. One deals with ethics; one with the principle of economy of thought; and the other five with special points of psychology. There is thus no very close unity, except what results from similarity of outlook and method. Especially the first three essays and the eighth belong together. The philosophy set forth in them is a development of that contained in Meinong's *Annahmen*, and its value appears to me to be very great. Its originality consists mainly in the banishment of the psychologism which has been universal in English philosophy from the beginning and in German philosophy since Kant, and in the recognition that philosophy cannot concern itself exclusively with things that exist.

Presentations, judgments and assumptions, Meinong points out, always have *objects*; and these objects are independent of the states of mind in which they are apprehended. This independence has been obscured hitherto by the "prejudice in favour of the existent" (*des Wirklichen*), which has led people to suppose that, when a thought has a non-existent object, there is really no object distinct from the thought. But this is an error: existents are only an infinitesimal part of the objects of knowledge. This is illustrated by mathematics, which never deals with anything to which existence is essential, and deals in the main with objects which *cannot* exist, such as numbers. Now we do not need first to study the knowledge of objects before we study the objects themselves; hence the study of objects is essentially independent of both psychology and theory of knowledge. It may be objected that the study of objects must be coextensive with *all* knowledge;

but we may consider separately the more general properties and kinds of objects, and this is an essential part of philosophy. It is this that Meinong calls *Gegenstandstheorie.*

This subject is not identical with metaphysics, but is wider in its scope; for metaphysics deals only with the real, whereas the theory of objects has no such limitations. The theory of objects deals with whatever can be known *à priori* about objects, but knowledge of reality can only be obtained by experience. The theory of objects is not psychology, since objects are independent of our apprehension of them. It is also not theory of knowledge; for knowledge has two sides, the cognition, which belongs to psychology, and the object, which is independent. The theory of objects, Meinong contends, is also not to be identified with pure logic, since logic, in his opinion, is essentially practical in its aim, being concerned with right reasoning. (On this point, opinions will differ; but the question is in any case only one of nomenclature.) The conclusion is, that the theory of objects is an independent subject, and the most general of all philosophical subjects. Mathematics is essentially part of it, and thus at last finds a proper place; for the traditional division of sciences into natural and mental left no room for mathematics, because it took account only of the existent. Grammar may be a guide in the general theory of objects, as mathematics in more special parts of the theory.

The first great division of objects is into three classes, those which exist, those which subsist (*bestehen*), and those which neither exist nor subsist.[1] It is obvious that abstracts such as diversity or numbers do not exist; propositions, again, are non-existent; thus certainly there are objects which do not exist, and which yet in some sense subsist. But even when we include subsistence, we do not, it would seem, find a place for *all* objects; some, such as false propositions, the round square, etc., are objects and yet do not subsist.

There are two sorts of judgments, which may be called *thetic* and *synthetic;* the former assert the being of something, the latter assert its being so-and-so (*Sein* and *Sosein*). The latter sort may subsist when their subjects do not subsist; the round square is certainly both round and square, although the round square does not subsist. We may say, if we like, "There are objects of which it is true to say that there are no such objects" (p. 9). Ameseder, the author of the second article ("Beiträge zur Grundlegung der Gegenstandstheorie"), discusses the three kinds of objects more in detail, and reduces existence to the being of a certain kind of objects. An object (*Gegenstand*) is either an *Objekt*[2] or an Objective—the latter being a proposition or something derivative from a

[1] Meinong appears to use *Sein* and *bestehen* as synonyms, and I shall use *being* and *subsistence* as synonyms.

[2] As this word is used in a different sense from *Gegenstand* I shall leave it untranslated, using "object" to translate *Gegenstand.*

proposition.[1] Objects may be divided into three classes, those whose being is respectively necessary, possible, and impossible. The being of what is possible, if the possible object is an *Objekt*, is defined as *existence;* but a possible Objective (*e.g.* the existence of a possible *Objekt*) has being, but not existence. Whatever is necessary is an Objective; but some Objectives are possible, and some are impossible (pp. 82-84). Still more definiteness is given to the subject of non-subsistent objects by Mally in the third article ("Zur Gegenstandstheorie des Messens"). A being-so (*Sosein*) whose subsistence excludes that of its *Objekt* (*i.e.* what would usually be called its subject) he defines as *contradictory.* An *Objekt* which has a non-contradictory being-so he defines as *possible.* "The roundness of what is square" is an impossible being-so; but the roundness and squareness of the round square, so far from being impossible, are necessary, though contradictory. It is impossible a square should be round, but not that the round square should be round, which is necessary (p. 128). Again he says: "Even if A . . . in fact is *not*, it is yet tautologically certain that the being of . . . 'the subsistent A' subsists. By a judgment 'the subsistent A subsists,' no more is judged about the (factual) being or not-being of A . . . than by the hypothetical judgment: 'If A is, it is' . . . The 'being and not-being' of the 'A which is and is not' subsists" (p. 133). Ameseder, in the preceding article, says, in the same spirit, that, if B is impossible, 'A differs from B' and 'A does not differ from B' may both be true (p. 88).

It is not customary for philosophers to face the round square with so much courage; and indeed few logicians can withstand its onset. But if we are to be clear about the supposed non-subsistent objects, it is quite essential that we should have a satisfactory theory about the round square. For my part, I am not convinced that there are any non-subsistent objects. But let us see what the arguments against them are.

Meinong's theory may be modified, (1) by denying his non-subsistent objects, (2) by denying that they do not subsist.[2] I should propose to apply the former process to the round square, the latter to false propositions. There is, Meinong admits (p. 12), one strong argument in favour of the subsistence of the objects which he regards as non-subsistent, and that is, that such objects can be subjects of true and therefore subsistent propositions. But this argument, he says, depends upon regarding a proposition as a complex, and its subject as a constituent of it; and such a view, he thinks, can only be taken figuratively. I should have thought the subject of a proposition was a constituent of a complex in the fundamental sense from which all others are derivative, and that

[1] On the meaning of the word Objective see MIND, N.S., No. 51, pp. 349 ff.

[2] We might also invent a third kind of being, more tenuous even than subsistence. Meinong considers and rejects this plan (p. 11). His reasons seem to me not decisive; but I shall not further consider this plan.

therefore the argument would be sound. But the chief objection to Meinong's view seems to me to lie in the fact that it involves denying the law of contradiction when impossible objects are constituents. If 'A differs from B' and 'A does not differ from B' are to be both true, we cannot tell, for example, whether a class composed of A and B has one member or two. Thus in all counting, if our results are to be definite, we must first exclude impossible objects. We cannot, if B is impossible, say 'A and B are two objects'; nor can we strictly say 'B is one object'. And the difficulty is that impossible objects often subsist, and even exist. For if the round square is round and square, the existent round square is existent and round and square. Thus something round and square exists, although everything round and square is impossible. This ontological argument cannot be avoided by Kant's device of saying that existence is not a predicate, for Ameseder admits (p. 79) that "existing" applies when and only when "being actual (*wirklich*)" applies, and that the latter is a *Sosein*. Thus we cannot escape the consequence that "the existent God" both exists and is God; and it is hard to see how it can be maintained, as Mally implies (p. 133), that this has no bearing on the question whether God exists. Thus I should prefer to say that there is no such object as "the round square". The difficulties of excluding such objects can, I think, be avoided by the theory of denoting; in any case, it is plain that the admission of such objects is open to grave objections. But much credit is due to the authors of this book for the thoroughness with which their view is developed.

For those who agree with the general standpoint of the work, this question of impossible objects is the most important one of all that arise in considering it, and our view in regard to it will affect very many of our other views. There are certainly difficulties in either hypothesis; but I think the hypothesis adopted by Meinong, Ameseder and Mally involves the greater difficulties.

In place of the theory of denoting,[1] Mally, in the third essay, develops a theory of explicit and implicit *Objekte*, which serves a similar purpose. Mally's essay, before it reaches the subject of measurement, treats afresh all the fundamentals of the theory of objects; it does this in a series of definitions, often (I think) embodying important ideas, but so obscurely expressed that it is very hard to understand what they mean. I shall not attempt a summary, as no summary could be more condensed than the original, in which single pages contain more matter than one usually finds in twenty. But some attempt must be made to explain the nature of explicit and implicit objects, though I am not sure of having fully grasped the author's meaning.

An Objective of the form "A is" or "that A is" or "A is *b*" or

[1] *I.e.* Frege's distinction of *Sein* and *Bedeutung*; *cf.* his article on this subject in *Zeitschrift für Philosophie und philosophische Kritik*, vol. 100. See also my article in present number of MIND.

"that A is *b*" is called an *explicit Objective*, and its subject[1] is an *explicit subject*, having the form "A which is" or "A which is *b*". A determination which "coincides essentially"[2] with an explicit Objective, without being one, is called an *implicit* determination; and a similar definition applies to an implicit subject. An explicit determination or subject with the determination of being implicit is called a *fictitious* determination or subject (pp. 137, 138). As an illustration, "Number which is greater than 5" is an *explicit* object; this is not 6, or 7, or 8, or etc., nor yet the aggregate of all of these; but each of these "coincides completely" (in Mally's sense) with this explicit object. Thus 6 *e.g.* is an *implicit* object having the kind of connexion in question with our explicit object. Now consider "a *certain* number which is greater than 5". This still has the same ambiguity as the *explicit* object, but it *says* it is a particular one of all the possible numbers 6, 7, 8. . . . Thus it is fictitious: it is a particular, but a *general* particular, if one may coin such a phrase. This distinction is an elusive one; at the same time, it is certainly genuine and important. For example, among the indemonstrable propositions which are the premisses of mathematics there are two which may be roughly stated thus: (1) "What hold of all, holds of any"; (2) "What holds of all, holds of each". The first, when we are given that all men are mortal, allows us to infer the proposition "any man is mortal"; the second allows us to infer that Socrates is mortal, and also that Plato is mortal, and so on. In the second, we infer the mortality of a certain definite man; but when we state the principle generally, the definiteness is fictitious: we say it is there, but in fact it is absent. This seems to be a case of a kind similar to that of Mally's fictitious objects. As to his explicit and implicit objects, their relation seems to be that of denoting concept to object denoted. The manner of statement, as opposed to that by means of *denoting*, seems to be determined by the admission of non-subsistent objects, which renders it unnecessary to make a sharp distinction of meaning and denotation such as we require for the denial of denotation in the case of impossible objects.

Mally passes next to the definition of *complexion* and *complex*, which is as follows: "A quality with several objects of determination (*Bestimmungsgegenstände*) and *one* implicit subject (*Eigenschaftsgegenstand*) is to be called an implicit complexion. The implicit subject of a complexion is to be called an implicit complex. The objects of determination of an implicit complexion are called its *inferiora*. The objects of determination of an implicit complex are called its *constituents*, or also *inferiora* of the complex" (p. 147).[3]

I hope other readers do not find these definitions perfectly easy

[1] I translate by "subject" the word *Eigenschaftsgegenstand*, which is used very nearly in the usual sense of "subject," though not quite.

[2] *I.e.*, approximately, has the same predicates, or applies to the same subjects, as the case may be.

[3] The above definitions are restated in shorter form on p. 153.

to follow. I believe the meaning is really quite definite, but the technical terms introduced are so numerous, and the fundamental ones are so hard to apprehend, that the definitions become very puzzling. In the present case, an illustration is given which greatly eases matters. *Triplicity*, Mally says, is an implicit determination with several objects of determination, namely one, one, one. Its implicit subject is not many, but one, namely the implicit complex called *three*. This instance makes the meaning fairly clear; but I find it hard to believe that a definition of complexity can avoid circularity. In the above case, plurality is introduced, which is a particular "complexion," and is definable when complexity is taken as indefinable.

Mally's theory of number is not very satisfactory. With every complex, he says, "coincides" an aggregate-complex (*Mengenkomplex*) of its constituents. An aggregate-complex wholly determined by its complexion—*i.e.* composed of wholly indeterminate objects—is a *pure* aggregate-complex. Every aggregate-complex has a *degree*, which depends only on the complexion of the complex. An aggregate-complex of determinate degree is called a number-complex or number (pp. 163-165).

This theory, to begin with, will only apply to *finite* numbers; but this is not the only objection to it. There seems to me to be a confusion between a number and an aggregate to which it applies. Mally confesses (p. 166) that *couple, trio*, etc., seem more appropriate words than 2, 3, etc.; and in fact what he defines as the number 2 seems to be really an indeterminate couple. I should escape this indeterminateness by defining 2 as the class of couples; for one must, I think, as Mally does, reach the number 2 through couples. A similar remark applies to the above notion of a "pure" aggregate. This is, it would seem, merely an indeterminate aggregate, that is to say, any aggregate. There cannot be an aggregate composed of indeterminate objects, except in a sense which makes the aggregate simply an indeterminate aggregate; but if this is so, there is not a variety of aggregates, called "pure," and having the property that their constituents are indeterminate. Here and elsewhere, one feels the need of Frege's theory of the variable and of functions; but language is so ill-adapted to the fundamental notions of this subject that whoever is afraid of symbols can hardly hope to acquire exact ideas where it is necessary to distinguish (1) the variable in itself as opposed to its values, (2) any value of the variable, (3) all values, (4) some value. These ideas seem to occur in Mally's exposition, but their employment in complicated cases is very difficult for him.

Mally's theory of quantity closely follows Meinong's; it uses the same criterion of a series approaching zero; and it contains similar views as to difference and similarity considered as quantities. He holds, for reasons which seem not very convincing, that every quantity can be diminished, and that zero is therefore self-contradictory and non-subsistent. He has an interesting definition of a continuum (p. 169), which is reached as follows. A complex whose constituents are complexes of its own complexion is a *homoiomeric* complex; such is a couple of couples. If the constituents of the constituents, and the constituents of these again, and so on *ad infinitum*, are all of the same complexion as the original complex, then the original complex is said to be *throughout homoiomeric*. An implicit complex completely coincident with a throughout homoiomeric complex is a *continuum*. Though this definition is interesting, it is to be observed that it does not apply to mathematical space and time, and that it may well be doubted whether there can be any object to which it does apply. The latter question depends, however, upon whether we hold that every complex must be analysable into simple parts—a difficult question, which need not here be raised.

Mally's theory of the extensions of number—negative, fractional, irrational and imaginary numbers—is not of a sort which will serve in mathematics. Since $-b$, in $a-b$, means the suppression, in an aggregate whose number is a, of a part whose number is b, it seems that $-b$ means the non-being of b. He says (p. 207): "An (impossible) number, whose being is equal to the not-being of another number, is called *negative*". (His theory of the other extensions of number is of the same kind.) But as a matter of fact, in $a-b$, it is not the number b itself that is suppressed, but an aggregate having b terms; here the earlier confusion of numbers with aggregates causes a fresh confusion as regards subtraction. Further, if a right theory of negative numbers is to be framed, we must distinguish the subtraction of b from the result of such subtraction performed on a number a. If we define $-b$ as $0-b$, we certainly get an impossible object, if 0 and b are the sort of numbers applicable to the counting of aggregates. In fact, $+b$ and $-b$ must both be defined as relations, and $+b$ must be distinguished from b just as much as $-b$ must. $+b$ and $-b$ are each other's converses; if two numbers (of the signless sort) a, c, are such that $a+b=c$, then a has to c the relation $+b$, and c has to a the relation $-b$;[1] in other words, what mathematicians would call the operation $+b$ turns a into c, and the operation $-b$ turns c into a. If negative numbers were in fact non-entities they would be useless, for a reason which applies generally against the introduction of non-entities into special reasoning, namely this: Of every impossible object, two contradictory propositions hold. But if two contradictory propositions hold of an object, then *all* propositions concerning that object are true; for if p is any proposition, then every proposition is either implied by p or implied by not-p.[2] Hence if negative numbers are non-entities there is no more point in saying one thing about them than in saying another: a result

[1] Or *vice versa*, according as we may choose to define.
[2] See my *Principles of Mathematics*, p. 18.

which might be expected to follow from denying the law of contradiction.[1]

It is natural to consider, in connexion with the three fundamental essays on the theory of objects, the eighth essay, by Ameseder, "Über Vorstellungsproduktion". He begins by setting forth briefly (pp. 481-483) the theory of sensation which is also explained elsewhere in the book.[2] According to this theory, sensations have objects and causes, but their objects are different from their causes. Thus the sensation of blue has *blue* for its object; but *blue*, though it subsists, does not exist. The *cause* of the sensation of blue is a thing-in-itself, and does exist. But *blue*, though it does not exist, is not dependent on sensation for its subsistence, and does not exist in the sensation of blue. Its subsistence does not, in fact, presuppose the subsistence of anything else. But this is not true of all objects. Founded (*fundierte*) objects[3] and the presentations which apprehend them have an inner dependence upon their *inferiora;* there can be no difference without objects which are different, and no presentation of a difference without presentations of objects which are different. The problem with which Ameseder is concerned is the problem as to the relation of the presentation of a founded object to the presentations of its *inferiora*. The presentation of a founded object is not itself founded, for nothing founded can exist. Nevertheless the presentation of a *superius* is built somehow on the presentations of the *inferiora*. This process is called *production;* it is involved in all perception which goes beyond sensation, for example in the perception of a melody. The conclusion reached is that the presentation of the founded object consists of the presentations of its *inferiora* standing in a *real* relation to each other (p. 496). This depends upon Meinong's distinction of real and ideal relations; the former are not necessary, and may exist, while the latter are necessary, and cannot exist. A real relation is such as that between the elements in a chemical compound; and the connexion of the produced presentation to the elementary presentations is thus conceived as being more or less like that of a chemical compound to its elements. This theory may or may not be satisfactory; in any case, the problem is very clearly stated, and its importance is quite undeniable.

The theory of production of presentations is used to account for the illusion in Müller-Lyer's figure, which is dealt with by Vittorio Benussi in a long and very interesting article (No. V.), "Zur Psychologie des Gestalterfassens". He distinguishes illusions of sensation, of judgment, and of production, and shows by a series of experiments that the illusion in question must be one of production.

[1] This result might no doubt be avoided by modifying the theory of implication; but it seems probable that any modification adequate for this purpose would be inadmissible on other grounds.

[2] *E.g.*, by himself, pp. 91-95.

[3] On the meaning of this term, *cf.* MIND, N.S., No. 50, pp. 210-211.

It appears that whatever, either in the figure or in the state of mind of the observer, increases the consciousness of the figure as a whole, increases the illusion as to the length of the central line of the figure. The illusion is not one of judgment, for it is unaffected by knowledge of the facts; it is not of sensation, for such illusions have the following marks, which it has not: (1) they depend on the stimulus, and cannot be modified by the subject; (2) they are uniquely determined by the stimulus; (3) their magnitude has in principle no limits; (4) they are not altered by practice. As regards (1) and (2), Benussi found that the illusion is diminished by telling the observer to concentrate attention on the central line, and increased by telling him to observe the whole figure. He concludes (p. 395) that contents in a real relation influence each other in the sense of their own natures; and that the presentation of shapes has this effect in a high degree because it involves a real relation of the presentations of the parts of the shapes.

The sixth essay, by Vittorio Benussi and Wilhelmine Liel, applies the same principles to the illusion of the shifted chess-board, and reaches a similar conclusion. The fourth essay, by Wilhelm Frankl, discusses the principles of Avenarius concerning economy of thought, and decides that, though certain principles of economy are valid, there are none so general or so fundamental as Avenarius contended. The seventh, by Vittorio Benussi, gives a new proof of the specific brightness of colours. The ninth, by Ameseder, "Über absolute Auffälligkeit der Farben," contends that this quality can be determined by experiments, some of which he has carried out and gives the results of. The tenth, by Wilhelmine Liel, "Gegen eine voluntaristische Begründung der Werttheorie," is in the main a polemic against Schwarz, contending that value is derived from feeling, not from conation. The eleventh and last, by Robert Saxinger, "Über die Natur der Phantasiegefühle und Phantasiebegehrungen," contends that the feelings and desires of imagination are facts *sui generis*, differing from feelings and desires proper as assumptions differ from judgments. The argument is unconvincing to me, because I often dissent where he appeals to introspection. For example he says that all feelings proper weaken with the lapse of time, in the absence of fresh stimulus, whereas those of imagination are constant—a difference which to me is not apparent in experience.

The book as a whole does the highest credit to the Graz school of psychology and philosophy; and its main articles contain theories which demand and deserve careful study. The second and third articles, by Ameseder and Mally, contain so many important definitions in quick succession that it has been impossible to give an adequate idea of their contents in the space of a review. The first article gives what we may suspect is the final term of Meinong's development away from psychologism; his present position appears to me clear and consistent and fruitful of valuable results for philosophy.

B. Russell.