













# RECENT LOGICAL REALISM

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS  
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A DISSERTATION

PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF BRYN MAWR COLLEGE IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BRYN MAWR, PENNSYLVANIA

JUNE, 1917

1. ... ..

2. ... ..

PRESS OF  
THE NEW ERA PRINTING COMPANY  
LANCASTER, PA.

p 7-57



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# RECENT LOGICAL REALISM.

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## INTRODUCTION.

It is not surprising that there should be every now and then a renaissance of Platonism. The theories called Platonic are too deep-rooted, intellectually and emotionally, in our nature ever to remain very long in abeyance. They are perhaps the only form of metaphysics calculated exactly to meet that fundamental human need which is sometimes said to lie at the root of all philosophizing—the need for the finding of the permanent. In a sense we may agree that this need does indeed condition every philosophy, even the most un-Platonic,—despite the fact that the only permanent recognized by certain systems is impermanence itself. In such systems, ranging though they do from the Heracleitean doctrine of flux to Bergson's theory of creative evolution, a kind of Platonism might be said to be implicit: a Platonism broadly definable as a crystallization of the passion for permanence. But such a definition, clearly, is too easily satisfied to be important. And the recent logical development that I shall call 'logical realism' may fairly be characterized,—as it sometimes has been,—as Platonic in a degree beyond the limits of that definition. For it is the chief concern of logical realism to establish an ontological status of a peculiar kind for certain classes of non-physical and non-psychical entities, with some of which the old Platonism was largely preoccupied.

But logical realism, whatever its real or fancied indebtedness to the original Platonic doctrines, is a Platonism engrafted upon new logical distinctions, qualified by new scientific concepts, and set forth in a new dialect. It requires, accordingly, new and special treatment. I shall not, then, insist upon or defend an historical analogy. Moreover, our ultimate concern here will be less for such general implications of the 'new Platonism' as connect it most nearly with its supposed prototype, than for its

contributions to a solution of the problem of truth. Indeed, the ultimate purpose of the present inquiry is to appraise a realistic theory of the meaning and the nature of truth.

Our approach to this theory will, however, be indirect by way of a preliminary examination of logical realism in a wider and more generally significant recent development as a theory of meaning. In this wider bearing, logical realism is a theory of the non-psychical correlates postulated for all conceivable acts of judgment and of conception. As applied to the problem of truth it is concerned only to describe the non-psychical correlates of such actual or potential judgments as are true. By endeavoring to possess ourselves first of the temper and point of view of the more general doctrine, we shall be best preparing ourselves for a critical examination of realism in its more restricted application.

That the realistic theory of truth is only one of a large number of new doctrines on the subject is well-known to everyone who is even slightly acquainted with the logical writings of the last few years in Austria, Germany, England and America. The problem of truth is an insistent problem, and one which imposes its claims upon thinkers of widely divergent logical persuasions. Tempor- alists, logical realists, voluntarists, and believers in the theory of fictions, all define their main issues by reference to it. Consequently, from a merely historical standpoint, the total situation into which 'Platonism' has been reborn possesses considerable interest. It exemplifies a striking convergence of preoccupations amid diversity of convictions. But a survey of that total situation is desirable for other reasons than its historical significance. It is urgent upon us if we would understand the full import of realism in its latest manifestations. For recent philosophizing has forged weapons against which that realism must, if it would continue, devise special offensive and defensive arms.

Most note-worthy of those weapons is the concept of evolution which, already responsible for entirely novel methods in the natural and social sciences, has, in its recent intrusion into logic, given rise to a new notion of truth. The notion has, to be sure,

its historical antecedents dating from the time of Protagoras. But since the twentieth-century version of the Protagorean theory derives its support from a very modern view of the universe, it may be regarded as a substantially new invention. According to this neo-Protagoreanism, called Pragmatism,<sup>1</sup> truth is not static and unalterable, but fluid, changing in conformity with the development and the demands of the human mind. On this view a statement now true may cease to be true; and truths about the present may originate in the future. Thus the modern version of the axiom that 'man is the measure of all things' necessitates a realistic conception of time. It necessitates also the making of new emphases. It directs an attention upon the particular, the concrete, the impermanent, which no protests of non-pragmatists can for the moment turn aside; it does this at the expense of attention to the universal, the abstract, the transcendent. Thereby, as is plain, the continuance of 'Platonic' realism has been jeopardized. For nothing could be more alien to the temper of Platonism, or more unpropitious for its persistence, than the three principal achievements of the evolutionary revolt: namely, the conception of non-static truth; the realistic appreciation of temporal relations; and the subordination of the abstract to the concrete, of the universal to the particular.

A second peril for Platonic realism is the rise of the theory of fictions. One classic formulation of this theory is to be found in Vaihinger's *Philosophie des Als Ob*, but the point of view of which it is the outcome is not peculiar to logicians or even to philosophers. It may indeed be said to belong preëminently to the class of philosophic scientists, and to be the direct product of certain recent developments of the mathematical and experimental sciences. The rapid accumulation of new functional concepts, the development of the theory of probability, and new interpretations of infinite and irrational quantities have made logicians increasingly aware that an adequate theory of truth must, on demand, be able to take account of whole new classes of entities and operations. Mathematicians and physicists

<sup>1</sup> Pragmatism has of course many variants. (Cf. A. O. Lovejoy: "The Thirteen Pragmatisms," *J. of Phil., Psych., & Scientific Methods*, Jan., 1908.)

themselves, becoming interested in the metaphysical status of their constructions, have offered theories on their own account; and logicians have had to admit among their ranks as co-workers on the problem of truth such men as Poincaré, Hertz, and Ernst Mach. It is, of course, not a totally new departure to ask whether the generalizations of science are true, or mathematical creations arbitrary. But self-consciousness regarding these matters has been augmented. It has come to appear extremely important to decide what are the logical implications of holding, for example, that Newton's laws of motion are true. Physics has affected logic; and logic in turn has affected the interpretation of physics. Scientific laws are now seen to express, in a vast majority of cases, not a present inter-relation of elements of an actual situation, but their necessary inter-relation in a hypothetical situation; the universe which they describe is recognized to be a highly simplified universe, shorn of complicating and conflicting elements; and the terms in which they describe it are admitted to amount to contrary-to-fact conditions in present time. According to the theory of fictions, not only causal laws and other universal propositions, but also various kinds of concepts are given a nominalistic interpretation. The theory of fictions, then, like that of evolution, must either be refuted or suffer a compromise with the doctrines of logical realism if these latter doctrines are to prove their legitimacy.

As we shall hereafter see, logical realism is a theory of monads. It teaches that the meanings expressed by propositions are separate entities, atomic in character; and it thereby provides for a system of separable and self-sufficient truths. It thus comes into conflict with a third type of antagonistic theory, a by-product of idealism. According to this theory there are not properly truths, but Truth; and no statement that is ever made is entirely true or entirely false. All statements, that is, merely partake of absolute truth, and the degree of their approximation to that truth is determined by their complexity and comprehensiveness. Truth, by this theory,<sup>2</sup> is a system, no one of whose parts possesses significance out of relation to the other parts; whereas in terms

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Joachim, *The Nature of Truth*; Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, and the works of Bosanquet, Royce, etc.

of logical realism truth is an aggregation of independent entities. For a third time, then, we are impressed by our obligation to be unsatisfied with any criticism or defence of logical realism that takes account only of such issues and arguments as are raised by its immediate champions and opponents, while ignoring those of the advocates of other contemporary doctrines.

Realism does not, as the foregoing observations might seem to indicate, find itself forced to stand on all sides on the defensive; it is not fighting single-handed in a hostile world. Indeed the realistic temper, despite outcroppings here and there of contradictory dispositions, is, more than any other, characteristic of recent philosophical speculation. Of realism as of idealism there are many distinct varieties, and logical realism is only one of several outgrowths of the great contemporary realistic movement. There is, for example, the realism of Külpe,<sup>3</sup> of Russell,<sup>4</sup> of the six Americans,<sup>5</sup> of Mach,<sup>6</sup> and of Frege,<sup>7</sup> as well as that of Meinong and Husserl. The various systems differ not only in their definition and treatment of the "real," but also with regard to the classes of objects with which they occupy themselves. Nearly every kind of entity has at someone's hands received latterly the realistic baptism; but some realists are exclusively concerned to establish the reality of sense-data; others of values;<sup>8</sup> others of various sorts of universals and complexes. For the 'logical realist' as for the 'new realist' sense-data are real and objective entities, but his hands are so occupied with the business of non-existential objects that he has little time to battle for the reality of things in the time-space world. For the most part his labours lie in a different region where classification into the existent and non-existent is irrelevant. It is upon certain so-called 'complexes' that the objectivist chiefly exercises his passion for the classifying, labeling, and exploiting of entities. These

<sup>3</sup> *Die Realisierung.*

<sup>4</sup> *Problems of Philosophy*, etc.

<sup>5</sup> *The New Realism.*

<sup>6</sup> *Analyse der Empfindungen.*

<sup>7</sup> *Grundlagen der Arithmetik.*

<sup>8</sup> Cf. e. g., articles by Rickert (*Logos*, 1912 and 1913, and *Kantstudien* 1914); by Meinong (*Archiv für die gesammte Psychologie*, 1905, *Logos*, 1912); and by Kreibitz, *Archiv f. sys. Phil.*, 1912, Ehrenfels in the *Vierteljahrshrift*, etc.

complexes, with which in the following pages we shall be concerned, were first given explicit recognition by Bernard Bolzano whose *Wissenschaftslehre* appeared in 1837. Thereafter for more than half a century the entities that it had been Bolzano's desire to bring to the attention of the world under the name of *sätze an sich* languished again in obscurity. It is only in recent years, with the revival of interest in Bolzano and in the kind of thinking which he initiated, that *sätze an sich* have been reinstated. At present they go by a variety of names. Marty calls them *Urteilsinhalten*; Meinong, *Objective*; Husserl, *Bedeutungen an sich*; Stumpf, *Sachverhalten*. With all this variety of designation the thing meant is substantially the same; and it will be our chief concern to discover exactly what this variously denominated thing is.

But before undertaking an examination of that type of modern realism which is interested in complexes, and of its instrument of propaganda, *Gegenstandstheorie*, we must notice certain circumstances contributing to its content, its arguments, and its dialect.

The first of these circumstances is the invention of symbolic logic. This fresh instrument of dialectic has created new issues, destroyed unessential problems, and made possible, by the richness and flexibility of its language, the expression of many delicate and important distinctions. The five separate meanings of the verb *to be* which may be unambiguously indicated in the new symbols are a case in point. This particular case is indeed of special importance to the realist, inasmuch as the main concern of logical realism is the definition of an ontological status distinct from existence and yet real. Again, mathematical logic has become an instrument of diagnosis adapted to the analysis of the concepts symbolized by such words as *and*, *or*, *not*, and *the*. A wholesome consequence of these and similar analyses has been a shift of emphasis from the substantive to the functional; a shift to which, as we have already seen, evolutionism and nominalism contribute. But since symbolic logicians, in many of their aims and sympathies, are in accord with logical realism, any opposition they chance to offer to its conclusions possesses more than ordinary significance.



In the realm of pure logic, in that of linguistic, and in psychology a number of old problems have been newly laboured, and a number of new ones initiated, which have important bearing upon logical realism. The meaning of negation, the status of subjectless propositions,<sup>9</sup> the import of universal propositions,<sup>10</sup> have been considered afresh and from new points of view; and various types of propositions have been analyzed and broken up into their elements. Although many results of all this have never entered into the explicit arguments of realism, certain consequences of extreme importance for it flow from these various activities. These consequences fall into two groups: they serve to emphasize the inter-relations and distinctions, either between logic and grammar, or between logic and psychology. Of the two groups of consequences those bearing upon the mutual independence of logic and psychology are the more extensive and important. Indeed the independence of logic as over against psychology furnishes in innumerable cases the main *motif* of recent speculation. In especial it guides the discussion of the subject of judgment with which psychologists as well as logicians have latterly been engrossed.<sup>11</sup> The outcome of their labours has been the recognition of a bewildering number of elements as constituents of the judgment: namely, 'content,' 'material,' 'immanent object,' 'transcendent object,' *Sinn*, *Bedeutung*, 'conviction,' 'assertion,' 'quality,' 'truth-value.' The distinctions, thus, are numerous and complicated, and many of them vary from system to system; but in all cases their segregation into the two classes of the mental and non-mental has been scrupulously observed. By none has this segregation been so strictly insisted upon as by the logical realist; by none has the distinction between psychology and logic been so vehemently asserted. His battle-cry may indeed be said to be a passionate affirmation of the irreducibility of the normative to the non-normative; his formula of intellectual damnation the charge of *Psychologismus*. In view of these circumstances, one of the

<sup>9</sup> *E. g.*, the discussions of Miklosich, Marty, Windelband, etc.

<sup>10</sup> In the logics of writers as much at variance as Bosanquet and Schiller.

<sup>11</sup> Besides the work done by the better known logicians and psychologists, we have the interesting contributions of Jerusalem and of Emil Lask.

crucial matters for searching criticism in our examination of realistic doctrines will be that of the meaning and validity of their divorce of logic and psychology.

The principal text for illustration of the doctrines will be certain logical writings of Alexius Meinong.<sup>12</sup> As a secondary text, the *Logische Untersuchungen*<sup>13</sup> of Husserl will be considered. But the aim of the present investigation is not to reproduce and criticize in all their ramifications the complete logical doctrines of both these men; nor indeed of even one of them. A simultaneous treatment in detail of the two would have been difficult, since in spite of their common fund of beliefs and aims, they by no means agree in many important particulars. An exhaustive examination even of Meinong's theories alone was not to our purpose. With his main contentions before us as a constant point of reference, and with opposing contemporary types of doctrine present as a background, I shall rather attempt to lay bare the chief assumptions underlying logical realism, and some of the conclusions to which it normally leads.

<sup>12</sup> *Ueber Annahmen*. Leipzig, 1910 (2d edition). *Abhandlungen zur Erkenntnistheorie und Gegenstandstheorie* (vol. 2 of *Gesammelten Abhandlungen*) containing (among other reprinted articles); *Ueber Gegenstände höherer Ordnung und ihr Verhältnis zur inneren Wahrnehmung* and *Ueber Gegenstandstheorie*.

<sup>13</sup> Halle, 1900.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE REALISTIC THEORY OF MEANING.<sup>1</sup>

OUR first survey of logical realism will be as far as possible uncritical. More urgently than most theories this theory requires prolonged and sympathetic attention. It runs at the outset one of two contrary dangers: that of appearing to be an almost tautological statement of something too self-evident to need proving; or that of seeming a completely artificial product of scholastic dialectic. Furthermore, it suffers to a rather unusual degree from difficulties of verbal statement. The concepts it employs, when clothed in slightly worn language, tend to be interpreted either too literally or too metaphorically. The sort of vision of which *Gegenstandstheorie* is the product is hard to render into intelligible speech. Consequently, like many matters of logic, but in uncommon measure, the theory demands at the beginning imaginative rather than analytical comprehension.

“No one doubts,” says Meinong,<sup>1a</sup> “that we cannot have a conception without its being the conception of something, nor judge without judging something.” The assertion may serve as an expression of the fundamental dogma of logical realism.<sup>1b</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The English equivalents to be employed for certain technical terms in passages quoted require some comment.

*Gegenstand*, which for Meinong covers *Objekt* and *Objektiv* will for the most part be rendered either as ‘entity’ or as ‘object.’ For *Objektiv* (which Meinong coined to denote the object of either a supposal or a judgment) though English writers have used the term ‘objective,’ the most natural translation is probably ‘proposition,’ not in the sense of the written or spoken formulation of a meaning, but of that meaning itself. *Objekte*, since they include all things that may be *vorgestellt*, will be variously translated, according to context, as ‘percept,’ or ‘concept,’ or ‘idea.’ *Sachverhalt*, in conformity with Meinong’s interpretation of the term, will be translated ‘fact.’ *Ansichheit* becomes ‘independent objectivity’; *bestehen*, ‘subsistence’; *sein*, ‘being’; *Urteil*, ‘(act of) judgment’; *Vorstellung*, for the most part, ‘idea’ or ‘(act of) conception.’ For the notion expressed by *aussersein* some such invention as ‘unreal being’ has to be made.

<sup>1a</sup> *Ueber Gegenstände Höherer Ordnung*, p. 381.

<sup>1b</sup> Cf. Plato’s *Parmenides*. (Jowett’s translation, Vol. III, p. 249.)

“But may not the ideas, asked Socrates, be cognitions only and have no proper existence except in our minds, *Parmenides*? For in that case there may be single ideas which do not involve the consequences which were just now mentioned.

And can there be individual cognitions which are cognitions of nothing?

In technical language the dogma goes by the name of the doctrine of 'intentionality' or as some phrase it, the 'relational nature of consciousness.' This doctrine, though it takes as its point of departure a particular view of the nature of consciousness, throws its main emphasis upon what is neither consciousness nor the product of consciousness. Its concern is to establish the 'something' postulated as the invariable correlate of acts of judgment and conception. Brentano had thus epitomized the doctrine: "Every psychical phenomenon is characterized by what the scholastics of the middle ages called the 'intentional presence' (intentionale Inexistenz) of an object and what we shall call . . . relation to a content, a directing upon an object . . . or an immanent objectivity. Every such phenomenon contains within it an object, although not always in the same way. In the idea something is represented (*vorgestellt*), in the judgment something is accepted or rejected, in love something is loved, in hate, hated, in desire, desired, and so forth. This intentionality is the distinctive peculiarity of psychical phenomena."<sup>2</sup>

Accordingly, every psychical phenomenon would seem to involve two terms and a relation: a psychical term, a non-psychical term, and a relation between them. Although logicians as well as psychologists manifest an interest in the psychical term, its analysis has no direct bearing upon the main task of logical realism; that task is the description of the non-psychical object which is supposed to be necessarily involved in every act of conception or of judgment. *Gegenstandstheorie*, the invention of the realist, is only an elaborate apparatus for isolating, dissecting, and empirically realizing this object. Our first interest is to discover what, according to *Gegenstandstheorie*, an object is.

Frege somewhere in his *Grundlagen der Arithmetik* observes: "Not every object is somewhere." The remark is levelled at what Meinong calls the prejudice in favour of the actual.<sup>3</sup> It is

That is impossible, he said.

The cognition must be of something?

Yes.

Of something that is or is not?

Of something that is."

<sup>2</sup> *Psychologie vom Empirische Standpunkte*, p. 115. See also Husserl: *Logische Untersuchungen*, Vol. II, p. 351, and Meinong, *Ueber Annahmen*, p. 235.

<sup>3</sup> *Ueb. An.*, p. 60.

one of the many protests put forward by anti-subjectivists to the effect that the physical and the psychical together by no means exhaust the contents of experience—that indeed they constitute neither its greater nor necessarily its more important part. Such teachings are of course not universally questioned in extra-philosophical circles. Mathematicians, for example, take for granted that they are occupied with entities that are non-physical. Most of them, if confronted with the matter, would probably declare these entities to be non-psychical as well. Yet the fact that they have neither place nor substance does not, in the eyes of the mathematician, detract from their being or their importance. He finds that they are not alterable at his volition, but that, like physical things, they exhibit unconditioned uniformities among themselves. He is interested in discovering their nature and their habits, so to speak, and in pointing out the individuality of their behaviour. Meinong accordingly declares that mathematics has in the past represented the only fully developed *Gegenstandstheorie*.<sup>4</sup>

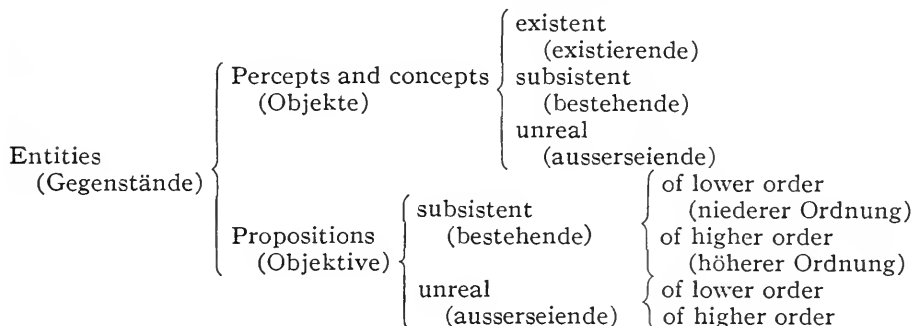
The realist, in endorsing the reality of such objects as the mathematician cultivates, frankly, if paradoxically, recognizes the qualifications to be imposed upon that endorsement. "There are things," says Meinong, "of which it is true that there are no such things."<sup>5</sup> And these queerly attenuated beings he classifies into a number of species: into the contradictory, the fictitious, the unreal (*i. e.*, the non-temporal), and the past and future existent.<sup>6</sup> "When I think of untroubled human happiness

<sup>4</sup> *Ueber Gegenstandstheorie*, p. 509.

<sup>5</sup> "Es gibt Gegenstände, von denen gilt, dass es dergleichen Gegenstände nicht gibt." *Ueber Gegenstandstheorie*, p. 490.

<sup>6</sup> *Ueber Gegenstände Höherer Ordnung*, p. 382.

His hierarchy of entities may be thus schematized:



or of a *perpetuum mobile*, my thought is as certainly directed upon 'something,' that is, upon an object, as if it were a case of the most ordinary bit of actuality.<sup>7</sup> . . . If we judge: 'A *perpetuum mobile* does not exist,' it is perfectly clear that the object whose existence is denied must have properties, and indeed characteristic properties, or conviction of its non-existence would have neither meaning nor justification."<sup>8</sup> Husserl corroborates him:<sup>9</sup> 'Logically regarded, the seven regular solids are objects as well as the seven wise men: the axiom of the parallelogram of forces is just as good an object as the city of Paris.' Nor do 'objects' in this all-embracing sense even have to be positive. Their essence may be a negation.<sup>10</sup> Everything, that is, which is conceivable or inconceivable, belongs to the vast and strangely assorted class of *Gegenstände*. The existent and the non-existent, the positive and the negative are so far on an equality. Concerning all of them alike Husserl, Meinong, and the rest who share their realistic propensities, are bent on making clear one fundamental matter: namely, their totally non-psychical character. An impossible object like the round-square is neither a state of mind nor a constituent of a state of mind; a centaur is not a bit of psychical existence or any sort of mental event. "Without," says Meinong,<sup>11</sup> "any regard to an apprehending subject and his experiences, one may state that every object possesses its generic and specific nature."

"The fact is what it is whether we assert it or not. It is a unitary matter of fact *an sich*."<sup>12</sup>

"My act of judgment is a fleeting experience, arising and passing away; not so what it affirms. . . . The acts of judgment

Every proposition is an 'object of higher order' in that it contains at least one *Objekt* as a constituent; it is a 'proposition of higher order' if it contains a subordinate proposition. Self-contradictory concepts make up the class of the *ausserseiende Objekte*; false propositions, that of the *ausserseiende Objektive*. Consequently true propositions compose the class of the *bestehende Objektive*.

<sup>7</sup> *Ueb. An.*, p. 234.

<sup>8</sup> *Ueb. An.*, p. 79.

<sup>9</sup> *Log. Unt.*, II, p. 101.

<sup>10</sup> *Ueb. An.*, p. 274.

<sup>11</sup> *Ueb. An.*, p. 61.

<sup>12</sup> *Log. Unt.*, II, pp. 43-44.

[in which a particular proposition is asserted] are different from case to case, but what they affirm is everywhere the same."<sup>13</sup>

"I perceive that what I mean by a statement or what, if I merely hear it, I apprehend as its meaning, is what it is whether or not I am and think . . . whether any thinking persons and acts are or not."<sup>14</sup>

In these last citations the postulate of *ansichheit*, of independence as over against the psychical, becomes completely explicit. And *Ansichheit* is the core of the whole doctrine. The objects for whose extra-mentality the realists are contending do not depend upon the occurrence of the acts by which they are apprehended. They are self-subsistent. And yet they are admitted not only to be no-where, but *not to be*. The god Jupiter who, as Husserl says, is not to be found as a constituent of the intentional experience which refers to him, is neither an 'immanent' mental object nor extra-mental. He *is not*. A centaur, adds Husserl,<sup>15</sup> is nothing and nowhere. Yet Jupiter and centaurs, along with the round-square, the square root of  $-1$ , and the principle of the parallelogram of forces are subsistent *Gegenstände*.

Realism thus believes itself to be a doctrine of objects, not only as they appear in discourse, but as they are in themselves, in their non-spatial, non-temporal, non-psychical being. Of what sort then is this being which *Gegenstandstheorie* attributes to objects, and what arguments are adduced in its defence?<sup>16</sup>

There is, to begin with, the very obvious consideration already mentioned, that if a thing is individuated sufficiently to permit statements to be made about it, it, in so far, is. This is not so much as to say that the verb *to be*, employed in predication, *ipso facto* implies the existence of the subject of the predication.

<sup>13</sup> *Log. Unt.*, II, p. 44.

<sup>14</sup> *Log. Unt.*, II, p. 100.

<sup>15</sup> *Ideen zu einer Reiner Phänomenologie*, p. 42.

<sup>16</sup> *Ueb. An.*, p. 79. "Eigenschaften haben besagt natürlich soviel als 'sosein.' Dieses Sosein hat aber dann keine Existenz zur Voraussetzung . . . Unser Ergreifen . . . findet . . . an den Gegenständen etwas vorgegeben ohne Rücksicht darauf, wie sich die Frage nach Sein oder nicht-sein entscheidet. In diesem Sinne 'gibt es' auch die Gegenstände, die nicht sind, und ich habe dies . . . als das 'Aussersein des reinen Gegenstandes' bezeichnet."

This would be to set up a new sort of ontological proof with a wider range of applicability than that of Anselm. None the less it is an intelligible contention that what we can direct our mind upon and make statements about is a degree less destitute of being than sheer undifferentiated nothingness.

Yet accepted cautiously, with the minimum of assumption as to the literalness with which the words are employed, this argument tends to induce one of the two kinds of unfavourable interpretation that I have already mentioned. It leads one to object: If by the being of objects we mean no more than their capacity to become the subject of reference of a mental act and to receive predicative qualifications, then of course these may easily be granted, in so far, to be. But in that case it all appears to be a rather unnecessary protesting about a really simple and self-evident matter, quite unworthy of the ceremony of special christening.<sup>17</sup>

Something more, then, must be meant. It may help us to an understanding of what that more may be to examine at this point, briefly, Husserl's explanation of the object in terms of meaning.

Husserl announces that his contributions to the theory of objects aim to establish a kind of realism lying between Platonic realism on the one hand, resulting from metaphysical hypostatizing, and psychical realism on the other, produced by the sort of psychological hypostatizing that Berkeley criticized in Locke.

<sup>17</sup> Meinong's system of ontologies is as follows:

being	}	existence (dasein)
		predicative determination (sosein)
(sein)		subsistence (bestehen)
		unreal subsistence (aussersein)

and the relations between them may be indicated by reference to the objects possessing them.

things that are	}	are all capable of predication	}	existent or
(i. e., have <i>sein</i> )				(i. e., have <i>sosein</i> ), and are:
				ausserseiende

Whether *aussersein* is properly to be set alongside of existence and subsistence as a third correlative type of being, Meinong questions. (*Ueb. An.*, p. 80.) But for himself, he answers the question in the affirmative (p. 242f). As criteria for distinguishing between existence and subsistence Meinong cites rather traditional considerations (*Ueb. An.*, p. 75): (1) Existences are temporal, pure subsistences timeless. (2) Causal connections obtain between existences but not between subsistences. (3) Existences are known empirically and subsistences *a priori*.



Just as surely, he says in effect, as the triangle as such is not possible as a mental image, so surely it is not possible as a Platonic universal possessing a degree of reality exceeding that of physical things. But there is a triangle-as-such nevertheless, in spite of the mind's ability to visualize or otherwise represent only special kinds of triangles with their concrete particularities. And such a triangle is no more and no less than what is referred to by any statement regarding triangles in general when no one kind to the exclusion of the rest is intended. It is no more and no less than a *meaning*.<sup>18</sup> And this meaning cannot be shuffled out of the way by the empiristic argument to the effect that all images are particular images and images of particular things. The mind knows that what it means is not its inadequate imagery, its sensory symbolic shorthand, but the something beyond it which that imagery mediates. General notions, universals, are meanings, propositions are meanings. Meanings are the objects of acts both of conception and of judgment. They constitute that class of entities whose members far outnumber actual or even possible things, including as it does the positive and the negative, the simple and the complex, the true and the false, and even the contradictory.

Concerning all of these alike acute logical problems occur which engage the attention of the realist. We shall, however, as far as is feasible, confine ourselves to the consideration of such meanings as are 'intended' by judgments.

"A proposition," says Meinong, similarly, "is no more to be expressed than a triangle or an earthquake or any particular experience occurring to another than the speaker. But all these things can be indicated in speech by reason of the fact that speech expresses an experience of which one of these is the object. Such objects we know as meanings and . . . just as words normally have the property of meaning objects, there must be speech forms which have as their meanings propositions."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> "In der Bedeutung constituirt sich die Beziehung auf den Gegenstand. Also einen Ausdruck mit Sinn gebrauchen und sich ausdrückend auf den Gegenstand beziehen (den Gegenstand vorstellen) ist einerlei. Es kommt dabei gar nicht darauf an, ob der Gegenstand existiert, oder ob er fictiv, wo nicht gar unmöglich ist" (*Log. Unt.*, II, p. 54).

<sup>19</sup> *Ueb. An.*, p. 53.

Taken in the sense of meaning, once more objects appear to need no defence. If the entities of the logical realist are nothing but meanings, what necessity for all this solemn protesting that every cognizing act involves an object? If entities are nothing but meanings, even the most unsympathetic critic will acquiesce when Meinong observes:<sup>20</sup> "Just as little as conception lacks an object when the thing conceived does not exist, just so little is an act of judgment devoid of an object when the judgment is not factual." Again we are tempted to protest that the contention is trivial. But *Gegenstandstheorie*, interpreted as *Bedeutungstheorie*, we must reply, amounts to something more than the easily granted claim that an act of meaning has as its object something meant by the subject. Meanings, according to logical realism, are not shifting, relative, vanishing things, but independent subsistences. "Just as numbers . . . do not originate and perish with the act of counting and as, consequently, the infinite number-series constitutes an objective fixed collection of universals bound by an ideal legality, a collection which no one can increase or diminish; so it is with the ideal, purely logical unities: concepts, propositions, truths, . . . in brief, the logical meanings. They form an ideal closed collection of universals whose coming into thought or whose verbal expression is an immaterial contingency."<sup>21</sup>

Meinong, after characterizing propositions as *being*, goes on to observe: "The essence of *being* no more depends on being cognized, or being able to be cognized, than the essence of colour depends on physical or psycho-physical processes."<sup>22</sup>

Now while the definition of an object as a meaning may facilitate, and certainly cannot obstruct, acceptance of the theory of the relational nature of consciousness, it just as certainly militates against the belief in the independent objectivity of that object. The notion of a meaning *an sich* recommends itself less easily than does the notion of an object *an sich*. For meaning, however one may define it, appears necessarily relative to consciousness.

That realists themselves believe meaning to be in no manner

<sup>20</sup> *Ueb. An.*, p. 45.

<sup>21</sup> *Log. Unt.*, II, p. 105.

<sup>22</sup> *Ueb. An.*, p. 62.

relative to consciousness, abundant explicit statements bear witness. Their occasional lapses into admissions in apparent contradiction to such statements do not alter the tone of their evidence; for these are contradictory in appearance only. When Husserl for example declares:<sup>23</sup> "There are thus countless meanings which, in the customary relative sense of the word, are mere possible meanings, since they never find expression, and indeed because of the limitations of human cognitive powers never *can* find expressions," it is quite evident that he does not deny the validity and independent reality of those meanings in his qualification of them as merely "possible." And when Meinong speaks of "living meaning"<sup>24</sup> (*lebendiges Meinen*) as being always a meaning for someone, and of a word meaning something only in so far as it expresses a particular, presentative experience,<sup>25</sup> it is perfectly clear that he is thinking of the *transmitting* of meaning, *i. e.*, that he is taking meaning in its functional sense, as a performance, not as a thing. His belief in it as, first and always, a thing,—and as a thing independent for its being on the existence of consciousness—is too manifest to admit question.

It may be suggested however that Meinong, and other realists, might be less loath than we perhaps anticipate to admit qualifications to their doctrine of the independent objectivity of meaning, if they could be induced to envisage the full metaphysical implication of that doctrine. One cannot of course with impunity predict in such matters. But in view of a certain peculiarity of Meinong's speculations, one would like to give him the benefit of the doubt. The peculiarity is this. Although he deals profusely in metaphysical postulation, and has very much to say regarding ultimate forms of being, his logical realism is a logic and a psychology, and only in a crude and rudimentary way a metaphysics. That, if forced to meet certain considerations, he might modify his dogmatism, appears possible because his rudimentary metaphysics seems to be the product of a naïve mind, not of a hardened and unregenerate one. His dogmatism is spontaneous and, one might say, youthful, arising apparently from inadvertent disregard of whole classes of circumstances

<sup>23</sup> *Log. Unt.*, II, p. 105.

<sup>24</sup> *Ueb. An.*, p. 26.

<sup>25</sup> *Ueb. An.*, p. 28.

that should be taken into account, rather than from wilful neglect of them. His gay, confident apportioning of different kinds of being to groups of entities that he delimits with a careless wave of the hand, is an example of this. His untroubled indulgence in the superlative-categorical manner of speaking betokens again his freedom from what one might call mature metaphysical self-consciousness.

Whether the seriousness and pertinency of certain facts that one might call to his attention relative to the matter of independent objectivity would give him pause might, on the other hand, be doubted. In somewhat peculiar combination, he possesses the characteristic weaknesses of the logician and of the psychologist, with all the aridity and abstractness of the one, and the credulity in the coerciveness of particular introspective findings to which the other is liable. Conceivably his bias is at once too formalistic and too empiristic to permit that generous envisaging of a matter with a view to all its potential aspects, which distinguishes the metaphysician at his best.

The considerations which might tend to alter the unqualified assertion of the independent objectivity of meaning are these. If it is asserted that proposition  $x$  which is the object of the judgments  $A, B, C, D \dots n$  is independent of those judgments and of the subjects whose judgments they are, either one of two things may be meant: (1) that the objectivity asserted consists of a non-relativity to each of the particular subjects taken in disjunction; or (2) that it consists of non-relativity to consciousness as such, *i. e.*, to all the possible subjects taken together. According to both views alike  $x$  could be asserted not to depend upon  $A$  or  $B$  or  $C$ , etc., for its validity, but to be objective for each. According to the second view,  $x$  would be asserted to be independent of the whole class of individual subjects and of the entire system of their cognitions, actual or potential. For the validity of this second notion of independence no proof is given, nor, I should say, is any such proof possible.

In arguing for limited objectivity, *i. e.*, objectivity for particulars only, Meinong would have been helping to establish some important and quite defensible principles. In failing to distinguish

the two types of objectivity, he commits himself to a cause which, if safe from complete overthrow by destructive argument, is likewise incapable of final establishment. And that is only another way of saying that to make itself proof from attack, logical realism should retreat to the impregnable<sup>26</sup> position of objective idealism, which it could do without thereby relinquishing the essentials of its doctrine of objectivity.

There is the further consideration that, in practice, the logical realists themselves, even when they would declare most emphatically that the accident of being apprehended is unessential both to the *being* and to the character of *Gegenstände*, fail to employ terms which definitely characterize such *Gegenstände* in their unapprehended state. The most they can do is to affirm that there *are* such entities. *What* entities they mean is communicable,—is conceivable even,—only by reference to their character of functioning as objects of possible knowledge.

We find in Bolzano, whose method of procedure anticipates that of all later logical realists, a fair illustration of the point. He observes that while there are, admittedly, besides *expressed propositions* also propositions which are not expressed but only thought, there are, further, propositions which are *neither* expressed nor thought. “Just as I,” he observes,<sup>27</sup> “in the phrase ‘an expressed proposition’ plainly distinguish between the proposition and its expression, so in the phrase ‘a proposition that is thought’ I distinguish between the proposition and the thought of it. Now what one must necessarily conceive by the word proposition in order to be able to make this distinction in common with me—what one represents to oneself as a proposition in order to be able to ask whether anyone has expressed it or not—is exactly what I mean by a *Satz-an-sich*. In other words, by a proposition-in-itself I understand merely an assertion (*Aussage*) that something is or is not, irrespective of whether this assertion is true or false, whether it is or is not apprehended in words by anyone at all,—even whether or not it is so much as apprehended by any mind.”

<sup>26</sup> By the use of this adjective I wish to imply, not that objective idealism is susceptible of proof, but that it is insusceptible of disproof.

<sup>27</sup> *Wissenschaftslehre*, Vol. I, p. 77.

Bolzano is thus unable to even *refer* to what he means by a *Satz an sich* without referring to its rôle of object of reference for a subject.

Similarly, the bare differentiation of the class of entities with which logical realists are concerned into the subordinate classes of *Objekte* and *Objektive* is accomplished solely through characterizing them as possible objects of acts of conception and of judgment respectively. (For Meinong *Objektive* are further characterized as possible objects of supposals, [Annahmen].)

Thus the undifferentiated 'entities' of logical realism can be characterized only as objects of possible knowledge; and furthermore no differentiation of them into distinguishable varieties is offered which does not involve reference to peculiarities or distinctions of mental experience.

We must now take account of certain of the more detailed doctrines, common to Meinong and Husserl, which contribute to their characterization of objective meaning.

We have already recognized the bare framework of the complex situation comprised by an act of judgment, as that situation is interpreted by the realists. We have seen that the judgment, whether true or false, positive or negative, universal or particular, includes: an act; an object;<sup>28</sup> and a relation between them. The

<sup>28</sup> The object in question is the *geurteilter Gegenstand* as opposed to the *beurteilter Gegenstand*, i.e., the proposition itself, not the subject of the proposition. That every judgment necessarily involves, besides the object immediately judged (the *Objektiv*) an inner object (the *Objekt*), judged about, is clearly recognized by the realists. ". . . finden wir neben einen Gegenstände, über den geurteilt oder der beurteilt wird, noch einen anderen der 'geurteilt wird'." *Ueb. An.*, p. 44. (Cf. also *Log. Unt.*, II, p. 378.) "Every judgment judges something which is not a concept (*Objekt*) but which stands over against the judgment as the object stands over against the conception of it." *Ueb. An.*, p. 143.

There are problems, which however we need not dwell upon, involved in the determination, not of the immediate object of a judgment, but of the mediate. For example, in judging: "Neptune is a satellite of the sun," the proposition: *Neptune is a satellite of the sun*, is the immediate object of the judgment. But are the subordinate objects, *beurteilte*, three—Neptune, satellite and sun—? or is there only one, namely, Neptune?

As for the constitution of the complex object of higher order containing one or more objects of lower order, the realists are eager to maintain it to be anything but an aggregate of those objects. Or, in terms of meaning, the meaning which is the object of the judgment, is not constituted of the various meanings attaching to the verbal constituents of the proposition expressing that judgment.

matter yet to be determined is the realist's distribution of the various mental and non-mental elements, also involved, to the act, the relation, and the object respectively. Or rather to the act, object, relation and *content*, for to the first three terms, the fourth must immediately be added. The relation obtains, not between the act as such and its object, but between the object and the content of that act.

But in the first place it must be noted that the relation is not an existent relation,—which obtains for a while and ceases to obtain—nor the act literally an act. That is, like the object which is in some cases at least an ideal—non-existent—object, the relation between it and the psychic content must necessarily be ideal.<sup>29</sup> And the act that is involved is such only in the sense of an intention . . . “the notion of activity (*Bethätigung*) must be avoided.”<sup>30</sup> “In every act,” says Husserl,<sup>31</sup> “an object is presented as determined in a certain specific way, and as such it may be the goal of changing intentions, judging, feeling, desiring, etc.”

Acts are not however exhaustively defined by reference to their bare intentional character. They are intentionally various. They differ qualitatively.<sup>32</sup> “The way in which a mere idea of a condition of affairs (*Sachverhalt*) means that condition is other than the way in which a judgment regards that condition as actual or unactual.”<sup>33</sup> “What constitutes the difference

<sup>29</sup> *Ueb. An.*, p. 266.

<sup>30</sup> *Log. Unt.*, II, p. 358.

<sup>31</sup> *Log. Unt.*, II, p. 376.

<sup>32</sup> The classification of psychical phenomena, and analysis of the types of mental acts occupies a large place in Meinong's writings. His doctrine of supposals (*Annahmen*), though it belongs primarily to the psychological part of his system, gives its name to one of the most important of his theoretical works and encroaches rather interestingly at points into the region of logic. Acts of supposal are regarded by him as the natural instrument for apprehending propositions, just as ideas (*Vorstellungen*) are the instrument for apprehending percepts and concepts. The most notable fact about them is that they are not bound by the law of contradiction (*Ueb. An.*, p. 228); consequently their objects may perfectly well be self-contradictory.

The question whether feelings as well as acts of conception, perception, judgment and supposal are relational in character has bearing on the logic of *Werttheorie*. The view that feelings are to be classed with relational mental acts involves a realistic view of values.

<sup>33</sup> *Log. Unt.*, II, p. 347.

between simply perceiving a concrete A and apprehending it as standing for any A? In this and countless similar cases the modification lies in the act-character. All logical differences, and at the same time all categorical form lies in the logical acts in the sense of intentions."<sup>34</sup> "To every logically distinguishable way of representing an object in thought corresponds a difference in the intention."<sup>35</sup> "In every act two sides are to be distinguished: the quality, which determines it to be, for example, an idea or a judgment, and the material which gives it its specific reference to something objective."<sup>36</sup> And finally *certainty* is attributed by Meinong<sup>37</sup> to the act as one of its distinguishing features.

In brief then, in its bare aspect of intentional experience, irrespective of its object and its content, an act is qualitatively determined as an act of a particular variety and of a particular degree of certainty.

But our original four terms—act, object, content, and relation—have already become differentiated into five; material has been added. Meinong's notion at least of this element of the experience is easily disposed of. He speaks of objects (percepts or concepts) as the material of propositions,<sup>38</sup> and of propositions of lower order as the material of those of higher.<sup>39</sup> Thus for him the material of any complex is to be equated with the constitutive elements of that complex.

Husserl's view of material is less simple. Content in the sense of *Materie*, is a component of the particular act-experience which it may have in common with acts of an entirely different character. This *Material* he defines as that in an act "which gives it its relation to something objective (*Beziehung auf ein Gegenständliches*) and indeed gives it with such perfect distinctiveness that it determines not only the object as such, which the act intends, but also the manner of that intending."<sup>40</sup> . . . Similar material can never give different objective reference; though different material may very well give the same reference."<sup>41</sup>

If the notion of material were not superseded for our purpose

<sup>34</sup> *Log. Unt.*, II, p. 363.

<sup>35</sup> *Log. Unt.*, II, p. 364.

<sup>36</sup> *Log. Unt.*, II, p. 389.

<sup>37</sup> *Ueb. An.*, p. 87.

<sup>38</sup> *Ueb. An.*, pp. 63, 357.

<sup>39</sup> *Ueb. An.*, p. 212.

<sup>40</sup> *Log. Unt.*, II, p. 390.

<sup>41</sup> *Log. Unt.*, p. 390.



by that of content and object, we should be obliged to pause and consider more minutely its function and its importance in the total experience of judgment. But it is plain that material is not identified with the object of a judgment; and that it is not bound up with that aspect of the act which makes it an act of a particular variety. Consequently, whatever material may be supposed to be, over and above *subject matter* in its vaguest sense (if indeed it be more than this) it does not concern us to discover. The crucial matter, the matter of greatest *gegenstandstheoretische* importance, is the distinction and relation between *Gegenstand* and *Inhalt*, object and content. It is in the interest of a clearer determination of the constituents and character of the *object* that we shall examine at some length its differentiation from content.

“In order,” says Meinong, “to judge now being and now not-being, now subsistence and again determination, judgments of different content are required since differences in the acts appear to play therein no characteristic rôle.”<sup>42</sup> This content is something psychical. It may differ from the object not only with regard to temporal coefficient, but also with regard to mode of being. An object of a mental act may be in past time; the content of a present idea must necessarily be present. “[The content] is real and present and . . . psychical, even if the . . . conceived object is non-existent, unreal, non-psychical and not present.”<sup>43</sup> But the content is no more to be confused with that other psychic element, the act, than with its object. Acts as qualitatively different as Meinong considers judgments and supposals to be, may possess identical content.<sup>44</sup> Content is a *tertium quid* lying between act and object and different from both. Yet content and object are coordinated; though “their coordination is by no means invariable. The same object can belong to different contents, and different objects to the same contents.”<sup>45</sup>

That Meinong does not mean by content those mental signs and fragmentary images which are the mere bearers of meaning

<sup>42</sup> *Ueb. An.*, p. 86.

<sup>43</sup> *Ueber Gegenstände Höherer Ordnung*, p. 384.

<sup>44</sup> *Ueb. An.*, p. 377.

<sup>45</sup> *Ueb. An.*, p. 237 and cf. p. 277.

may be fairly safely asserted. It would otherwise be less constant, more haphazard, more essentially individual than he appears to think it. How then does it succeed in being totally mental,—totally deficient in objectivity?

My contention is that despite his ingenuous affirmations of that non-objectivity, Meinong does not really believe in it; that content for him is really a kind of hybrid,—an objective meaning tangled up with the act by which it is meant. But this meaning would be identified neither with meaning in the sense of the process of referring to an object nor with meaning as synonymous with object. It would be meaning in a third sense, and one exceedingly important for the theory of objects.

That such a third version of meaning should have taken shape appears inevitable when one considers the main thesis of realistic doctrines: that cognitive experience involves a term totally irreducible to mental elements. A discrepancy occurs between that postulated meaning *an sich* and the meaning as apprehended. On the one hand the act and the object, the reference and the thing referred to, fail to account satisfactorily for the particular manner of that referring, the particular aspect or aspects of the object singled out in that reference; and on the other hand, however unambiguously the apprehended aspect may determine an object, that aspect obviously fails to exhaust the object as such.

Now the aspect or property specifically singled out as the determinant of an object would naturally be regarded as the content of the act, since it is, immediately and indubitably, present. That it should also be viewed in the character of a meaning, is, I am contending, likewise natural. However properly the objective entity referred to may be said to be the meaning of an act, the aspect specifically present—equiangularity, for example, in the reference to an equiangular-equilateral triangle as equiangular—would be, in an even more usual sense, a meaning. In the case of concepts, plainly, meaning in the first sense, as coincident with the object, turns out to be what is traditionally termed the *denotation*; while meaning in the second sense is *connotation*. Whether the antithesis of denotation and conno-

tation may with any propriety be carried over from the object of ideas to the object of judgment, is questionable.

In the next chapter we shall argue the matter. At present it is incumbent upon us to discover whether this conception of meaning as content plays the same part in Husserl's theory that it plays in Meinong's.

Now Husserl refers to the difference between the object which is meant, and that object as it is meant.<sup>46</sup> The distinction introduces us to his account of the whole matter, which far exceeds Meinong's in thoroughness and complexity.

That complexity I shall just indicate. For my aim is rather to light up the essentials of his doctrines in such a way as will tend to dissolve an apparent contradiction in his theory of *Bedeutung*, than to emphasize, for the sake of historical completeness, the multiplicity of his logical distinctions. The seeming contradiction is as follows. The object, as we have already discovered, is repeatedly defined by Husserl as a meaning. But in other passages he treats meaning and object as totally distinct. The expressions 'equilateral triangle' and 'equiangular triangle' possess, he observes,<sup>47</sup> the same *Gegenstand* but different *Bedeutung*. Contrariwise, two expressions may have *different* objects and the *same* meaning, as indeed always happens in the case of generic terms such as, for example *horse*, where a constant meaning may have the greatest variety of objective reference. But the case of the triangle illustrates for him also the difference between *content* and object: "The concepts '*the equilateral triangle*' and the '*equiangular triangle*' are in content (*inhaltlich*) different, though, as is evident, they both refer to the same object."<sup>48</sup> Meaning, then, and content are at least *sometimes* identical. In so far as they are identical, and in so far as content and object are distinguished, meaning must be used in a sense different from that in which it is identified with object: in a third sense according to which it is neither the act nor its objective reference.

There is the further difficulty that in his desire to provide for all subtle gradations of logical distinction, Husserl uses the term

<sup>46</sup> *Log. Unt.*, II, p. 376.

<sup>47</sup> *Log. Unt.*, II, p. 47.

<sup>48</sup> *Log. Unt.*, II, p. 389.

content to denote other things besides meaning in the third sense. But since these other uses are clearly of minor importance, and for the most part amount to concessions to traditional phraseology, I shall do no more than refer to them.

First of all he takes content in the two senses of real content (as element of consciousness) and intentional content.<sup>49</sup> This dual classification he elsewhere breaks up into a triple; and we find content equated with:<sup>50</sup> (1) intending sense or mere meaning (*intendirender Sinn* oder als *Sinn*, *Bedeutung schlechthin*); (2) Fulfilling sense (*erfüllender Sinn*); (3) object (*Gegenstand*). More bewildering still, we find intentional content broken up into the aspects:<sup>51</sup> (1) intentional object of the act; (2) material (*materie* (*im gegensatz zu seiner qualität*)); (3) intentional essence (*intentionales Wesen*).

The notion of content as identified with material we have already illustrated.<sup>52</sup> Content as identified with object he takes casually: "I see constantly this one and the same box however it may be turned. I have thereby ever the same content of consciousness if I choose to call the perceived *object* the content of consciousness. I have with every turn a new content of consciousness, if in a much more appropriate sense I so denote the *experienced contents*."<sup>53</sup>

But to return to the passage which was our point of departure: the 'object as it is meant' and the 'object which is meant' must be distinguished.<sup>54</sup> Intentions may differ (*i. e.*, in this case, contents), while for acts thus various, the object which is meant may be the same; for though in each case the intention is different in each the same object is meant in a different way.

We shall later have to consider in exactly what sense the antithesis of meaning as content (or connotation), and of meaning as object is to be legitimately attributed to the correlates of acts of judgment. We shall also be obliged to consider not merely what the antithesis amounts to in the actual realistic doctrines, but also in a possible corrected realism. For the realists, unfortunately, apply too scantily some of their more complex dis-

<sup>49</sup> *Log. Unt.*, II, p. 216.

<sup>51</sup> *Log. Unt.*, II, p. 375.

<sup>53</sup> *Log. Unt.*, II, p. 361.

<sup>50</sup> *Log. Unt.*, II, p. 52.

<sup>52</sup> See above, p. 22.

<sup>54</sup> *Log. Unt.*, II, p. 376.

tinctions to the case of propositions,—the very case where the application would be above all illuminating and important. And too often, where such application is made, it turns out to contradict what would most reasonably appear to be the meaning of the doctrine in question in its abstract formulation. Such judgments, for example, as ‘The earth is a sphere’; ‘It is true that the earth is a sphere’; ‘It is true that it is true that the earth is a sphere’<sup>55</sup> would be declared by Meinong to differ, not in *content* only, but in *denotation*: the three judgments possess *different* objects, those objects being not even of the same ‘order.’ His point of view in this matter leads me to question whether such *equivalent* propositions as: ‘two is less than three’ and ‘three is greater than two,’—which one would suppose could be taken to illustrate a case of identity of denotation with diversity of meaning—would as a matter of fact be so treated by the realists themselves.

This, and similar problems will bring us back to a further consideration of one variety of the great class of ‘entities.’

This variety—as *Sätze an sich*—remain, as we saw at the outset, the matter in whose interest *Gegenstandstheorie* was developed. As a point of historical interest, however, it is worth while to note that a complete identification between the notions of the various realists regarding such entities is not possible. Meinong explicitly denies that his *Objektive* are the same as certain objects discussed by other logicians. They are not in his opinion identical with *Sätze an sich*,<sup>56</sup> for if they were then *Vorstellungen an sich* would be his *Objekte*. But Bolzano opposes *Vorstellungen an sich* and *Gegenstände*, while for Meinong *Gegenstände* comprise *Objekte* and *Objektive*. Moreover a *Satz* would reasonably differ from an *Objektiv*, “being an *Objektiv* apprehended, where possible even expressed, and in any case formulated in words.”<sup>57</sup> That is, Meinong, in adhering to the common definition of *Satz*, would justify his claim that his own invention possesses greater comprehensiveness by including the verbally unformulated and unexpressed as well as the expressed.<sup>58</sup> *Objektive* also are not the

<sup>55</sup> Cf. e. g., *Ueb. An.*, p. 70.

<sup>56</sup> *Ueb. An.*, p. 99, note.

<sup>57</sup> *Ueb. An.*, p. 100.

<sup>58</sup> But cf. the quotation from Bolzano, p. 19.

same as Marty's *Urteilsinhalten*. *Inhalt* is opposed to *Gegenstand*: "*Objektive* can not be called judgment-contents, since they can not be called contents."<sup>59</sup> Nor does Stumpf's conception of a *Satz an sich* as a "psychisches Gebild"<sup>60</sup> permit an identification of *Satz* and *Objektiv*. The proposition is as little psychical as it is physical. Finally propositions are not to be identified with *Sachverhalten*.<sup>61</sup> For propositions include besides "facts" the nameless objects of false judgments.

Yet with all this diversity of naming and pretended difference of essence, the thing indicated is, apparently at least, approximately the same: namely, that unity of meaning or reference, which, indebted neither for its character nor for its being to the existence of knowing subjects, and unaffected by their changing states, is nevertheless accessible to them all whenever they make the "same" judgment; a thing neither physical nor psychical, a thing unconditioned by spatial aspects and unrelated to time; a thing into which the elements of certainty, of evidence, of affirmation and negation, characteristic of the *act* of judgment, do not enter.

<sup>59</sup> *Ueb. An.*, p. 105.

<sup>60</sup> *Ueb. An.*, p. 102.

<sup>61</sup> *Ueb. An.*, p. 101.

## CHAPTER II.

### CRITICISM OF THE REALISTIC THEORY OF MEANING.

WE have found that logical realism, reduced to its essentials, amounts to a theory of infinitely numerous and variously qualified entities standing over against the physical and psychical world as non-physical, non-psychical but cognizable objects. We have yet to discover any motives sufficiently urgent to account for the excessive interest in these entities entertained by realists, or for the labourious and lengthy discussions devoted to them. The convinced realist, quite naturally, does not feel called upon to justify the bare recognition of these entities. For him they are as indubitable, as immediately known, as any fact of sensation. What he might have felt justly called upon to do, but has not done, is to state the motives which impelled him to his labours, and to formulate the tacit assumptions underlying his explicit postulates. For us, his critics, a complete understanding of what he is trying to do and a thorough criticism of his conclusions is impossible till we discover both those motives and those assumptions.

Now it appears to me that the chief assumptions underlying *Gegenstandstheorie* are assumptions regarding a supposed instance of identity. It appears to me that the belief that any person at different times and different persons at any time may make the "same" judgment supplies the main motive for the theory of the relational nature of consciousness, and consequently also for the theory of objective entities. Conceivably, in the absence of any conviction that different people may make the same judgment, one might postulate a realm of monadistic propositions. There is no direct contradiction between the denial of identity and the postulation of such propositions. One might hold that every judgment, though unique in the history of the world, involves an objective correlate incapable of getting into relation with any other judgment of the same or of a different

individual. Such an objective correlate would be of the nature of an ephemeris, having one brief chance for participation in the world, with the certain doom of subsequent annihilation. Or a shadowy continuance in a state of total inactivity might be granted it. Possibly, indeed, the possession of objective character would involve this. But in that case it is difficult to see in what terms the continuance would be expressed, or in what manner it would occur, since even the possibility of ever coming into relation with another judgment throughout time and eternity would be denied it. Abstractly, however, the postulation of such an entity is conceivable. But actually, it is not what has been done by the realist. Moreover, if it had been, all motive for the continuance of *Gegenstandstheorie* would vanish. That theory is plausible, is reasonable, only in its office of accounting for the assumed identity of judgments and conceptions from moment to moment as acts of different individuals, or as repeated acts of the same individual.

It may be remarked that it is not subsistent objects only whose postulation presupposes belief in the realization of identities. In the physical universe,—and even in the world of cognizing subjects,—entities are singled out and treated as unitary wholes solely on the ground that they may enter, unchanged, into various relations,—that they may appear, as identical, in a variety of experiences. Not only does the need for a persistent element, common to a variety of experiences, and serving as their principle of coordination, constitute the sole *motive* for the singling out of such entities; it is the apparent discovery of a recurrent identity amid diversity of context that supplies the main *justification* for the presumption of the reality of physical entities as sharply distinguishable and unitary wholes.

Now it is quite evident that logical realists themselves are confident that two judgments may be identical; and they are by no means alone in their confidence. The belief in the possible identity of two judgments is a quite normal belief; it is one expression of that natural confidence in the reality of the permanent which, as I observed at the outset, appears to supply the main incentive for all philosophizing, though most for philoso-



phizing that is Platonic. The realist, then, holds his belief in common with a very large number. Like the philosophically unsophisticated, who share his conviction, he fails to substantiate it with serious argument. Unlike them, he fulfils the obligation to supply a description of the conditions under which identical judgments would be possible. He offers *Gegenstandstheorie*. Upon reflection that the *acts* of judgment as psychical experiences must at different times and under different conditions be different, and that the psychical *content* undoubtedly varies from person to person, he is driven to seek the ground for the identity of judgments in something which is not relative to individuals, not subject to conditions of time and place. He thus arrives at the notion of non-psychical *objects* of the acts of judgment; and to these he ascribes the identity.

Although the subject of identity is never treated as a controversial matter by the realists or put forward explicitly as the controlling motive for their theorizing, it gets plentiful recognition in their writings. "I perceive," says Husserl, "that in repeated acts of representation and judgment I mean, or may mean, identically the same concept or proposition."<sup>1</sup> "The idea which I have of the ice-fields of Greenland is assuredly a different one from that of Nannsen; but the object is the same."<sup>2</sup>

Although it is thus an object as opposed to a content that is assumed to constitute the identical element in two identical concepts or judgments, we must, as a preliminary measure to the discussion of identity, first consider the matter of content.

We have discovered that content amounts, according to realists, to a variable element, describable as a meaning; and that thus two kinds of meaning, related as independent variables, are present in every concept and judgment. In the case of concepts, at least, meaning in the tertiary sense, or content, is at once seen to coincide with connotation; and to be opposed to a denotation in the form of primary meaning or object. The concepts, *equilateral triangle*, and *equiangular triangle* have then supposedly as their common denotation the triangle (or class of triangles) which is thus variously described by them; and as

<sup>1</sup> *Log. Unt.*, II, p. 100.

<sup>2</sup> *Log. Unt.*, II, p. 392.

their connotation, or content, the property of equilateral triangularity and equiangular triangularity respectively. They agree, that is, in denotation, while differing in connotation; they possess the same object in spite of their dissimilarity of content.

In so far as to conceive and to judge are both acts of intention, are both cognitive modes of reference to an object, it would seem probable that any logical distinctions rightfully attributed to the simpler of the two types of mental experience would be somehow applicable to the other. But meaning is such an unprecedented phenomenon in the universe of mental and physical things, that one cannot with impunity venture any prophecies whatever concerning it. The fact that conceptions and judgments are both experiences in which the mind appears to be able to establish a connection with something devoid of location and substance, yet clearly recognizable, would not necessarily mean that judgments, like conceptions, exhibit the antithesis of denotation and connotation. But what does the antithesis amount to even in the case of concepts? Although it is the denotation of *judgments* that must subsequently claim our exclusive attention, it may be well, in passing, to throw open to question the realist's explanation of the denotation of *concepts*.

The realist assumes that such an expression as 'the equilateral triangle' possesses a definite and single denotation. This assumed denotation is characterized by him as a member of that large class of subsistent *Gegenstände* which constitute simple 'meanings,' or, in Meinong's phraseology, of *Objekte* of lower order. Now what, precisely, may this *Objekt* be?

Husserl emphatically declares, in the first place, that it is not a Platonic idea (form, or type); he protests against the hypostatizing of it as a thing, bereft indeed of physical and psychical nature, and yet real.

Is then, perhaps, the 'object' denoted by the expression in question the *class* of all triangles thus characterized?

The notion of class, though it may admit of anti-nominalistic interpretations, does, actually, tend to induce the contrary interpretations which are the product of the theory of fictions. To explain the denotation of 'the equilateral triangle' as a class,

jeopardizes its continuance as a subsistent *Gegenstand*. In any case it is fairly clear that the realists themselves do not regard it as a class. They do not employ the term 'class' or any concept that could be said to correspond to it. Moreover, if the denotation of the expression, and of similar expressions *were* a class, the formula "There are objects of which it is true that there are no such objects" would amount merely to a statement to the effect that "there are classes which possess no members"; which in turn reduces to the statement that two or more classes need have no common members; and the apparent mystery, the provoking paradox, and all need for elaborate *Gegenstandstheoretische* explanations would vanish.

But if the realists do not mean by 'the equilateral triangle' either a Platonic 'real' or the *class* of all actual or possible equilateral triangles, do they perhaps mean a *system of mutually implied properties*?

On the hypothesis that they do mean this, the problem of impossible (*ausserseiende*) objects once again vanishes. Such a supposed hybrid as 'the round-square' could then be said to denote at once, the unrealizable and mutually incompatible systems of properties implied by roundness and by squareness. There would thus be no further mystery about self-contradictory 'objects.' The expressions by which they seemed to be denoted, would merely denote compounded properties possessed by *no* object.

But Meinong, at least, definitely believes that 'the round-square' is an object; and neither he nor Husserl can be said to consider the denotation of such an expression as 'the equilateral triangle' to be either a property or a system of properties.

It is difficult then to see *what*, of the nature of a unified object, the denotation of such an expression is supposed by either of them to be.<sup>3</sup> We must leave the problem unsolved, and pass on to the still more complicated matter of the 'denotation' of propositions.

Meinong, as we have seen, defined content as something psychical opposed to the non-psychical object. This element we

<sup>3</sup> See below, page 38, note.

have seen reason to characterize as tertiary meaning; and we have discovered that, despite its attributed psychological character, it is by no means individual and variable. The content of the concept *equilateral triangle* seems to be quite as objective and constant as its denotation or object. Meinong, that is, in building up a third kind of meaning between act and object, appears not to have accounted for what turns out to be meaning in a fourth sense, or what I shall call 'variable connotation.'

What I mean by this expression may be illustrated by reference to popular usage. When the word *Egypt* is said to be rich in connotation, by connotation is not meant something perfectly arbitrary and subjective; nor on the other hand, something necessarily intrinsic to the concept denoted by the word. The richness of connotation varies with the individual; not to everyone does the word 'mean' precisely the same. And yet that meaning is not, either, subject to the *caprice* of the individual. He cannot, at will, compel the word to connote for him whatsoever he wishes.

But connotation in this sense, it may be exclaimed, is nothing but association. For it is indeed true that no two persons' associations are identical; and yet associations are not voluntarily alterable at will, and they have moreover an objective reference. To some extent connotation may be admitted to consist of associations. When however one takes for similar consideration a proposition instead of a concept, the inadequacy of a definition in terms of association at once becomes evident.

That there is such a variable element involved in judgments as well as in conceptions could not possibly be contested. Two persons, a small boy and a great mathematician for example, may both make the judgment:  $2 + 2 = 4$ . It is obvious that to the two, the bearing, the significance, the implications, the recognized applications, the limits of applicability of the proposition vary enormously. It is this variation that I mean by variation of connotation; this background of considerations is what I am calling meaning in a fourth sense; and all this could hardly be comprehended under the term association.

That concepts possess content, or meaning in the third sense we have satisfied ourselves; that judgments possess content

which may be identified with such meaning or connotation in its usual significance is at least possible. In any case tertiary meaning as Meinong describes it (under the name content) is not a variable element. It cannot then be identified with meaning in the fourth sense. Neither, as is very obvious, may the variable meaning be confused with the realist's postulated object. That object and variable connotation must be completely opposed. The chief ground for the opposition is the fact that while the object is postulated as something necessarily identical from one judgment to another, and from one point of time to another, the connotation, as a shifting complex of significances, is distinguished by extreme variability.

Thus we finally return to the question of denotation,—of the postulated atomic, isolable, object, capable of entering impartially into different persons' judgments regardless of presuppositions, context and mental background. We are called upon to justify, or condemn, the belief in that constant core of meaning supposed to remain after the layers of idiosyncratic private meaning, in the form of connotation, have been stripped off; a core accessible alike to the boy and the mathematician, and primarily meant by both of them when they make the 'same' judgment.

On the supposition, which is that of the realist, that when two minds entertain an 'identical' meaning, that meaning is a single, unified, isolable entity, we are at this point left high and dry by the argument. It is only too obvious that an absolute demonstration that two minds ever mean precisely the same single entity is impossible. Only a direct comparison of the meanings occurring in the two cases could accomplish this; and such a comparison cannot, unhappily, be made. But we are not therefore reduced to a position of agnosticism, and forced to content ourselves with the reflection that realism does indeed possess claims to acceptance on condition that two minds may, and sometimes do, apprehend an identical object; but that this important condition can be neither proved nor disproved.

No; we may penetrate back of the condition as I have just formulated it, and question the propriety of the notion of meaning

which is involved in that formulation,—the notion of it as a single, unified, isolable entity. To compare such a tight, self-contained entity related to the judgment of one individual with that related to the judgment of another, in order to discover if the same entity is involved in the two cases, is, I have said, impossible. But such a comparison may not be called for in order to determine whether the ‘same’ judgment is possible for different individuals. A meaning, in the sense of object, may be something very different from a monad,—something for which there are unique and feasible methods of investigation other than those of direct comparison.

To call in question the monadic conception of objects is no slight matter. That conception constitutes the logical realist’s chief claim to originality. His general doctrine, shorn of the qualifications which convert it into a monadism, possesses really very little that is distinctive. In so far as the theory, thus shorn, seems profound and important and acceptable at all, it appears to admit of rejection by logicians of very few persuasions. Indeed, most of what in the theory is reasonable and plausible, one might say, had already become a truism in many systems of philosophy long before the sect of realists with their special set of terms and arguments appeared upon the earth.

Objective idealists, for example, insist similarly upon the non-psychical character of what is conceived or judged, and thus upon some form of the theory of ‘intentionality.’ Bradley observes,<sup>4</sup> “The idea in judgment is the universal meaning; it is not ever the occasional imagery, and still less can it be the whole psychical event. . . . Judgment proper is the act which refers an ideal content (recognized as such) to a reality beyond the act.” “. . . The affirmation or judgment consists in saying, This idea is no mere idea but is a quality of the real. The act attaches the floating adjective to the nature of the world, and, at the same time, tells me that it was there already.”<sup>5</sup> “We shall always go wrong unless we remember that the relations within the content of any meaning, however complex, are still not relations between mental existences.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Principles of Logic*, p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> *L. c.*, p. 11.

<sup>6</sup> *L. c.*, p. 13.

The 'intentionality' of judgments, according to idealists, consists of a reference, not only to a delimited portion of reality, but also ultimately to reality as such. Reality is not referred to piece-meal by particular mental experiences. Moreover the 'act of judgment' is not itself sharply delimited from the total experience in which it arises. The subjective side of judgment is not, any more than the objective side, to be atomized and isolated. Particular judgments are to be treated as such only by cutting across the continuous and ever developing apprehension of the real,—an apprehension which constitutes at once a continuum and a process of evolution.

Pragmatism, no less than objective idealism, could similarly be shown to include doctrines of 'intentionality,' though of a different variety still. In this case the objectivity consists, one might say, of possible acts, these being acts of verification.

The monadism inherent in the doctrines of logical realism puts them in a different case. As a theory of monads, logical realism is individual and distinctive enough, but also far from acceptable to every comer.

The realists, in formulating their doctrine, appear to have proceeded upon the assumption that the universe may legitimately be reduced to substantives. They claim a right to treat as nouns its parts and concatenations of its parts; its aspects and the relations between them,—and even such concatenations of its parts and aspects as cannot possibly be exemplified in nature, being mutually incompatible.

Now we granted rather uncritically at the outset that anything which admitted of predication could, with perfect propriety, be called an object. And anything, it would seem, a process,—a doing or a becoming,—a state, or a relation, is, or may be, the subject of a proposition, and accordingly is, or may be, in so far, a substantive. But when a meaning is described by realists as an object, something more than its character of functioning grammatically as the subject of a sentence is obviously meant.

But indeed one may question the validity of even that bare grammatical interpretation of the substantive character of certain meanings. Recent investigation, aided by symbolic logic, has

taught us the wholesome lesson that not all that appears to function as the subject of discourse in reality does so. We have learned that many verbal forms prove on analysis to mean quite otherwise than at first appears. Some of the illogicality of grammar, and of the ungrammatical aspects of logic, has been made plain. The simultaneous and related investigation of the fields of grammar and logic furnishes, in fact, exceedingly important lessons for realistic dogmatism. One such lesson we find administered at this point. If, as is the teaching of certain recent theorizing, such a monstrosity as "the-round-square" or "the-present-king-of-France" does not really, though it does in appearance,<sup>7</sup> function as the subject of the expressions in which

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Bertrand Russel, *Mind*, 1905, "On Denoting"; and Whitehead and Russell, *Principia Mathematica*, Vol. I, p. 69, ff: (Translations are substituted for symbolic terms) "Whenever the grammatical subject of a proposition can be supposed not to exist without rendering the proposition meaningless, it is plain that the grammatical subject is not a proper name, *i. e.*, not a name directly representing some object. Thus in all such cases, the proposition must be capable of being so analyzed that what was the grammatical subject shall have disappeared. Thus when we say "the round square does not exist" we may, as a first attempt as such an analysis, substitute "it is false that there is an object X which is both round and square." Generally, when "The so-and-so" is said not to exist, we have a proposition of the form "The  $\varphi$  does not exist," *i. e.*, the proposition " $c$  exists, and for all values of X, 'X is  $\varphi$ ' is equivalent to 'X is identical with  $c$ ' is false" or some equivalent. Here the apparent grammatical subject "the  $\varphi$ " has completely disappeared: thus in "The  $\varphi$  does not exist," "the  $\varphi$ " is an incomplete symbol.

"By an extension of the above argument, it can easily be shown that 'the  $\varphi$ , is *always* an incomplete symbol." By an analysis of the proposition, "Scott is the author of Waverley," Mr. Russell shows that the phrase "author of Waverley" is not a *name* of anything. If it were, then supposing it to be a name for  $c$  we should have the proposition "Scott is  $c$ ." "But if  $c$  is anyone except Scott, this proposition is false; while if  $c$  is Scott, the proposition is 'Scott is Scott' which is trivial, and plainly different from 'Scott is the author of Waverley.'" He proceeds to the conclusion that such descriptive phrases, having meaning only "in use" are incomplete symbols. ". . . we just not attempt to define 'the  $\varphi$ ' but must define the *uses* of this symbol, *i. e.*, the propositions in whose symbolic expression it occurs."

In somewhat less technical terms, the doctrine may be thus epitomized: The proposition "The S is A" is not an assertion about S but an elliptical statement to the effect that

1. There is not more than one S.
2. There is an S that is a P.

or, what amounts to the same thing:

1. The class of S's is either a zero class or a unit-class.
2. The class of S-P's is not a zero class, neither of which assertions has as its subject *the S*.



it seems to occur, what is left to say in defence of its substantiality as a unified meaning?

To phrase the matter in this way is to some degree to beg the question. At bottom the problem of substantiality and that of functioning as an indisputable subject of discourse is the same. We may not assume a right to deny that the meanings attaching to certain turns of expression so function, for that, after all, is, at least among other things, what the realists take issue about. When they call meanings 'objects,' they undoubtedly mean more, but they certainly do not mean less, than that every such supposed meaning may be a proper subject of a proposition. The grammatical consideration at least gives us a precedent for the dispersion of supposed objects in other than a grammatical sense.

Those objects, I have said, call forth criticism on the ground of their unpalatable substantive character. But it is more than their bare substantiality that is to be questioned; the monadism of logical realism is a monadism of "windowless" elements, and precludes the possibility of relations of inter-dependence between its members. This attribution to meaning of the character of completely isolable entities, while it is the most distinctive feature of realism, is also its weakest.

Now if a thing is an entity, it is, in some sense of the term, a whole. Integration involves unification; an entity is a whole if it possesses unity. This unity may of course arise from any one of a number of different characters; but the kinds of unity that distinguish wholes fall into two groups; they are either an essential property of the entities possessing them and not to be explained by reference to anything with which those entities may chance to get into relation; or they are constituted of certain effects, functions, or relations of those entities in their character of members of a group or groups. The impermeability of the entities of realism precludes the possibility of their possessing a unity of the second type. The unity of meanings must, from the realist's standpoint, be explained in terms not of function, relation, or effect, but of being.

The curious result of regarding any property as an essential

property, inexplicable in terms of anything outside the strict limits of the thing possessing it, is that speech is paralyzed. The essential, regarded as pure being, guiltless of action, is inexplicable and even incommunicable. In the face of such supposed essences there may be only solemn asseveration, with nothing asserted. And discussion, reduced to the necessary small compass, becomes portentous, but rather empty. Yet, while definitely robbed of the kind of persuasiveness that derives from argument, it becomes also impregnable to refutation.

The practice of treating certain characters as ultimate and self-contained is one that—in spite of the prevalence of pragmatic ways of thinking—has in recent speculation become fashionable. Far from regarding the resulting agnostic proclamations as something to regret, and, with increasing knowledge, to hope to rectify, their authors evince a most extraordinary self-satisfaction. The discovery of something which can be pronounced totally inexplicable appears to be productive of extreme elation and pride. Philosophers experience a pleasing finality in being able to declare: this is indefinable. The phenomenon occurs in discussions of many different topics: Mr. G. E. Moore's important announcement that the good is ultimate and indefinable is a case in point. The realists likewise plume themselves in several connections upon having hit upon something about which there is nothing whatever to say. Some of the most important concepts occurring in their system are thus summarily disposed of.

Unity, in so far as it is regarded as strictly essential and not constituted of effects, would be in the same case.

Meanings are treated as entities which have a character undetermined by any relations that obtain between them. As meanings *an sich*, they are entities *an sich*, and the unifying principle which constitutes their thing-hood is something intimate, internal, intrinsic to them. The realists do not themselves, I hasten to say, talk about this unity as one of being as opposed to a unity of function, and pronounce it indefinable. But in treating meanings as isolable entities at all, the consequences of extreme pluralism are directly involved. To the realist the meaning of every word, of every aggregation of words, of every

assertion and every concatenation of assertions, constitutes a unity which is intrinsic. Of this unity of the denoted object there is no proof nor explanation, since it cannot be resolved into terms of what the object is or what it does.

But do meanings admit of the attribution of a unity of this description?

When a word, or any other symbol, is said to have meaning, what is intended is that the symbol points to, takes the place of, supplies a transition to, a something else. This is the active sense of meaning, which the realists provide for verbally in their distinction of *meinen* and *Meinung*, of *bedeuten* and *Bedeutung*. But it is the substantive significance of meaning,—meaning in the primary sense,—that I am declaring indefinable on the realist's presuppositions.

The question of reality and that of definability are of course two questions. A thing might very well be even if we could say nothing whatever about it by way of analysis. The absolutely simple would probably be in this case. But in the absence, in human experience, of the absolutely simple, we are confronted with the doubt whether such unities as we encounter are unities of being at all, and not unities of function; to which the further doubt may be added: whether the unities of being—if there be any—in so far as they are significant and communicable and operative in experience, are not also unities of function. To discover that they were unities of function would not preclude the possibility that they were also unities of being; but the bare possession of that second character there seems to be no proving or disproving. Metaphysically, the hypothesis that there were integers—infinitudes of them—which owed their unity to a not further definable character of being, might to some minds be extremely interesting. But such an hypothesis, whether it be true or false, belongs to that region of transcendental thought which has as its appropriate objects unknowable things in themselves. For the denial as for the affirmation of such objects we have no reasonable justification. And there are two chief reasons against even the presumption of such objects.

In the first place the postulation of unitary, integral, essential

wholes is open to the suspicion that always attaches to what is asserted and defended in response to a powerful emotional demand. In this case the emotion is undoubtedly derived ultimately from a fundamental logical coercion. But its compelling force is one of feeling rather than reason. The human mind likes wholes. It encounters intellectual obstacles, and experiences inhibitions, every time it attempts to envisage anything which, like an infinite series, is not a "given whole." The gathering up of areas within boundaries, which is part of the categorizing instinct, is congenial and satisfying. The unbounded, unintegrated, appears dangerously impermanent. And the emotional unrest that is aroused by the impermanent is one of the things, as we have noted, that drives men to Platonize. The more literally, *i. e.*, the more monadically, they take their Platonism, the more emotionally satisfying it proves to be. The notion of a universe of closed, self-contained, autonomous entities, impervious to change and destruction, such as the realist provides for himself, is one of the emotionally most comforting notions that is producible by metaphysics.

All this, though it may serve as an argument against the assumption of wholes, is of course no valid argument against there being such. For if our universe happens to be a place,—which it very well may be,—of perfect rational-emotional adjustment, the demands of feeling may be identical with the demands of reason, and their satisfaction furnish evidence of metaphysical validities. But in the absence of proof that the two realms of thought and emotion are thus intimately correlated, we must face the fact that the satisfaction of feelings certainly gives no evidence on the nature of reality, and in fact is slightly prejudicial of such notions as function for that satisfaction.

The other reason against the scientific policy of postulating essential wholes, is likewise of a negative kind. It consists of the fact that the only sort of wholes that enter into our experience are wholes with regard to function, and that even those are to a large degree imperfectly integrated and indefinitely bounded. We do not exactly perceive the limits of the supposedly bounded colours of a spectrum; we do not experience the exact beginning

and conclusion of a rising and vanishing series of tones; we cannot pronounce upon the identical line where shadow on the ground merges into sunlight; we cannot tell when a fragrance ceases to be perceived; or when the neutral ground between coolness and warmth is passed. The world, even as it enters into our experience, is a complex of relativities, an indivisible continuum. Merely to cut it up into entities as it comes to us directly is Utopian and impracticable. How much more so the cutting it up into integers out of all relation to experience.

Furthermore how falsifying of experience and purely theoretical is the severing of all connections between these postulated integers. Complete integration entails such isolation. But by what far stretches of abstraction and simplification, does the mind arrive at such a notion. All that, known through experience, we call a thing, comes to us in a context, with the definition of function. Just as in the realms of light, colour, sound, temperature, fragrance, we distinguish limits and envisage wholes only by an act of faith, so in the region of artificial objects—chairs and tables, bridges and lead-pencils,—even of senates, and laws, and fashions,—we find wholes which are such only in context and by respect to purpose. The familiar instance of the attempted definition of “the same” Greek boat, or of the identical knife, sufficiently illustrates the point. Self-identity—which is another name for constancy in a variety of relations—is something which finds its only rational application in view of particular functions.

The burden of proof at least rests then on those who advocate essential wholes.

If meanings constitute such wholes their nature will be thoroughly indescribable and indefinable. A meaning as an isolable invariable entity, accessible to mental acts but out of every significant relation to them and out of every determining relation to other meanings, will be beyond reach of comparison, investigation, and identification. We shall know of them only that they enjoy pure self-contained continuance.

Over against the realists' atomizing of the universe into nouns we have the pragmatists' vapourizing of it into verbs. The

latter method has at least the virtue of supplying criteria for definition to take the place of the paralyzing formula: this thing is an undefinable.

Even if a meaning does not consist of consequences, its nature may perhaps be intelligibly ascertainable only by investigating the consequences. But that meanings do indeed consist of the acts and operations which we call their application, is a supposition which may be not preposterously entertained. It is, of course, a supposition inconsistent with the doctrine that concepts, complexes, propositions, possess a stable, isolable, denotation as a core for accidental and unessential connotation. It is,—to revert to our former distinction of the four kinds of meaning,—a supposition of the invalidity of the assumption of the first kind of meaning, and of the validity of the assumption of the fourth.

Are meanings not things but processes? Is their essence not a core, but a radiating congeries of associated, particular applications? Are meanings fundamentally not denotations but connotations?

That they embrace connotation as well as denotation,—that in their occurrences in particular individual experiences they radiate individual associations; that they do have consequences, and applications and limitations,—the realist himself would grant. What he contends is that these radiations are subsidiary to a changeless inalienable denotation.

But,—to rid ourselves wholly, for the moment, of the obsessing substantive view which realism voices,—what may meanings be, stripped of all particular application, all practical functioning, all individual association, context and condition? What is that inner self-identical core of constant meaning of the proposition  $2 + 2 = 4$ ? In any specifiable sense do the great mathematician and the little schoolboy,—to revert to our yet unanswered question,—mean identically the same single thing when they make the judgment of that equality?

It is because of the unique and elliptical character of meaning as a mental performance, that we so naïvely endow it with a nature and function for which we possess no introspective, nor any other kind of, evidence. We are accustomed to observe

that the conscious content of habitual judgments becomes increasingly abbreviated and symbolic, without,—so we think,—losing any of its original denotative significance. In a half-mystical way we attribute to any given group of words the almost intelligent ability to lay hold of something non-mental, non-spatial, and super-temporal which we call a meaning, and which is supposed to be something distinct from, and uninfluenced by, all concrete conditions, all matters of context and of inter-relations with other similar objective entities.

Consider the case of the judgment  $2 + 2 = 4$ . It is undeniable that some at least of the consequences—of the particular applications—which are involved in the knowledge of the mathematician are included also in the knowledge of the schoolboy. It is probable that most of the considerations which cluster about the verbal formula for the boy are included in the mental background of the man. To neither one nor the other however are the great majority of these considerations present to consciousness at the moment at which they actually make the judgment in question. The richness or paucity of their mental content at that moment is supposed by the realist to make no difference in the denotation of their judgment. In this of course he is right. What I am asserting is not that denotation must be adequately represented in present conscious content, but that the denotation is not such a core of identical unitary meaning as the realist asserts it to be. What I am denying is that the boy and the man, though they make a judgment with a denotation inadequately represented in conscious content, do not, when they judge in common that  $2 + 2 = 4$ , judge altogether the same thing.

The view that I am advocating may be stated thus: two individuals may make judgments similar in varying degrees up to identity as a theoretical limit, the degree of that approximation to absolute identity being determined by the extent to which considerations that limit and determine the total system of the practical and theoretical significances of the judgment form part of the mental background of the two persons making that judgment. Theoretically, then, two persons' judgments may

be identical and probably in many cases are so, but not in the sense that each is mysteriously related to the same single simple entity, possessed as a common meaning. But the ultimate denotation,—meaning in the primary sense,—of the judgment  $2 + 2 = 4$ , as made by the child and by the mathematical specialist, would not be entirely the same. Some of the important considerations of the applicability and consequences of the proposition which they both apprehend are indeed common to the two. The child, however, is oblivious of the distinction of ordinal and cardinal numbers; he is unaware of the inapplicability of the proposition in the case of “classes” of different orders, and the like. And, provided mathematics continues to enlarge and develop, the mathematician himself cannot be said to make quite the same judgment as may be made by a mathematician in the year 2000. But the judgments of the child and the mathematician certainly are similar to a high degree, in that the denotation of the child’s judgment forms a large part—and indeed a largely essential part,—of the denotation of the man’s judgment.

Just as pragmatism with all its wilfulness and occasional excesses does good service to philosophy in bringing forward the notion of function in place of that of substance, so absolutism, out of the midst of a context which may be largely unacceptable, furnishes us with the very significant concept of intimate coherence to replace that of aggregation. It is to the consideration of this concept as applied to all meanings that my immediately preceding observations directly lead.

The notion of coherence definitely calls in question the doctrine of the externality of relations, and thereby of a very essential aspect of logical realism. The realist’s pluralism of isolable entities is grounded upon the dogma that relations are external, not constitutive of the elements between which they obtain. In terms of the coherence view, or of the theory of the essentiality of relations, the nature of meanings may be thus generally expressed: Meanings are so intimately related that their forcible uprooting out of the total context of actual and possible meanings is fatal to their continuance. They form a system of closely



inter-dependent elements no one of which possesses a character conceivable in itself alone. The essence and character of each must, that is, be looked for, not within any assignable limits, but in radiations of innumerable related meanings, and, in varying degrees, in the entire system of meanings. By which it is in no wise meant that meaning is subjective,—that it is not totally super-individual,—but only that when an individual mind is coerced in its recognition of “the meaning” denoted by its judgment, it is coerced not by a single, isolated, unified entity, but by an entire universe of interpenetrated, systematized *meanings in use*. ‘The meaning’ is then, as a unit, merely a convenient term about which to centre one’s discourse. As a unit it is a fiction.

It is thus with the combined weapons of the theory of fictions, of the pragmatic conception of functions, and the absolutist notion of merged and interpenetrated things, that one may attempt to combat the postulations of logical realism. But in the last analysis all argument is vain in the face of the situation created by the appearance of *Gegenstandstheorie* in the meta-physical arena. In a sense, the phantoms conjured up by decree of realists cannot, by any process of reasoning, be definitively banished. One may plead the expediency of Occam’s dictum, and argue the needlessness of raising to the dignity of a thing all that one may converse about. Drawing upon the inventions and devices and arguments of recent non-realistic speculation one may endeavour to allay the floods of hypostatized ‘objects’ with which every region of discourse is filled. But even the powerful alembic of the theory of fictions is powerless to dissolve altogether the realist’s universe of impervious atoms.

For the banishing of entities is a very different matter from their initial reception. Such are the strange ways of logic that the veriest charlatan may foist upon society entities which the most reputable of logicians has no power absolutely to deny. A universal negative is not to be levelled by anyone at the tenuous and evasive meanings-in-themselves which the realist has provided with an appellation and a home. And the realist is no charlatan. He is ingenious and acute and rather learnedly

persuasive. And he has to his credit, or discredit, the unique claim of having forced upon the attention of the world more *entia* than it had ever seen the like of; and not *entia* only, but an untiring instrument for their further multiplication. His device of "higher orders" makes possible infinite hierarchies of successively more vaporous, though increasingly more highly articulated, *Gegenstände* on the easy system of throwing together simple objects by any type of relation, or of incorporating any proposition within a further proposition by means of a predication.

A further consideration of one special type of these postulated entities will engage us in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE REALISTIC THEORY OF TRUTH.

IT is apparently a wilful and unreasonable inversion of the right order, first to attempt demolishing the doctrines of logical realism in their general bearing, and then to proceed to examine certain of those doctrines in one of their particular applications. If the interpretation of meanings as isolable, self-contained, atomic wholes is questioned in its entirety, that interpretation in the case of such meanings as happen to be what we call 'true' is thereby naturally involved; and a fresh consideration of the matter might seem superfluous. But there are circumstances relative to the problem of truth, inadequately accounted for in other theories, that may still appear to recommend some sort of logical realism. These special circumstances tend to qualify the criticism already leveled at logical realism in its entirety, to the extent of limiting their application to such meanings as are not describable as *true propositions*. It is at least theoretically possible to hold, in accordance with the contentions of the last chapter, that acts of *conception* and of *false* judgment stand in relation to no such integrated independent entities as realists make their objects out to be, even though a similar denial may not be in order regarding the postulated objective correlates of *true* judgments.

For logical realism, as we have seen, the distinction between true judgments and false is of less consequence than the distinction between judgments as such, regardless of their "truth-value," and other classes of mental experience. Accordingly, for the logical realist, the presence or absence of such features as make a proposition factual or non-factual matters less than the circumstance that propositions, true or false, constitute a class that is significantly distinguishable from the class of percepts and concepts. His ambition to stock his logical universe with objects antecedes his interest in their differentiation into two

species corresponding to the species of true judgments and false with which they are to be correlated. The realist, in other words, is singularly guiltless of preference for true judgments and for the objects of true judgments. Indeed, in his eagerness to establish the axiom that all psychical experiences involve a relation to an object, he is even less zealous in defence of 'factual' propositions than of his postulated objects of false judgments, since such judgments, in nearly all theories but his own, are left unprovided with objects altogether.

But the radical and significant difference between the true and the false is not left altogether unconsidered by the realist; and it is by virtue of his occasional, but very explicit, treatment of the meaning of truth that we are warranted in attributing to him the realistic doctrine to be set beside the many other doctrines of truth to which the speculation of our time has given rise. Like some of those other theories, his theory is concerned rather with the metaphysics—the ontology one might say—of truth, than with the criteria of knowledge. It attempts to point out, not what judgments, or what kind of judgments, are true and what false, but what the quality of trueness in true propositions consists of. This disinterested logical treatment of the problem, though not peculiar to logical realism, is rather more distinctive of it than of any other contemporary system. Pragmatism, indeed, furnishes definitions of truth as distinguishable from the knowledge of it; but truth, for it, coincides for the most part with *known* truth, and its definition amounts to a formula for the testing of beliefs. Again, the coherence view of truth, although, in offering a definition of absolute truth which removes it definitely from the reach of human knowledge, it succeeds in attaining a highly theoretical attitude toward the notion, reintroduces, in the doctrine of degrees of truth, what amounts to criteria of knowledge. Such knowledge is of course only partial knowledge, since its objects are only partially true. But a test for determining the degree of approximation of that knowledge and that truth to absolute knowledge and absolute truth is given in the criteria of complexity and comprehensiveness. Theoretically, on the basis of a definition of truth as the system of the complete

description of the totality of things, a principle for determining the grades of known partial truths is automatically furnished.

Logical realism vouchsafes no such aid for the appraising of judgments. It fails to do so partly because its interest is differently focussed, and partly because of the realist's somewhat naïve and simple point of view regarding the possibility of knowledge. Not only are truths unquestioningly assumed to be immediately cognized through actual human judgments, but,—what is a different matter,—such judgments are assumed to be known to be true. Both these assumptions are quite unessential to the realistic doctrine that truths, or factual propositions, constitute a realm of isolable, coordinate, atomic entities, since such entities are not, by this theory, dependent upon being the objects of actual judgments.

That the realists should regard truths as atomic in character was necessitated by their general theory of meaning. Indeed that general theory predetermined,—both by its treatment of concepts and by its treatment of propositions—the essentials of the realistic theory of truth. On the basis of the general theory, there was no escape for the realist from the pronouncement that 'trueness' is an atomic meaning whose essence depends on no systematic inter-relation of other concepts, or meanings; and that 'truths,' as substantives, identifiable with facts, are isolable and independent wholes.

What, apparently at least, *was* left open to his choice was the alternative explanations of 'trueness' as an indefinable *quality* of certain propositions in themselves considered, and as a *relation of correspondence* between those propositions and the further, non-propositional universe of existences. This second alternative, furthermore, left him the choice of offering an explanation of what 'correspondence' between a propositional subsistent and a non-propositional existent would consist of; or of treating the notion of correspondence as itself an indefinable.

But the apparent possibility of a choice between the first pair of alternatives was only apparent. The conformation of their general theory of meaning foredoomed the realists to ambiguities and contradictions in the event of their choosing to regard

'trueness' as an indefinable *quality* of propositions. For even though they thereby excluded the notion of *correspondence* between the propositional and the non-propositional, from their explanation of 'trueness,' the fact that their postulated world of subsistent entities was partly made up of a set of propositional formulations of what exists, propositionally unformulated, in the real world, practically involved a relation of some sort of correspondence between the two realms.

As we shall see, the realists did, as a matter of fact, at least sometimes, make this perilous choice. They sometimes regarded as an ultimately indefinable quality the 'trueness' of true propositions. But they also clearly recognized, on occasion, that true propositions must be said to *agree with* the actual—though without attempting to explain what such agreement consists of. The chief confusions inherent in their explicit statements as to what 'trueness' is, may, I think, be traced to the anomalous character of the position to which they were thus committed.

In the case of Meinong, the vacillation between the two alternatives, and the reason for it, is easily observable and soon disposed of. "One asserts what is true," he says,<sup>1</sup> "when what one says agrees with what is, or more exactly, with what is factual." Again,<sup>2</sup> "The judgment would not be true if . . . it did not agree with the facts" (mit dem Tatsachen gleichsam nicht zusammenstimmt). But he observes further that "a judgment is true not in so far as it is a judgment about an existent, or even a subsistent object, but in so far as it lays hold upon a subsistent proposition (ein seiendes Objektiv erfasst). . . . The being of the proposition is the essential condition for truth, and truth is partially constituted of that being. The judgment would not be true if the proposition in question were not subsistent."

"A proposition is false simply in so far as it is not true, or in so far as it fails to agree with a factual proposition, or finally in so far as it is not factual."<sup>3</sup>

"A proposition that subsists is describable as a fact."<sup>4</sup> "A proposition must carry factuality within itself, and indeed, so

<sup>1</sup> *Ueb. An.*, p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> *Ueb. Geg.*, p. 499.

<sup>3</sup> *Ueb. An.*, pp. 94-95.

<sup>4</sup> *Ueb. An.*, p. 69.

far as I can see, as a fundamental quality for which there is no definition, and, at least at present, not even any description.”<sup>5</sup>

When Meinong calls a proposition factual by reason of its ‘agreement with facts,’ he is not, of course, any more than when he declares factuality to be an undefinable quality, giving the notion a definition. In both versions of his theory of truth—as an ultimate quality and as a relation—‘trueness’ functions as an undefinable; for of the meaning of correspondence he attempts no explanation. If he had attempted one he would have found himself in the old disturbing dilemma experienced by every supporter of the correspondence theory of truth. The resemblance between the supposed ‘immanent object’ and actuality he would have had to pronounce either complete or incomplete. If the resemblance was complete,—if the immanent object was a perfect replica of the transcendent object—to what end would the reduplication be postulated? While if the resemblance was incomplete, of what kind, and of what degree would the resemblance be supposed to be? And how, in any case, could anyone say what the transcendent was like, in so far as it failed to be copied?

Husserl’s vacillation between two apparently incompatible notions of ‘trueness’—as an undefinable quality, and as a relation—is also, it seems to me, like Meinong’s, to be explained on the ground of his failure to recognize clearly that his general theory of meanings, as constituting a realm correlative with the time-space world, committed him unavoidably to a notion of correspondence between the two realms. But in his case the confusion is even greater than in the case of Meinong. For Meinong, as we have seen, sometimes stumbles upon an admission that true propositions sustain a relation of agreement or correspondence with what *is*, or the factual, and for the rest maintains his indefensible notion of the “trueness’ of a proposition as an inexplicable intrinsic quality. Husserl, on the other hand, even in his interpretation of truth as a ‘relation’ between the ‘meant’ and the ‘given’ fails to regard it as a relation of correspondence.

We may notice first what appears to be an explanation of ‘trueness’ as an intrinsic *quality* of certain meanings. “What is

<sup>5</sup> *Ueb. An.*, pp. 70-71.

true is absolute, is true *an sich*. Truth is identically one, whether men or monsters, angels or gods, apprehend it in judgment."<sup>6</sup> "My act of judgment is a fleeting particular experience beginning and ceasing. Not so, what my judgment affirms, [for example] this content, *that the three altitudes of a triangle meet in a point*. As often as I or anyone uses this same expression in the same sense, there is a new act of judgment. . . . The acts of judgment are from case to case different; but what they judge, what the affirmation affirms is everywhere the same. It is identical in the strict sense of the word, it is one and the same geometrical truth."<sup>7</sup> "I perceive that what in the proposition in question I mean, or (if I merely hear it) apprehend as its meaning, is identically what it is whether I think and am, whether any thinking persons and acts are, or not. This is true for every kind of meaning,—subject meanings, predicate-meanings, meanings of relation and connection, etc. It is true, above all, for the ideal determinations which primarily apply only to meanings. These include,—to mention only some of the more important,—the predicates *true* and *false*, *possible* and *impossible*, *universal* and *particular*, *determinate* and *indeterminate*, etc."<sup>8</sup>

But the appearance of an easy and wholesale disposal, in this manner, of the problem of truth, is contradicted by Husserl's subsequent procedure. In later sections of his work he seems to qualify his earlier views in such a way as to lead one to believe that 'trueness' is not after all an intrinsic *quality* of certain meanings, but a relation between a meaning and something else. He defines truth as an "identity: the complete agreement between what is meant and what is given as such."<sup>9</sup>

This part of his theory is bound up with intricate and prolonged epistemological considerations. Indeed, it appears, by reason of the rôle apparently attributed to *mental acts* for the production of truth, to be itself actually an epistemological, not a metaphysical theory. Some, at least, of the epistemology, we shall be warranted in passing by, and, together with it, certain of the alternative versions of what he means by 'trueness.' This

<sup>6</sup> *Log. Unt.*, I, p. 117.

<sup>7</sup> *Log. Unt.*, II, p. 44.

<sup>8</sup> *Log. Unt.*, II, p. 100.

<sup>9</sup> *Log. Unt.*, II, p. 594.



procedure would be rash in the case of almost any other logician than Husserl. But, as we have already seen in his explanation of *Inhalt*, his manner of apportioning technical terms is loose in the extreme. It is perfectly plain that alternative uses of a term are, for him, true alternatives, incapable of reconciliation. 'Content' he defined variously as equivalent to 'object,' 'material,' 'intentional essence,' 'meaning,' and 'fulfilling sense.' Similarly here, in his explanation of 'truth,' he treats himself to irreconcilable variants. "Truth," he says,<sup>10</sup> "as correlate of an identifying act is a *fact* (*Sachverhalt*) and as correlate of a complete identification it is an identity: the complete agreement between what is meant and what is given as such." This he calls the "objective" sense of truth. He contrasts it with truth in a second sense,<sup>11</sup> which has to do with "the ideal relation which obtains in the congruence (defined as 'evidence') between the cognitive essences of the congruent acts" [of meaning and fulfillment]. In this sense, Truth is agreement as such. In the third place, he identifies the given object in the sense of the 'meant' as being "truth, or the true." And finally he defines truth from a fourth point of view as "correctness of the intention . . . adequacy to the true object."

One cannot, it is evident, regard as expressions of *the same* notion of 'trueness' these divergent formulations. Certain of them must be admitted to be accidental, and subsidiary to some one dominant conception.

There can be no doubt, in view of the space devoted to it, that the notion of truth as the identity of 'the meant and the given' is for Husserl the most serious and important notion. It is the notion to which his elaborate epistemology directly leads, and the notion for which he obviously tries to prepare the way in his earlier, more general, discussion of meanings, regardless of their "truth value." We must, then, question rather closely what he intends by the opposition of the 'meant' and the 'given,' and what is to be made—in the way of a theory of the meaning of trueness—of the suggested identity between them.

It must be recalled that, for Husserl as for Meinong, there are

<sup>10</sup> *L. c.*, II, p. 594.

<sup>11</sup> *L. c.*, II, p. 595.

correlative worlds of existences and meanings, of non-propositional actualities and of propositional subsistences. "Nothing," he says,<sup>12</sup> "can be, without being somehow determined; and *that* it is thus determined is just the Truth *as such* which constitutes the necessary correlate of being *as such*." Again<sup>13</sup> . . . "the world is nothing but the collective, objective unity which corresponds to the ideal system of all truth of fact (*Thatsachenwahrheit*), and is inseparable from it." Unquestionably he must then intend by the 'given' to which meanings conform, this 'world'; and this world, though it would contain meanings as part of its elements, would, to a large degree at least, by virtue of its inclusion also of physical and psychical existences, have to be regarded as non-propositional in character.

Now between this world and such meanings as constitute the class of factual propositions there would, I have said, seem to be necessarily a relation of correspondence; though, as I have admitted, it is extremely difficult to see in what terms this correspondence would be defined. But between meanings and 'the given,' Husserl, as we have just seen, postulates as the condition of truth, not a relation of correspondence but an identity. His theory, logical and epistemological together, may be thus paraphrased and summarized.

There are acts of meaning whose objects are meanings. There are also fulfilling acts, of the nature of intuitions (resulting from immediate perceptual experience of the world), whose objects are 'the given,' *i. e.*, actuality as it really is. Between the objects of intentions (that is, meanings), and the objects of fulfilling acts (that is, 'the given') there may obtain relations of varying degree of correspondence, up to identity as a limit. In cases where correspondence is totally lacking, we have *falsity*, in cases where complete identity occurs, we have *truth*. Truth itself is the identity of the meant and the given.

Theoretically, on this scheme, both series—of the meant and of the given—might be regarded as variables. The object meant and the object given might be regarded as approximating, in a series of more and more adequate judgments, to that object in

<sup>12</sup> *L. c.*, I, p. 229.

<sup>13</sup> *L. c.*, I, p. 121.

which they become merged. But it is fairly clear that Husserl, though he regards the meanings of the more and more adequate judgments as constituting a series of more and more adequate values of variables, considers the 'given' (as being not *merely* given, but real), as throughout constant.

But whether interpreted in this way, or in the other, the theory, which pretends to supply a significant explanation of truth, evaporates under examination. For meaning, at the point where it becomes *identical* with 'the given' cannot, it would seem, fail to disappear, leaving us with only 'the given,' which, as I said at the outset, might be regarded as non-propositional actuality. It might be objected, however, that 'the given' must not be thus regarded—that it is itself, on Husserl's view, propositional in character, consisting of completely adequate descriptions of reality in the form of *meanings*. But even this attempted justification of the theory is incapable of rescuing it. For if the identity (which constitutes trueness) between the meant and the given is an identity of two sets of meanings, adequate and inadequate, there is left, unsolved, the problem of what would constitute the adequacy of those adequate meanings, and of what would be their further relation to non-propositional actuality.

Not only is the doctrine, as formulated in Husserl's theory of identity, liable to destruction by this line of argument. It may be threatened from another direction on the basis of the view, held by Meinong and Husserl alike, that meanings, as isolable wholes, distinct from brute non-propositional actuality, are immediately given to perception.

The realists, we have observed, in spite of their claim that 'entities' are in no wise dependent upon being cognized, find no way of characterizing them or even of referring to them, except as the non-psychical terms of some sort of cognitive relation. On the basis of this discovery we have assumed a right to complain that the realists, for all their pretended elimination of psychological considerations from their theory of entities, are in reality completely dependent upon such considerations for the establishment of much of that theory. For though they insist that the

condition of being apprehended is accidental to the 'being' of entities, they do not hesitate to claim that the entities as experienced appear to be what in themselves they really are. This is important for the criticism it calls for with regard to the supposed immediate apprehension of the properties of trueness and falsity. The realists hold that 'entities' in their direct presentation to consciousness may appear in their fundamental character of truths or falsehoods. "If any one," says Husserl,<sup>14</sup> "experiences the evidence of A, it is evident that no one else could experience the absurdity of the same A, for that A is evident means: A is not merely meant, but is truly given exactly as what it is meant; it is in the strictest sense itself present."

The theory, it must be admitted, is not actually so extravagant as it appears to be in this particular formulation of Husserl's. For if the formulation were entirely adequate to the theory, it would follow that no sincere judgments could possibly be false. Every judgment would be related to a meaning accurately apprehended as to its 'truth-value.' But, for Husserl, *evidence* is not an invariable accompaniment of every judgment. Some judgments, though complete in all other respects, and accompanied by the subjective feeling of certainty, are actually *Evidenzlose Urtheile* by reason of their deficiency in the aspect of 'fulfilment' by the supplementary 'fulfilling act.' For by *Evidenz*, Husserl means, not a mere individual feeling, but an objectively grounded element, truly bearing witness to the accuracy of the apprehension of a meaning. But with this qualification—which of course is imperative—the theory becomes again a deceptive covering for unimportant declarations. For if the feeling of evidence is something more than a sincere conviction of the truth of the judgment it accompanies, we are left entirely uninformed of the certain criterion of the possession of evidence. In the last analysis, indeed, *no* judgments, except possibly those of sensory perception and some classes of judgments of logical and mathematical relations, possibly not even these, can be asserted with certainty to illustrate—what the realists would contend that *all* intentional acts illustrate—the direct presentation to cognition of an object *as it is in itself*.

<sup>14</sup> *L. c.*, II, p. 599.

In view of such a limitation of the field of *certain* judgments, which is enjoined by common observation of the fallibility of human judgment and of the vicissitudes of once established beliefs, logical realism becomes a theory to the effect that 'intentional acts' are related to entities immediately presented, but only in certain cases—and those to a very small degree determinable,—manifest in their character of truths or falsities.

If logical realism, thus qualified, may still be called a realistic theory of truth at all, it is in the rather unimportant rôle of a realism of unknowable *Dinge-an-sich*. For the appeal to immediate perception,—to the direct experience of true entities, as true,—cannot universally be used in support of the theory of the fundamental division of entities into the mutually exclusive and together exhaustive classes of the true and the false. Thus, *Gegenstandstheorie* sinks back again into the minor, and, as we have already seen, highly questionable, position of a theory of entities known only as entities-in-themselves, without even the bare determination of 'trueness' and its opposite.

The realistic doctrine of what 'trueness' means thus turns out, at the hands of the logical realists themselves, to be either a trivial assertion of an undefinable quality; or a bare assertion of an unexplained relation of correspondence; or a doctrine, that ends in shipwreck, of an identity between the meant and the given. The foregoing comments amount however merely to a criticism of the realistic doctrine of truth *in so far as it is concerned with the definition of the adjective 'true.'* We have yet to consider what is to be said for the realistic doctrine of atomic 'truths' as *substantives*. But before entering upon that further phase of our criticism let us pause to consider in how far the realistic notion of 'truths' coincides with the view of common sense.

Repeatedly already we have noted that many doctrines of logical realism are only learned formulations of quite natural and primitive convictions. But the coincidence is nowhere more strikingly illustrated than in such doctrines as are concerned with the problem of truth.

In the first place, the unphilosophic man and the logical realist both feel strongly that in addition, for example, to the radiations

of light of a given wave-length, there is something, called a *fact*, to the effect *that* there are such radiations, and *that* they are, for sensation, of their specific character. They agree in believing not only that such facts subsisted antecedent to the knowledge of them, and remain unaltered when they pass out of relation to a knowing consciousness, but that they are essentially independent of even the possibility of knowledge. They agree, further, in believing that such facts are separable and mutually independent. In other words, to the uncritical mind, as to the mind infected with realistic presuppositions and armed with realistic arguments, truths, or facts, are not only self-subsistent but atomic in character. To the uncritical mind, as to the mind of the logical realist, the coherence notion of truth as a system, not an aggregation, is altogether false and unnatural.

With regard to 'future facts,' or facts about the future, as with regard to facts concerning the present and the past, the unphilosophic man and the logical realist are in essential agreement. They both hold that, previous to the occurrence of the event described by a proposition, that proposition is true. The doctrine amounts to a belief that if B and C are mutually exclusive and together exhaustive of the situation as applied to A, then not only is the proposition *A will be B or C* now true, but of the two propositions, *A will be B* and *A will be C* one is now already true, even though we cannot know which.

This faith in the present truth of simple propositions about the future marks logical realism and common sense alike as deterministic. Indeed, even the bare belief in the present truth of the above *disjunctive* proposition may be said to be a determinism, though this may seem at first sight unpalatable. There is historical precedent for thus characterizing it. Epicurus<sup>15</sup> denied the truth of such a disjunctive proposition precisely on the ground that it injected into nature a necessity, where no necessity is. He denied that the proposition, "Tomorrow Hermarchus will be alive or will not be alive" was already true today.

This purely logical type of determinism, a determinism consisting of a belief in a coercion exerted upon the future not by the

<sup>15</sup> Cicero, *Academicorum Priorum*, II, XXX, 97.

will of anyone, or by universal relations between events, but by logical entities called facts—is more nearly related than is at first sight evident to a determinism of a theological nature. For the unquestioning belief in the present truth of propositions about the future leads unphilosophic man to include such propositions among the other contents of the mind of God in his character of omniscient being. This, by a natural substitution, turns into the doctrine that God now *wills* the future, and thus into a theological in place of a logical determinism. This means that the doctrine of predestination and that of the timeless subsistence of logical validities are only unphilosophic and philosophic versions of the same belief, predestination being a primitive and anthropomorphic form of the doctrine of the logical indistinguishability of propositions regarding the future and those regarding the past.

But the logical realist does not, like the theologian, feel called upon to postulate anything in the way of a consciousness, logical or divine, as a container of facts. His atomic universe of truths, relative indifferently to past, present, and future, is self-sufficient.

In another respect still he diverges from the common-sense view. He interprets as timeless the validity of all facts, of time present, past, and to come. Unsophisticated man, on the contrary, harbours such notions of the eternal trueness of truth as make its validity temporal, though unending. In other words, time enters into the crude logic of naïve man in a way that is not paralleled in the doctrines of the logical realist.

Nevertheless the doctrine of atomic truths, such as the realist postulates, lends itself with peculiar appropriateness to a temporalistic development. It is worth while, therefore, for us to consider it briefly from this point of view.

According to the common-sense view of time, there are four distinct kinds of facts: those true throughout its entire extent; those dated in the past; those dated in the present; and those dated in the future. Human consciousness is conceived as moving along time as along an unending road, and accordingly as leaving behind it, as it moves, what *was* present, but thereby becomes past, and coming up with what *was* future, but thereby

becomes present. On this view, nothing already unprovided for in the form of 'truths' can possibly occur. All that happens is, so to speak, the automatic transformation of the tenses of propositions as consciousness comes abreast of them and leaves them behind. Carried to its logical extreme this view would admit of there being any number of present moments situated at different points along the plane of time which different consciousnesses happened to occupy. A 'common present' for such different consciousnesses would be a fiction, manufactured for practical purposes of inter-communication.

To think of time as a transparent medium, through which 'past' and 'future' facts shine in unrefracted purity, is to maintain a logical determinism by which the significance of time as a principle of free creation is utterly denied. But—to pursue the metaphor—time might be conceived to be a medium capable both of altering the distribution of the rays that pass through it, and even of changing their constitution. The future might be regarded as, so to speak, an uncreated region, not yet determined even to the extent of being logically provided for in the form of truths. According to such a view the 'timeless' validity of truths would be comparable to certain types of infinite series with a first term but no last. It would be an *everlasting* validity, having no end, indeed, but a beginning. Facts, or truths, would thus be conceived to spring into being contemporaneously with the occurrence of the events which they described, at a point of time which would in all cases be abreast of living consciousness in its progress through time, and which would consequently be in all cases describable for such consciousness as the 'present moment.' The atomism accompanying such a dynamic notion of time would then be an atomism of truths having a beginning in time. And this would be a perfectly conceivable and quite plausible atomic realism, provided the initial assumption of complete indeterminism were granted; provided also, *any* atomic doctrine of 'truths' were regarded as plausible.

Logical realists, it must be remembered, feel quite as strongly, and argue quite as insistently about those of their postulated atomic meanings which are actual or potential objects of self-



contradictory conceptions and of false judgments, as for the objects of judgments that are true. We have seen what kinds of transforming operations these objects may in general be subjected to for their elimination. But the elimination of what we call 'facts' does not appear so easy of accomplishment. To dismember the supposed objects, 'the round-square' and 'that  $2 + 2 = 5$ ' seems to be an exceedingly different matter from dismembering 'that  $2 + 2 = 4$ .'

But without at once assuming that *every* so-called 'true' proposition can be explained in such a way as to eliminate all supposed necessity for postulating an isolable, atomic truth, may we not perhaps look to find at least certain classes of such propositions which may be thus disposed of?

The most obvious and promising region for such explaining away is the region of certain kinds of truths of 'higher order.' Such postulated truths are numerous, and, what is more, they contain within themselves a principle of unlimited self-propagation. Once granting, for example, that, in addition to the truths, 'A is B' and 'C is D,' there are the further truths, 'A is B and C is D'; 'A is B or C'; 'C is B or D,' etc., we have opened the way to an alarming multiplication of entities. But how are we to extricate ourselves? If any simple propositions are true, and the principles of logical multiplication and addition are valid, will not the admission of the simple truths of 'lower order' entail the admission of the entire vast superstructure of truths of 'higher order'—truths consisting of various combinations and permutations of those original truths?

One refuge that is open to us is the plea against redundancy. We might assert that, although these elaborate creations out of simple materials are indeed true, they are not ultimate and perfectly objective truths, for such truths must be conceived to be non-redundant. And it is quite plain that if 'A is B' is true, and 'C is D' is true, the proposition, 'A is B and C is D' adds nothing to reality. But by what warrant may one deny the redundancy of truths? And what limit could be set to the elimination of supposed 'facts' by reference to that criterion? If 'ABC is an equilateral triangle' is admitted to be a true prop-

osition, will the numerous propositions to the effect that 'ABC is equiangular,' that 'Angle ABC is  $60^\circ$ ,' that 'CBA is  $60^\circ$ ,' etc., be redundant and consequently not ultimate?

The question introduces us to a new and very important problem, that of the present status of propositions which are logically derivable from known truths, but which have never been actually deduced or even verbally formulated. In so far as such truths are truly derivable from other truths shall they be said to be contained within those truths, or must they be conceded a coordinate independence? If the latter, they tend to fall under the ban against the redundant. If the former, are we not virtually substituting for the objective and independent being of deduced truths, an *objective validity of deductive operations, i. e.*, of laws of procedure?

In making this latter suggestion, we are reverting to the method for reducing postulated entities to something non-substantive, which appeared possible and expedient in the case of objects of self-contradictory concepts and of false judgments. According to this principle the assertion, 'A is B and C is D' would not have as its denotations a compound fact,—an hypostatized multiplied meaning,—but would be 'true' in the sense that within it two true propositions were brought together by the operation of a valid law of thought. There would not be in nature, so to speak, the hybrid 'A is B and C is D,' subsisting as an isolable truth, but only the single elements of which the hybrid is compounded, and the function of compounding which is verbally symbolized by the word *and*.

Another possible field for 'reduction' is that of the supposed objects of negations. It is of course plain that countless negative statements are, in the widest sense of the term, 'true'—that, indeed, every 'true' affirmation involves a possible 'true' denial of its opposite. But the question is again about there being 'in nature' negative facts; which amounts to the question whether negations are not less ultimate than affirmations, and merely derived from them by further operations of thought. This in turn reduces to the fundamental question whether positive true meanings do not sufficiently account for the uni-

verse, visible and invisible, without the postulation of a second corresponding set of negative meanings.

There is the possibly more cogent consideration that even if a case could be made out—as we have not indeed discovered that it may be—for the objective validity of positive atomic meanings in their unasserted character, negative meanings appear to involve reference to *acts* of denial for their significance.

But the matter of negation is too complex to treat of in this place. The reference to it may be taken merely as a suggestion that whatever reasons one may recognize for questioning the ultimate and atomic character of *positive* 'truths,' the reasons for questioning that of *negative* 'truths' are even more coercive.

The postulated atomic character of those simple positive 'truths' we have still to consider. For even if the theory of fictions, Occam's razor, and the method of substituting valid functions of living thought in the place of inert entities somewhat plausibly disposes of certain classes of so-called facts, the class of simple positive truths might still prove to be—as the realist believes them to be, and in spite of the arguments of the last chapter—substantive, isolable, and unitary wholes.

The situation more specifically is this. In the first place, the atomic character of at least certain supposedly atomic meanings may be questioned; in the second place 'trueness' as a distinguishing property of one class of meanings is not satisfactorily accounted for by any of the explanations offered by logical realism; and lastly, there is, in at least a very large proportion of cases, no infallible evidence of the trueness or falsity of judgments supposed by logical realists to have as objects true or false meanings, directly perceptible in their character of the true or the false. In the face of all this, may one nevertheless maintain that however 'trueness' may be correctly defined, true meanings are isolable and unitary, and, without reference to each other, *in themselves* true?

Consider once again the judgment,  $2 + 2 = 4$ . We have said that it may not be declared to denote a single, perfectly unambiguous, and invariable meaning, but that its denotation is a complex of variable connotations, consisting of what are usually called its possible applications. We have said,

furthermore, that the statement, when taken in abstraction from every possible context, is even devoid of significance. In other words, we have said that not only is its actual denotation a system, but that its very possession of the function of denoting at all depends upon a further system of interpenetrated meanings, and upon its membership in the vast system of such meanings.

Similarly, I would maintain and for the same kind of reasons, the proposition may not, out of all context, and cut off from relation to other meanings, be called *true*. Its truth, like its significance, is the product of relations. These relations are not, however, reducible to an inexplicable relation of correspondence—either with something likewise propositional, or with something non-propositional. They are relations constituting an intricate system of mutual interdependence among the members of a universe of meanings. Not only does the meaning derive its truth from its membership in that system, but it owes the limits of its possession of the property of trueness to conditions of applicability and context. ‘ $2 + 2 = 4$ ’ is not true *unbedingt und überhaupt* any more than it is *significant* absolutely and without all qualification. It is not significantly ‘true’ when applied to ‘classes’ of different order; it is not, in the strictest sense ‘true’ when applied to the addition of groups of infinite collections.

Nor is it possible to strip off layers of accidental variations of ‘trueness’ till a single, invariable, unequivocal core of ‘trueness’ appears. The statement, that is, is not atomistically true any more than it is atomistically significant. In its character of a truth as in its character of a meaning, it is not unitary and isolable. This contention means that, in face, first, of the realistic doctrine of the applicability of the term ‘trueness,’ and second, of the realistic doctrine of the separable character of truths as substantives, we would oppose the arguments to be urged against the pluralistic notion of meanings in general. And we would declare that both the view that the denotation of the concept ‘trueness’ is a single, isolable, atomic property, and the view that the denotation of any so-called ‘true’ affirmation is a single and simple atomic truth, is the product of processes of abstraction and simplification that are convenient but fallacious.

## VITA

I, Helen Huss Parkhurst, was born in New York City, January 3, 1887. My father was Howard Elmore Parkhurst, my mother, Mary Huss Parkhurst. In 1905 I was graduated from the Dwight School, Englewood, New Jersey, where I assisted in the elementary work during the next two years. I took my A.B. degree at Bryn Mawr College in 1911, having done my major work in the group of Latin and English. During 1911-12 I taught English and History at the Dwight School, Englewood. As scholar in Philosophy and tutor in English I returned to Bryn Mawr, where I studied with Dr. Theodore de Laguna and Dr. Grace de Laguna, and where I took the degree of Master of Arts in 1913. In 1913-14, as President's European fellow, I worked under the Hon. Bertrand Russell, Dr. G. E. Moore, and Professor James Ward, in the University of Cambridge, England, and for one term attended lectures in logic and metaphysics at the Sorbonne. Receiving a resident fellowship in Philosophy for the year 1914-15 I returned to Bryn Mawr where I continued my work in Philosophy and Psychology under the direction of Dr. Donald Fisher, Dr. C. E. Ferree, and Dr. Chester Kellogg. Holding an honorary fellowship at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, during the year 1915-16, I worked under Professor Arthur O. Lovejoy and Professor John B. Watson. During the present year 1916-17, in the capacity of reader and demonstrator in the history of art, I have conducted at Bryn Mawr a three-hour course in the history of seventeenth and eighteenth century painting.

My dissertation on the subject of recent logical realism has been written under the direction of Professor Theodore de Laguna, to whom I owe a debt of gratitude for untiring advice and assistance. To Mr. Russell I am under obligations for first directing my interest toward the subjects treated in my dissertation. I am similarly indebted to Professor Lovejoy for reinforcing those interests and for helping to organize them.

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