

## The Theory of Objects

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### 1. THE PROBLEM

THAT KNOWING IS IMPOSSIBLE without something being known, and more generally, that judgments and ideas or presentations (*Vorstellungen*) are impossible without being judgments about and presentations of something, is revealed to be self-evident by a quite elementary examination of these experiences. I have been able to show, almost without special investigation, that this is also true in the realm of assumptions (*Annahmen*), even though psychological research has but recently turned in their direction.<sup>1</sup> The situation is more complicated in this respect, however, in the case of feelings. There is no doubt that language is somewhat misleading in referring to joy or grief, or to pity or envy, and the like, as being that which one feels. There are also complications in the area of desires, insofar as we think from time to time that we should revert to the possibility of desires which are not desires for anything, despite the linguistic evidence, which is here once again entirely unambiguous. However, even one who would disagree with my view that feelings, like desires, are dependent psychological states insofar as they have ideas as their indispensable "psychological presuppositions,"<sup>2</sup> would un-

This essay first appeared in *Untersuchungen zur Gegenstandstheorie und Psychologie* (Leipzig, 1904), edited by Meinong. Other essays, by philosophers and psychologists associated with Meinong at the University of Graz, were included in the same volume. The essay also appears in Volume II of Meinong's collected works.

1. *Über Annahmen* (Leipzig, 1902), pp. 256 f. [The references in the present selection to *Über Annahmen* are to the first edition, not to the second, revised edition of 1910.]

2. See my *Psychologisch-ethischen Untersuchungen zur Werttheorie* (Graz, 1894), pp. 34 f. Also Höfler, *Psychologie*, p. 389.

hesitatingly concede that we are happy about something, interested in something, and, at least in the majority of cases, do not wish or intend without wishing for or intending something. To put it briefly, no one fails to recognize that psychological events so very commonly have this distinctive "character of being directed to something" (*auf etwas Gerichtetheit*) as to suggest very strongly (at least) that we should take it to be a characteristic aspect of the psychological as opposed to the non-psychological.

The purpose of the following remarks is, nevertheless, not to explain why I hold this way of looking at the matter to be firmly established, despite the many difficulties confronting it. There are so many cases in which reference, indeed explicit directedness (*Gerichtetheit*), to that "something," or (as we say quite naturally) to an object, unquestionably forces itself upon our attention that, even if they alone were to be considered, the question would soon be answered for anyone who investigated these matters scientifically.

The partitioning of whatever deserves and needs theoretical consideration into different scientific realms, and the careful delimitation of these realms, may often be of little practical importance in advancing the research connected with it. What matters in the final analysis is the work that is accomplished, and not the banner under which it is done. However, obscurities as to the boundaries of the diverse areas of science can become significant in two contrasting ways: either the areas which are actually investigated encroach upon one another, or they are separated from each other, and consequently leave an intermediate area untouched. The significance of such obscurities, within the sphere of our theoretical interest, is exactly the opposite of their significance within the sphere of practical affairs. In the latter, the "neutral zone" is a guarantee (always desired but rarely capable of being realized) of amicable neighborly relations, while the overlapping of territorial claims presents the typical case of conflict of interests. But in the realm of theoretical activity, where such conflicts, at least, have no justification, it is a gain, objectively considered, if the frontier districts coincide, for as a result they are investigated from different sides. A separation, on the other hand, is always a disadvantage, the seriousness of which depends on the size and significance of the intermediate territory.

The intent of the problem raised here is to call attention to just such an area of knowledge, which is sometimes overlooked, sometimes not sufficiently appreciated in its distinctive character. The question concerns the proper place for the scientific investigation of

the Object (*Gegenstand*) taken as such and in general—we wish to know whether, among the sciences that are accredited by scientific tradition, there is one within which we could attempt a theoretical consideration of the Object as such, or from which we could at least demand this.

## 2. THE PREJUDICE IN FAVOR OF THE ACTUAL

It was no accident that the foregoing account took cognition as its starting point in order to arrive at the Object. To be sure, cognition is not unique in “having” an Object. It has it in such a distinctive manner, however, that whenever we are speaking of Objects, we are influenced to think first of all of the Object of cognition. For, to be precise, the psychological event we call cognition does not constitute the cognitive situation in and of itself: knowledge is, so to speak, a double fact (*Doppeltatsache*) in which what is known confronts the act of knowing as something relatively independent. The act of knowing is not merely directed toward what is known, in the way in which a false judgment may be directed toward its Object. In knowing, on the contrary, it is as though what is known were seized or grasped by the psychological act, or however else one might attempt to describe, in an unavoidably pictorial way, something which is indescribable. If one concentrates exclusively on the Object of knowledge, the problem about the science of Objects which was raised above is initially placed in a rather unfavorable light. A science of the Objects of cognition: does this mean anything more than the demand that what is already known as the Object of cognition be now made the Object of a science, and thus the Object of cognition for a second time? In other words, are we not asking for a science which either is made up of the sum-total of the sciences taken together, or one which would have to accomplish all over again what the recognized sciences jointly accomplish anyway?

We should guard ourselves against concluding from these considerations that the idea of a universal science, in addition to the special sciences, is absurd. This understanding of the nature of the world in its entirety and of its ultimate foundations, which the best minds have always considered to be the final and most estimable goal of their pursuit of knowledge, can only be the subject of a comprehensive science *in addition to* the special sciences. Indeed, the

discipline which goes under the name of metaphysics has been thought to be exactly such a science. No matter how many disappointments have been associated with this name, and are associated with it, the responsibility for them lies with our intellectual capacities, and not with the idea of such a science. May one go so far, therefore, as to take metaphysics to be the science whose legitimate function is to deal with Objects as such—or Objects in their totality?

If we remember how metaphysics has always been conceived as including in its subject matter the farthest and the nearest, the greatest and the smallest alike, we may be surprised to be told that metaphysics cannot take on such a task. It may sound strange to hear that metaphysics is not universal enough for a science of Objects, and hence cannot take on the task just formulated. For the intentions of metaphysics have been universal (a fact which has so often been disastrous to its success). Without doubt, metaphysics has to do with everything that exists. However, the totality of what exists, including what has existed and will exist, is infinitely small in comparison with the totality of the Objects of knowledge. This fact easily goes unnoticed, probably because the lively interest in reality which is part of our nature tends to favor that exaggeration which finds the non-real a mere nothing—or, more precisely, which finds the non-real to be something for which science has no application at all or at least no application of any worth.

How little truth there is in such a view is most easily shown by ideal Objects<sup>3</sup> which do indeed subsist (*bestehen*), but which do not by any means exist (*existieren*), and consequently cannot in any sense be real (*wirklich*). Similarity and difference are examples of objects of this type: perhaps, under certain circumstances, they subsist between realities; but they are not a part of reality themselves. That ideas, as well as assumptions and judgments, are nevertheless concerned with such Objects (and often have reason to be very intimately concerned with them) is, of course, beyond question. Similarly, number does not exist in addition to what is numbered, supposing the latter does exist; this we clearly know from the fact that we can also count what does not exist. Again, a connection does not exist in addition to what is connected, supposing the latter does exist: That their existence is not indispensable is proven by the

3. Concerning the sense in which I intend to employ the expression “ideal,” which unfortunately is ambiguous in ordinary language, see my essay, “Über Gegenstände höherer Ordnung, etc.,” *Zeitschrift für Psychologie*, XXI, 198. [This essay appears in Volume II of Meinong’s collected works; see Selected Bibliography.]

connection between the equilaterality and equiangularity of a triangle. Moreover, where existing objects are concerned, such as atmospheric and thermometric or barometric conditions, the connectedness does not unite these realities themselves so much as it does their being or even their non-being. In knowing such a connection, we are already dealing with that special type of Object (*mit jenem eigentümlichen Gegenstandartigen*), which, as I hope I have shown,<sup>4</sup> is related to judgment and assumptions (*Urteilen und Annahmen*) in the way in which the Object, in a strict sense, (*der eigentliche Gegenstand*) is related to presentations (*Vorstellungen*). I have recommended the name "Objective" (*Objektiv*) for this type of Object, and I have shown that the Objective itself can assume the functions of an Object in the strict sense. In particular, it can become the Object (*Gegenstand*) of a new judgment, or of some other intellectual operation, which is related to it as to an ordinary object (*Objekt*). If I say, "It is true that the antipodes exist," truth is ascribed not to the antipodes, but to the Objective, "that the antipodes exist." But this existence of the antipodes is a fact (*Tatsache*) which, as everyone sees immediately, can very well have a subsistent status, but cannot be still another existent entity in its own turn, as it were.\* This holds, likewise, for all other objectives, so that every cognitive act which has an Objective as its Object represents thereby a case of knowing something which does not exist.

What has been stated here only in terms of isolated examples is supported by the testimony of a very highly developed science—indeed the most highly developed one: mathematics. We would surely not want to speak of mathematics as alien to reality, as though it had nothing to do with what exists. Indeed, we cannot fail to recognize that mathematics is assured of an extensive sphere of application in practical life no less than in the theoretical treatment of reality. However, pure mathematical knowledge is never concerned with anything which must, in the nature of the case, be actual. The form of being (*Sein*) with which mathematics as such is occupied is never existence (*Existenz*). In this respect, mathematics never transcends subsistence (*Bestand*): a straight line has no more existence than a right angle; a regular polygon, no more than a circle. It can be regarded only as a peculiarity of the mathematical use

4. *Über Annahmen*, chap. vii.

\* [dass sie zwar sehr wohl bestehen, aber nicht ihrerseits sozusagen noch einmal existieren kann.]

of language that this usage makes quite explicit existence-claims.<sup>5</sup> Even though the mathematician may use the term "existence," he cannot but concede that what we would otherwise call "possibility" is, in the final analysis, all that he requires of the objects of his theoretical consideration; it is very noteworthy, however, that a positive turn is being given to this ordinarily merely negative concept.

Together with the prejudice in favor of our knowledge of reality, alluded to previously, the basic independence of mathematics from existence enables us to understand a fact which would be fairly surprising if these points were not considered. Attempts to systematize the sciences as parts of a whole usually find themselves in an embarrassing position in connection with mathematics, and they must be extricated, with varying degrees of success, by more or less artificial expedients. This is in striking contrast to the recognition—one might straightaway say popularity—which mathematics has acquired for itself even in lay circles by its achievements. But the organization of all knowledge into the science of nature and the science of mind (*Natur- und Geisteswissenschaft*), appearing to be an exhaustive disjunction, really takes into account only the sort of knowledge which has to do with reality (*Wirklichkeit*). Consequently, when we look at the matter more closely, we should not be at all surprised to find that this organization does not do full justice to mathematics.

### 3. SOSEIN AND NICHTSEIN

There is thus not the slightest doubt that what is supposed to be the Object of knowledge need not exist at all. But our account up to now may seem to leave room for the conjecture that wherever existence is absent, it not only *can* be but *must* be replaced by subsistence. But even this restriction is inadmissible, as may be seen by contrasting the characteristic functions of judging and assuming, a distinction I have attempted to maintain by contrasting the "thetic and synthetic function" of thought.<sup>6</sup> In the former case, the act of thought grasps a *Sein*, in the latter a "*Sosein*." In each case, naturally, it is an Objective that is grasped; it is reasonable to speak of a

5. Cf. K. Zindler; "Beiträge zur Theorie der mathematischen Erkenntnis," *Sitzungsberichte der kais. Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, phil. hist. Kl.*, CXVIII (1889), p. 33 and 53 f.

6. *Über Annahmen*, pp. 142 ff.

*Seinsobjektiv* and of a *Soseinsobjektiv*, respectively.\* Now it would accord very well with the aforementioned prejudice in favor of existence to hold that we may speak of a *Sosein* only if a *Sein* is presupposed. There would, indeed, be little sense in calling a house large or small, a region fertile or infertile, before one knew that the house or the land does exist, has existed, or will exist. However, the very science from which we were able to obtain the largest number of instances counter to this prejudice shows clearly that any such principle is untenable. As we know, the figures with which geometry is concerned do not exist. Nevertheless, their properties, and hence their *Sosein*, can be established. Doubtless, in the area of what can be known merely *a posteriori*, a claim as to *Sosein* will be completely unjustifiable if it is not based on knowledge of a *Sein*; it is equally certain that a *Sosein* which does not rest on a *Sein* may often enough be utterly lacking in natural interest. None of this alters the fact that the *Sosein* of an Object is not affected by its *Nichtsein*. The fact is sufficiently important to be explicitly formulated as the principle of the independence of *Sosein* from *Sein*.<sup>7</sup> The area of applicability of this principle is best illustrated by consideration of the following circumstance: the principle applies, not only to Objects which do not exist in fact, but also to Objects which could not exist because they are impossible. Not only is the much heralded gold mountain made of gold, but the round square is as surely round as it is square. To be sure, insights of actual importance regarding such Objects have been noted only in exceptional cases. Nevertheless, even from them some light might be shed on domains which are especially important for us to know.

But such things may be alien to our natural way of thinking; it is even more instructive to recall this trivial fact, which does not yet go beyond the realm of the *Seinsobjektiv*: Any particular thing that isn't real (*Nichtseiendes*) must at least be capable of serving as the Object for those judgments which grasp its *Nichtsein*. It does not matter whether this *Nichtsein* is necessary or merely factual;

\* [Approximate translations of the German terms in the text are the following. The *Sein* of an object is its existing, or its being real; its *Nichtsein* is its not existing, or its being unreal; its *Sosein* is its having characteristics. A *Seinsobjektiv* is an objective consisting of something existing, or of something being real; analogously for *Soseinsobjektiv* and *Nichtseinsobjektiv*.]

7. This principle was first enunciated by E. Mally in his treatise which was honored by the Wartinger prize in 1903, and which appears in completely revised form as No. III of these papers; see chap. i, § 3, of Mally's paper. [Meinong here refers to the volume in which his own essay originally appeared. Mally's paper is entitled "Untersuchungen zur Gegenstandstheorie des Messens."]

nor does it matter in the first case whether the necessity stems from the essence of the Object or whether it stems from aspects which are external to the Object in question. In order to know that there is no round square, I must make a judgment about the round square. If physics, physiology, and psychology agree in asserting the so-called ideal character of sense-qualities, they implicitly assert something about color as well as about sound, namely, that the one exists no more than the other. Those who like paradoxical modes of expression could very well say: "There are objects of which it is true that there are no such objects." The fact, familiar the world over, which is meant by this statement throws such a bright light on the relation of objects to reality, or their relation to being, generally, that a somewhat closer examination of the matter, which is of fundamental importance in its own right, is entirely in place in our present study.

#### 4. THE AUSSERSEIN OF THE PURE OBJECT

A recourse to certain psychological experiences suggests itself as a natural way of resolving the paradox which seems to lie before us. I have attempted to present the most essential points pertaining to this problem in another work.<sup>8</sup> But, according to my account here, if we were now to maintain the aforementioned subjectivity of sense-qualities, we could speak of the object of a presentation of blue only in the sense of something which is a capacity of that presentation, from which reality withholds, as it were, the opportunity for its realization. Considered from the standpoint of the presentation, this still seems to me to touch on something of essential significance. However, I cannot conceal from myself at present the fact that it is no more necessary to an Object that it be presented in order not to exist than it is in order for it to exist. Further, even if there were a reference to it, the most that could result from its being presented would be a sort of existence—"existence by way of idea (*in der Vorstellung*)"—and so, more precisely, "pseudo-existence."<sup>9</sup> To express it more exactly: If I say, "Blue does not exist," I am thinking just of blue, and not at all of a presentation and the capacities it may have. It is as if the blue must have being in the first place, before we can raise the question of its being (*Sein*) or non-being (*Nichtsein*). But in order not to fall into new paradoxes or actual

8. *Über Annahmen*, pp. 98 ff.

9. See "Über Gegenstände höherer Ordnung," *loc. cit.*, pp. 186 f.

absurdities, perhaps the following turn of expression may be appropriate: Blue, or any other Object whatsoever, is somehow given prior to our determination of its being or non-being, in a way that does not carry any prejudice to its non-being. We could also describe the situation from its psychological side in this way: if I should be able to judge that a certain Object is not, then I appear to have had to grasp the Object in some way beforehand, in order to say anything about its non-being, or more precisely, in order to affirm or to deny the ascription of non-being to the Object.

This fact, despite its commonplace character, is seen to be of a very peculiar type. We could hope to do justice to it with somewhat greater theoretical rigor by means of the following considerations. As I have stated elsewhere,<sup>10</sup> that a certain thing, A, is not—more briefly, the *Nichtsein* of A—is just as much an Objective as is the *Sein* of A. And the degree of certainty with which I am justified in saying that A “is not” is the degree of certainty that the Objective, “*Nichtsein* of A,” itself has a *Sein* (or, more precisely, as mentioned above, that it has subsistence [*Bestand*]). Now an Objective, whether it is a *Seinsobjektiv* or *Nichtseinsobjektiv*, stands in relation to its Object (*Objekt*), albeit *cum grano salis*, as the whole to its parts. But if the whole has being, so must its parts. This seems to mean, when it is extended to the case of the Objective: if the Objective has being (*ist*), so, in some sense or other, must the object which belongs to it, even when the Objective is an objective of non-being (*Nichtseinsobjektiv*). Furthermore, since the Objective strictly prevents us from assuming that A has being, (being, as we have seen, can sometimes be understood as existence, sometimes as subsistence), it appears that the requirement that the Object have being (which was inferred from the being of the *Nichtseinsobjektiv*) makes sense only insofar as the being in question is neither existence nor subsistence—only insofar as a third order of being, if one may speak this way, is adjoined to existence and subsistence. This sort of being must belong, therefore, to every Object as such. A *Nichtsein* of the same type cannot be set in opposition to it, for a *Nichtsein* even in this new sense would have to immediately produce difficulties analogous to those which arise from *Nichtsein* in its ordinary sense, and which the new concept was to have eliminated. The term “*Quasisein*” seemed to me for a while to be a completely suitable expression for this rather oddly constituted type of being.

10. *Über Annahmen*, chap. vii.

This designation, however, like others that were approved earlier (for instance, “*Pseudoexistenz*” and “*Quasitranszendenz*,”<sup>11</sup>) runs the risk of causing confusion. More important, meanwhile, are the following pertinent considerations. Can being which is in principle unopposed by non-being be called being at all? However much we are permitted in this connection to judge that there is a being which is neither existence nor subsistence, nowhere else do we find grounds for such a postulate. Must we not take thought to avoid it in our case also wherever it is possible? The consideration which seems to force us to such a postulate is, to be sure, an experience which is easily observed. As we have seen, A must be “given” to me in some way or other if I am to grasp its non-being. This produces, however, as I have already shown elsewhere,<sup>12</sup> an assumption (*Annahme*) possessing affirmative quality: in order to deny A, I must first assume the being of A. What I refer to, so far as the being of A is concerned, is thus something which is to a certain extent only a claimant to being (*ein gewissermassen vorgegebenes Sein des A*). But it is of the essence of assumption that it direct itself upon a being which itself does not need to be.

Without a doubt, it would be comforting to be able to say that the strange kind of being which belongs to that which does not have being (*Sein des Nichtseiendes*) is just as absurd as it sounds. Such a view could recommend itself to us were it not for the fact that the Objective, which has being, always seems to require in turn an Object which has being. For the present, this requirement is based solely on the analogy to the part-whole relation: an Objective is thereby treated as a complex of some kind and the Object belonging to it as a kind of component. In many respects this may be in accordance with our insight into the nature of an Objective, which is as yet still exceedingly defective. However, no one will deny that this analogy is only an initial expedient in our embarrassment and that there would be no grounds for following this analogy rigorously even for part of the way. Thus, instead of deriving the being of an Object from the being of an Objective, even on the basis of a questionable analogy where the Objective is an Objective of non-being, it would be better to conclude from the facts with which we are concerned that this analogy does not apply to the Objective of non-being—i.e., that the being of the Objective is not by any means universally dependent upon the being of its Object.

11. *Über Annahmen*, p. 95.

12. *Loc. cit.*, pp. 105 ff.

This is a position which speaks for itself without any further ado. If the opposition of being and non-being is primarily a matter of the Objective and not of the Object, then it is, after all, clearly understandable that neither being nor non-being can belong essentially to the Object in itself. This is not to say, of course, that an Object can neither be nor not be. Nor is it to say that the question, whether or not the Object has being, is purely accidental to the nature of every Object. An absurd Object such as a round square carries in itself the guarantee of its own non-being in every sense; an ideal Object, such as diversity, carries in itself the guarantee of its own non-existence. Anyone who seeks to associate himself with models which have become famous could formulate what has been shown above by saying that the Object as such (without considering the occasional peculiarities or the accompanying Objective-clause which is always present) stands "beyond being and non-being." This may also be expressed in the following less engaging and also less pretentious way, which is in my opinion, however, a more appropriate one: The Object is by nature indifferent to being (*aussersehend*), although at least one of its two Objectives of being, the Object's being or non-being, subsists.

What one could thus call with propriety the principle of the indifference of pure Objects to being (*den Satz vom Aussersein des reinen Gegenstandes*) finally eliminates the appearance of a paradox which was the immediate occasion for the assertion of this principle. As soon as it is recognized that, apart from special cases, both being and non-being are equally external to an Object, it is then understandable that nothing more, so to speak, is involved in comprehending the non-being of the Object than there is in comprehending its being. The above-mentioned principle of the independence of *Sosein* from *Sein* now presents a welcome supplement to this view. It tells us that that which is not in any way external to the Object, but constitutes its proper essence, subsists in its *Sosein*—the *Sosein* attaching to the Object whether the object has being or not. We are finally in a position to see with sufficient clarity what confronted us above as the prejudice in favor of the existence, or at least the being, of all possible Objects of knowledge. Being is not the presupposition under which knowledge finds, as it were, its point of attack; it is itself such a point of attack. Non-being is equally as good a point of attack. Furthermore, in the *Sosein* of each Object, knowledge already finds a field of activity to which it may have access without first answering the question concerning being or non-being, or without answering this question affirmatively.

## 5. THE THEORY OF OBJECTS AS PSYCHOLOGY

We now know that those Objects which exist, and even those which have being, run far short of the sum-total of Objects of knowledge, and we can see therefore how inaccurate it would be to regard a science of the actual, or a science of being in general, no matter how comprehensive its scope, as a science of Objects of knowledge taken simply as such. Moreover, in the previous paragraphs, we have considered only the Objects of cognition. But the question raised at the very outset of this exposition had to take into consideration the fact that not only cognition but every case of judgment and presentation has its Object—not to mention the Objectivity (*Gegenständlichkeit*)\* of extra-intellectual experiences. This all-embracing importance of Objectivity for the psychical side of life—it may indeed be precisely its distinguishing characteristic, as I have briefly mentioned already—may now suggest to us that (owing to our exclusive attention to cognition) we permitted ourselves to be led down a detour that might easily have been avoided. For the science which most naturally would have to do with Objects as such would be the very one whose business it is to deal with this Objectivity. This task, in view of what I have just touched on once again, seems to belong to psychology.

In any event, it must be conceded that the current direction of psychology is not entirely opposed to such a conception of its task. There is, for example, a psychology of sound as well as a psychology of color, within which by no means the least important tasks are taken to be the ordering of the diverse Objects belonging to the sensory domain concerned, and the investigation of their distinctive nature.<sup>13</sup> It is also natural that the science of psychological facts draws into its range of investigation the distinctive activities of the psychological sphere—in particular, intellectual activities. It would be an odd psychology of judgment that took no notice of that capacity which (under sufficiently favorable circumstances) reaches out beyond itself to take possession of reality in some way. There is

\* [By "Objectivity" is meant here merely the characteristic of referring to some Object. It has no direct connection with the usual philosophical sense of "objectivity" in English, where objectivity is opposed to subjectivity.]

13. For more details, see my "Bemerkungen über den Farbenkörper und das Mischungsgesetz," *Zeitschrift für Psychologie und Physiologie der Sinnesorgane*, XXXIII, p. 3 ff. [This paper is included in Volume I of Meinong's collected works.]

something besides reality which can be known, and it is something which we are in a position to know with the aid of certain intellectual operations. Psychology, therefore, certainly cannot refrain from considering both this capacity to know and also that something outside of reality (*Ausserwirkliche*) toward which these characteristic activities are directed.

To this extent, therefore, the Objects of judging, assuming, and presenting, as well as the Objects of feeling and desiring, undoubtedly gain entry into psychology. But everyone will notice at once that this science does not take these Objects into consideration for their own sakes. In practice, both inside and outside of scientific pursuits, it is, frequently enough, quite an incidental matter as to what result is a primary goal, and what is just accepted as an accidental by-product. For example, it is certainly useful to archaeology that what philologists often find necessary merely for textual interpretation points to the "real things," yet is no proper part of classical philology. Otherwise, the latter science could easily lay claims to being the most basic discipline, since work on ancient languages has provided the starting point for all sorts of scientific activity. Similarly, psychological inquiry can bear fruit for related areas as long as they belong to sciences which are either less developed than psychology or have not yet been formally recognized as separate sciences at all. Nothing more clearly demonstrates that this has happened in the case of theoretical consideration of Objects than the example of colors mentioned above, where investigation of the psychological facts first led to the investigation of facts concerning Objects; an example is the investigation of the relationships among colors conceived in spatial terms (*der Farbenkörper auf den Farbenraum*).<sup>14</sup> The reference to linguistic science, already introduced, shows in another respect how little psychology can qualify as the true science of Objects. In dealing with the meaning of words and sentences,<sup>15</sup> linguistic science is necessarily also concerned with Objects, and grammar has done the spadework for a theoretical grasp of Objects in a very basic way. Thus, in point of fact, the viewpoint from which psychology was to have been conceded any prerogative in this matter is not apparent; rather, it is clearly seen that neither of these two disciplines can be that science of Objects we are seeking.

After it had been shown that the sciences of being in general, including the one which has to do generally with whatever is actual, are inadequate to the task of the science of Objects, it would be

14. Cf. *loc. cit.*, pp. 11 ff.

15. Cf. *Über Annahmen*, pp. 27 ff.

strange if one of these sciences were unexpectedly to demonstrate its qualifications for this task. Moreover, one can state precisely the portion of the entire realm of Objects capable of being handled by psychology even under the most favorable circumstances. Psychology can take interest only in those Objects toward which some psychological event is actually directed. Perhaps we could put this more briefly: psychology can take interest only in those Objects which are actually presented, whose presentations thus exist, and which, accordingly, themselves exist at least "in our presentation of them," or, more correctly, have pseudo-existence.<sup>16</sup> For this reason, it was relevant to note above that the geometrical figure presenting color-relationships (*Farbenkörper*), as an abstract summary of all of the colors which actually exist in the experience and imagination of men, constitutes one of psychology's concerns. But even this is not strictly true, for such a totality is no more capable of constituting a continuum without the aid of changing events than is a set of points.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, the idea of color-relationships conceived in spatial terms (*die Konzeption des Farbenraumes*) is based *only* on the nature of the Objects in question, and is thus entirely non-psychological, although it doubtless has to do with the theory of Objects. Perhaps the basic difference between the standpoints adopted in the one case and in the other can be traced out immediately in the example, without the assistance of any special comments.

Only one consideration could seem adapted to wipe out the impression of complete dissimilarity between psychology and the theory of Objects, or at least to make it plausible that, strictly speaking, no object could be given that does not belong to psychology as the Object of a presentation (a view which is contrary to the interpretation just advanced in connection with color). One could hold the view that, no matter how we may have come to introduce the Object in question for theoretical consideration, we must, after all, have comprehended it and thus have had it as a presentation; because of this, however, the Object falls within the ranks of those pseudo-existing Objects which are the concern of psychology as well. Thus, if I should think of a white which is brighter than any that human eyes have ever seen, or will see, the white is nevertheless a presented white. To this extent, no matter how a theory is framed, it could never be applied to an Object which is not presented.

This thought is reminiscent of an argument of the "idealists"

16. "Über Gegenstände höherer Ordnung," *loc. cit.*, pp. 186 f.

17. Cf. E. Mally, in the third of these studies, chap. i, Sec. 15; chap. iii, Sec. 20; chap. iv, Sec. 25. [See footnote 7.]

which, strange to say, has not yet entirely been forgotten. This argument states that if "*esse*" need not be precisely "*percipi*," it must at any rate be "*cogitari*"; for no one can think of an "*esse*" without—thinking of it. In any case, the effect of such considerations may be more opposed to, than in accord with, their intent. If, for example, the ultrawhite mentioned above is brought into the domain of theoretical consideration just by means of a conception directed towards it, then the novel psychological events which come to life *could* engender new work for psychology. To be sure, this is by no means necessary. In the case of the example we are considering here, such work is scarcely to be expected, since an abundance of similar conceptions is already available. However, the possibility must certainly be kept in mind, and if it is once actually realized, then how little the conception of ultrawhite is a part of psychology will become quite clear. By virtue of this conception, the work of the theory of Objects is to a certain extent already completed, but that of psychology has yet to be done. It would be odd to consider the accomplished task a psychological one just because of the task that is still to be done.

#### 6. THE THEORY OF OBJECTS AS A THEORY OF THE OBJECTS OF KNOWLEDGE

What psychology cannot provide us might better be sought, therefore, in those areas where the very nature of what we investigate is constituted, in part, by Objects. On the basis of our previous discussion, it can hardly be doubted that in cognition we have before us facts of this type. Cognition is not merely a judgment that happens to be true; it is true by its own nature—true from within, as it were. A judgment is true, however, not insofar as it has an Object that exists, or even one that has being, but only insofar as it grasps an Objective that has being. That there are black swans, but that there is no *perpetuum mobile*, are both true judgments; but the first concerns an existent object, the second a non-existent object. In the one case, the being of the Object in question subsists; in the other case, its non-being subsists. Truth is always bound up with the being of Objectives and is therefore partially constituted out of it. The judgment would not be true if there were no Objective to which it referred. Nor would the judgment be true if it were constituted differently than it is and therefore did not agree with the facts. The

coincidence of the one subjective and the other objective requirement can thus be entirely accidental: as when one draws a true conclusion from false premises.

Now such an accidental or external character is surely foreign to the relation between knowing and what is known. In the case of knowing, it belongs to the nature of the judgment that it does not miss its aim at what is to be known. This distinctive feature of cognition achieves a place in the forum of psychological investigation through what we know as evidence (*Evidenz*). However, the evident judgment itself does not constitute the fact of cognition. It is essential to grasp the Object with respect to the Objective, and for this the being of the latter is indispensable. In this respect, the cognition entirely resembles the judgment which is true *per accidens*, as it were. For this reason, it was possible even at the beginning of the present essay to call knowledge a double fact (*Doppeltatsache*). Anyone who wishes a scientifically closer view of this compound fact must not restrict himself to the psychological aspect of it; he must also take into consideration, as quite expressly a part of the problem set before him, the other side, i.e., the Objective which has being and the Object which is implicated in the Objective.

With regard to our major problem, we have in some measure returned to a standpoint which we abandoned in the previous paragraphs, for we have appealed to the fact that objects belong not only to cognition, but also to false judgment, to presentation, and to psychological activities which are totally non-intellectual. If we conclude that the theory of Objects falls most naturally within the scientific treatment of cognition, we are confronted with this question: By restricting ourselves to cognition and thus excluding other psychological events, do we not cut ourselves off from certain Objects and give up that universality which is required in dealing with Objects as such?

The doubt is unfounded. In order to see this, one must, above all, remember the characteristic difference between psychology and the science of knowledge. It is obvious that psychology is concerned only with real psychological events and not with the merely possible. A science of knowledge cannot set similar limitations on itself, because knowledge as such has value, and therefore something which is not but *could* be may draw attention to itself as a *desideratum* for knowledge. Accordingly, not only are pseudo-objects in general, and hence all objects which are actually judged or presented, to be included as Objects of our scientific knowledge (*Wissens*), but also



all Objects which are Objects of our cognition only in possibility. However, there is no Object which could not at least in possibility be an Object of cognition; at any rate, we may say this if we adopt the instructive fiction that the capacity for knowledge is not impaired by limitations, such as stimulus thresholds and thresholds of discriminations, which are laid down by the constitution of the subject and are never entirely absent. Assuming an intelligence of unlimited capacities, there is nothing unknowable; and what is knowable, is. However, since the preferred usage is generally to apply "it is" (*es gibt*) to things which have being, and particularly to existing things, it would perhaps be clearer to say: All that is knowable is given—namely, given to cognition. To this extent, all objects are knowable. Given-ness as a most general property can be ascribed to Objects without exception, whether they are or are not.

The consequence of these considerations for the relation of the Objects of cognition to the Objects of other psychological activities scarcely needs to be drawn more explicitly. Regardless of the other types of experience one might have of Objects, all Objects are, without exception, Objects of knowledge. Consequently, anyone who undertakes a scientific treatment of Objects from the standpoint of cognition need not fear that he might thus exclude any area from the totality of Objects.

## 7. THE THEORY OF OBJECTS AS "PURE LOGIC"

It is in accord with long-established tradition to think of logic first, when considering a scientific treatment of cognition. Actually, it is only very recently that problems have been set for one of the main parts of logic, the so-called pure or formal logic,<sup>18</sup> which agree unmistakably with what must properly be demanded of a theoretical treatment of Objects as such.<sup>19</sup> I have already expressed elsewhere my basic agreement with E. Husserl's attack against "psychologism" in logic.<sup>20</sup> I did this at a time when external circumstances prevented me from obtaining more than a preliminary and very incomplete acquaintance with the extensive work of this author. Today, when I trust that through penetrating study I have done justice in some

18. See E. Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, two volumes, (Leipzig and Halle, 1900 and 1901). "Pure" and "Formal" Logic are explicitly identified in Vol. I, p. 252.

19. In particular, Vol. I, pp. 243 ff.; also Vol. II, pp. 92 ff.

20. *Über Annahmen*, p. 196.

measure to the merits of the publication in question, I can completely support my previous expression of agreement and extend it still further to many another of those "problems." It is, then, perhaps a dissent of relatively minor importance that I would not refer these problems precisely to "pure logic."

I am influenced above all by this fact: it is only with great difficulty that the notion of logic can be separated from that of a technology devoted to the advancement of our intellectual powers. Consequently, logic always remains a "practical discipline."<sup>21</sup> We may say at most that a transition can be made from the work of this practical discipline to what I have occasionally characterized as a "theoretico-practical discipline."<sup>22</sup> When logic is thus called "pure logic,"<sup>23</sup> I would prefer to say that the result is not logic at all. And I would refer the problems set for "pure logic" to that theoretical discipline, or to one of those theoretical disciplines, to which logic, like all other practical disciplines, must finally be traced.

I am in complete agreement with the author of the *Logische Untersuchungen*, as I have just mentioned, in insisting that recourse is not to be made exclusively to psychology. Indeed, when I consider the guiding idea to which our author returns again and again in his polemic against "psychologism" in order to characterize this extra-psychological domain of knowledge, it is difficult for me to avoid the impression that he was not entirely able to free himself from what he had opposed with as much zeal as truth. "Pure" logic has to do with "concepts," "propositions," "arguments," and the like.\* But are not concepts, after all, presentations which may be used for theoretical purposes, but which are nevertheless presentations? If one disregards the obtrusive grammatical meaning of the word "proposition" (*Satz*), as is explicitly demanded, e.g., by Bolzano, will one then be able to disregard the psychological process (assumption or judgment) expressed by the grammatical proposi-

21. I have tried to present this in greater detail in my work, *Über philosophische Wissenschaft und ihre Propädeutik* (Vienna, 1885). See particularly pp. 96 f.

22. *Loc. cit.*, p. 98.

23. I find the equivalent term, "formal logic," objectionable in that it brings to mind what used to be taught under this name and what has properly been opposed and apparently overcome. Is this objection based merely on a personal idiosyncrasy? We must also give some weight to the fact that the term "form" cannot provide a clear picture of what it is supposed to mean.

\* [It is impossible to reproduce in English the full significance of Meinong's remarks here and below. There is no English word or expression which duplicates the ambiguities of the German "*Satz*." The word "*Satz*" is here translated as "proposition," but obviously "proposition of contradiction" is to be avoided.]

tion? More precisely: If we do this, what will be retained that can in some measure lay claim to the name "proposition"? Still, there is an extralogical sense here in which one can talk of a "law (*Satz*) of contradiction," or the "Carnot law (*Satz*)" and so on,<sup>24</sup> although, to be sure, this has the feel of a rather extended usage of words. As far as I can see, such an extralogical sense is completely lacking in the case of the word "inference" (*Schluss*). Even if one speaks quite naturally of "the" syllogism in *modus Darapti*, of "the" hypothetical syllogism, and the like, one means an intellectual event or the possible results of such an event, just as one means a physiological event when one speaks of "the" circulation of the blood.

To contrast "objective" inferences and proofs with those that are subjective<sup>25</sup> might thus seem to obscure rather than to clarify the facts of the matter. But the entire tenor of the *Logische Untersuchungen*, as well as many of the particular statements that are contained in it, convinces one that, despite certain differences in detail (at present unavoidable), the author's goal is the same as our own. It is a goal to which he has been forced by mathematico-philosophical studies<sup>26</sup> and by certain distinctions which are in part genuinely, and in part only supposedly, psychological; I refer to the distinction between content (*Inhalt*) and Object<sup>27</sup> and, what is even more to the point, to that between Object and Objective.<sup>28</sup> Under such circumstances, the common cause will be better served if I cease dwelling on these considerations (which may be largely terminological anyway) and, instead, try to show briefly how, in my opinion, we may deal more adequately with the danger of "psychologism"—a danger which, in spite of the attention devoted to it, may not yet have been entirely avoided.

## 8. THE THEORY OF OBJECTS AS EPISTEMOLOGY

Before we do this, however, we may draw an obvious practical consequence from the criticisms we have directed against the expression "pure logic." There is no need to invent a name for a theory of scientific knowledge (*Wissen*) which sets itself no practical

24. What is involved here is, of course, the Objective; see *Über Annahmen*, p. 197.

25. *Logische Untersuchungen*, II, p. 26; also pp. 94 and 101.

26. See *op. cit.*, Preface to Vol. I, p. v.

27. "Über Gegenstände höherer Ordnung," *loc. cit.*, pp. 185 ff.

28. *Über Annahmen*, pp. 150 ff.

goals and accordingly represents a theoretical science. One could not wish for a more natural name than the designation, "*Theorie des Erkennens*," or more briefly, "*Erkenntnistheorie*." Therefore, I choose to speak of "theory of knowledge" instead of "pure logic," and I now hope to show that the question of "psychologism" in the theory of knowledge returns us immediately to the theory of objects, from which the remarks made above may have seemed somewhat remote.

"Psychologism," as the name of a natural or considered tendency to solve problems with predominantly psychological means, involves no blame in itself.<sup>29</sup> However, within a certain sphere of problems, including just those problems that concern us here, the word does not lack a pejorative connotation: what is meant is simply the inappropriate use of psychological method. Since cognition is an experience, the psychological way of considering things is certainly not to be banished in principle from the theory of knowledge. The theory of knowledge must deal with concepts, sentences (judgments and assumptions), inferences, and the like, and will certainly have to do so psychologically. But knowing stands over against the known. As I have said repeatedly, cognition is a double fact. One who neglects the second side of this fact and so proceeds in the theory of knowledge as if there were only a psychological side of cognition, or one who would foist the viewpoint of psychological events on this second side, is not to be spared the reproach of psychologism.

Can we make clear to ourselves why there is this danger of falling into such a psychologism, a danger from which scarcely anyone who has concerned himself with epistemological matters has withheld his tribute? The double aspect (*Doppelseitigkeit*) of cognition is so striking that hardly anyone could overlook it even if only existing things were to be known. However, as we have seen, all of mathematics, and particularly geometry, deals with the non-real. Thus, the prejudice in favor of reality that I have repeatedly called to attention leads here to a dilemma which seems to be quite illuminating and which is, nevertheless, basically very singular. To be sure, we may not become explicitly conscious of it easily, but

29. The proven objectivity of Überweg-Heinze's presentation of facts assures me of this in my own case. They place my own scientific activity under the general title of "Psychologism." (*Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie*, 9th ed., Part IV, pp. 312 ff.) The sense in which I myself might agree with this characterization may be seen in *Über Annahmen*, p. 196.

it may be formulated approximately in the following manner: either the Object to which cognition is directed exists in reality or it exists solely "in my idea" (more briefly, it "pseudo-exists"). Perhaps nothing bears more eloquent testimony to the naturalness of this disjunction than the use of the word "ideal." According to modern usage, without regard for its historical meaning, the word "ideal" means the same as "thought of" or "merely presented"; hence it pertains, apparently, to all of those objects which do not exist or which could not exist. What does not exist outside of us, so one automatically thinks, must at least exist in us. Such an Object, it is supposed, belongs before the forum of psychology; one then makes room for the thought that the knowledge of existing things (and along with this knowledge reality itself) can perhaps be treated "psychologically."

And perhaps this prejudice in favor of what is actual can be traced one step farther back by exhibiting the truth from which it could have originated. It would certainly be mistaken to believe that every instance of knowledge must concern existence or something existent. But is it not correct to say that all cognition as such ultimately has to do with something which has being (*mit einem Seienden*)? That which has being, the "fact," without which no cognition could count as cognition, is the Objective. It is the Objective which is grasped by the relevant cognitive act and to which being (*Sein*) or, more precisely, subsistence (*Bestand*) belongs, whether it is positive or negative, whether it is an Objective of being (*Sein*) or of *Sosein*. Would it be too risky to suppose that the factuality of its Objective, which is unfailingly associated with any instance of cognition, has undergone a sort of transference to the Object (which is almost the only thing considered by theory) and that it is then exaggerated into the tacit demand that everything that confronts knowing be real?

The question may remain undecided here. Our problem is not the psychology of psychologism. This much, however, stands beyond all doubt: psychologism in the theory of knowledge is invariably based on the neglect or misunderstanding of the Object side of the cognitive state (the word "Object" being here taken in its widest sense, in which it includes the Objective). One falls into psychologism if one fails to grasp the significance and the distinctive character of the Objective and, accordingly, looks to the Object for the being which belongs to all cognition. In such a case one does not sufficiently appreciate the possibility of *Nichtsein* and *Sosein*, and one says that something actual must be involved in anything

that has being. And surely, whoever wishes to free himself from this misconception need not make it his task to keep psychology at a distance from the theory of knowledge. The psychology of cognition must always constitute an integral part of the theory of knowledge. The only thing against which he must guard himself is taking for psychology that part of the theory of knowledge which is and must remain the theory of Objects.

If the theory of the Objects of knowledge or, more briefly, the theory of Objects, is presented to us as an integral part of the theory of knowledge,<sup>30</sup> the answer to the initial question of our present discussion can easily be found. The proper place for investigating Objects as such, we could then say, is the theory of knowledge. And, in fact, this result could be left standing without much damage to the theory of Objects. The more clearly the theory of knowledge becomes aware of its tasks, the more certainly it will become and remain, by virtue of one of its fundamental parts, a theory of that which is to be known, of the "given" in the sense in which the word was employed above, and consequently of the sum-total of Objects generally. Often enough, epistemological interests will quite naturally prepare the way for an interest in the theory of Objects. Nevertheless, if I see rightly, we must go one step further if we are really to do justice to the claims which a theory of Objects is competent to make in virtue of its distinctive nature.

## 9. THE THEORY OF OBJECTS AS A SEPARATE SCIENCE

The position of psychology, which along with the theory of Objects must be given a fundamental share in the theory of knowledge, points to this fact. We have already seen it to be self-evident that there can be no theory of knowledge which does not concern itself with the act of knowing and which is not to this extent also a psychology of cognition. However, no one would consider the significance of psychology for the theory of knowledge to be an adequate characterization of the position of psychology in the system of sciences. No one would wish to regard psychology as nothing more than a piece of epistemology. Shall we be satisfied with a wholly analogous characterization of the theory of Objects? Is it necessary

30. Agreement is expressed most recently by A. Höfler, "Zur gegenwärtigen Naturphilosophie," in Vol. II of *Abhandlungen zur Didaktik und Philosophie der Naturwissenschaft*, ed. F. Poske, A. Höfler, and E. Grimsehl (Berlin, 1904), p. 151 (p. 91 of the separate edition).

for our interest in the theory of Objects to proceed, as it were, by way of our interest in cognition?

It seems that anyone who has involved himself closely with the problems of the theory of Objects has plenty of direct experience to the effect that this is not the case. We may acknowledge that epistemology may utilize every detail which competent inquiry in the theory of Objects has produced and will produce, to afford some further information, perhaps less directly, but no less clearly. We can fully appreciate the basic significance of what the theory of Objects has to show us concerning psychologism in epistemology, as we have just done, and at the same time admit that the theory of Objects raises problems whose solutions are interesting for their own sakes.

This becomes particularly clear when we make an assumption which may still involve much that is obscure, but concerning whose essentials I have no fear of making any mistake. I have referred before to the fact that a suitable place for mathematics could never be found in the system of sciences. If I am not mistaken, the anomalous position of mathematics had its basis in the fact that the concept of a theory of Objects had not yet been formed. Mathematics is, in its essential features, a part of the theory of Objects. I say "in its essential features" in order to explicitly leave open the possibility of a specific differentiation of mathematical interests (which I believe is one of the unexplained matters mentioned above).<sup>31</sup> Apart from that, it seems quite obvious to me that both internal and external factors have secured for mathematics an advantage within its own domain, while the theory of Objects must set the entire domain of objects before itself as its task or hold this domain before its eyes as an unattainable ideal. If this consideration is justified, then, as soon as some account is taken of the more specific aspects of the theory of Objects we cannot fail to see how little our interests in it are epistemological interests.

From what has been said, I draw the conclusion that the theory of Objects has a claim to the status of a discipline independent even of the theory of knowledge, and, accordingly, to that of an independent science. This claim cannot be elevated to the level of an accomplished fact, but, on the contrary, is scarcely beginning to be fulfilled, for the theory as a whole is something to be developed, and not something ready to be exhibited. The high stage of development of one of its parts constitutes an external obstacle to the

31. For the beginnings of the relevant work, see E. Mally, in No. III of these studies: Intro., Sec. 2; chap. vii, Secs. 40 ff. [See footnote 7.]

recognition of its claims, which can hardly be overestimated. A mathematician might well be disturbed by the suggestion that he is "really" a theorist of Objects (*Gegenstandstheoretiker*). However, no one will demand that a physicist or chemist consider himself to be a metaphysician. This is so because a science which already exists cannot be either characterized or even named in terms of a science which is still merely an object of aspiration. Moreover, a relatively general science as such can and must set itself goals which are foreign to the relatively specialized sciences. This second point is somewhat obscured, in the case of the relation of mathematics to the theory of Objects, by the fact that in the domain of the theory of Objects mathematics represents not one (of several) but, at least for the time being, the only special science of its type which is known and recognized. A twofold task, perhaps quite dissimilar in its two aspects, is, accordingly, to be ascribed to the theory of Objects. On the one hand, the theory of Objects has the problems of a science of the highest degree of generality and comprehensiveness. On the other, it has, as if standing in the place of a whole group of specialized sciences, those problems which so far have not received any special consideration. Because of the necessity for descending into relatively specialized domains which arises from this situation, its nature as a general science is unavoidably again obscured. Consequently, the subsumption of mathematics under the theory of Objects can easily appear to threaten the distinctive character and special claim of the former.

However, such external and accidental matters ought not to hamper insight into the essential connection between mathematics and the theory of Objects to the extent that that connection exists. This not entirely simple situation can, perhaps, best be given its due by saying: Mathematics is certainly not the theory of Objects, but is now as before a science in its own right. However, its Objects are included in the domain which the Theory of Objects, also having its own justification, must deal with as a whole.

#### 10. THE THEORY OF OBJECTS AND OTHER SCIENCES; GENERAL AND SPECIALIZED THEORY OF OBJECTS

The theory of science can adopt two approaches to its subject matter—that is to say, the various sciences themselves—with which it deals. In the natural approach, it can proceed with assurance if it obeys the principle of all the factual sciences: first the facts and

then the theory. The several sciences must first be given. Then the necessity for examining more closely their nature and mutual relationship may become justified. However, science is also, at least partially, the result of premeditated activity. In employing such foresightedness, the theory of science can also deal with sciences which do not yet exist but should exist. It can find itself directed toward rendering the idea and the tasks of such sciences as precise as possible in anticipation of them.

In the preceding discussion we found ourselves compelled by our interest in Objects to considerations which belong to the theory of science. In this connection, it is incumbent upon the theory of science to function in the second of the two ways mentioned above. The theory of Objects, which we must claim to be a proper science, is, in the main, a science that for the time being hardly exists at all—especially as a separate discipline explicitly recognized in its own right. But, although no investigations have been carried out in the name of the theory of Objects, we must not suppose that this science has been wholly neglected.

If we were to trace out in detail the numerous and intimate relations which the science we have just proposed bears to ways of thinking that have been followed in the past, we would see that it justifies itself by what it has to offer. This is not the proper time to trace these connections; nevertheless, in introducing this new science it is appropriate to make some mention of them. Thus, some notice can be taken of necessities which have been felt for a long time and which have already found expression in the most diverse ways, necessities which have arisen in consciously working out interests that are very widespread, but which have often been unconscious of their real goal.

In fact, I believe that no special historical investigation is actually required to establish that, although the theory of Objects may not have been pursued "explicitly" heretofore, it has all the more frequently been pursued "implicitly." To this I must add that, at least in practice, the implicit status has degrees which smooth transition to the explicit status. Anyone who wishes to pay attention to such transitions and their objects should bear in mind that we have met with interests of two different types pertaining to the theory of Objects: those in regard to questions about certain special domains of Objects, and those in regard to questions which concern the domain of Objects as a whole. We can in this sense, even if it be only for momentary understanding, separate a specialized and a general theory of Objects.

We have referred above to the fact that specialized (in a certain sense the most specialized) theory of Objects has found in mathematics the most splendid representation that could be desired. This luster has long led to efforts to make the procedure, *more mathematico*, accessible to other sciences—I might say, other domains of Objects. We shall scarcely be tripped up by any significant error if we add: whenever such attempts have been undertaken, then to that extent an effort has been made also to do the task of specialized theory of Objects in areas outside of mathematics. Of course, not every application of mathematical procedures need thus be taken into consideration. When the merchant or the engineer calculates, he has as little to do with the theory of Objects as with any other theory. However, certain presuppositions having to do with Objects lie naturally at the base of such practical applications; it is not otherwise when the application results in a theoretical interest. In contrast with the technique of calculation which demands complete attention, the nature of these presuppositions can remain fully in the background. This is illustrated most clearly by the theory of probability and the theory of probable error, which even now are still not recognized by everyone as naturally belonging to logic and psychology. The nature of these assumptions can possibly put the calculations in question at the service of the theory of Objects (as we can see in the case of the theory of combinations). Meanwhile, geometry seems better prepared than arithmetic to extend a hand beyond its narrow borders to discoveries in the theory of Objects. If one observes that the domain of spatial quantities belongs to arithmetic, then what is offered as the translation (so familiar to everyone) of the geometrical view from space to time is already extramathematical and, moreover, pertains to the theory of Objects. It pertains to the theory of Objects because it is in no way tied up with the so-called reality, or more precisely, real existence of time. It is obvious that the analogy is valid for phronomy to a much greater measure; if—what seems to me to need no proof—A. Höfler is correct in contending that tension is the "third fundamental phenomenon of mechanics" along with space and time,<sup>32</sup> then an additional direction is indicated in which this science, without prejudice to its naturally empirical character, engages the interests of the

32. A. Höfler, "Zur gegenwärtigen Naturphilosophie," p. 84 (p. 24 in the separate edition), note 23; also p. 164 (104). In any case, "the theory of dimensions" mentioned on p. 147 (87), *ibid.*, deserves to be mentioned in connection with the point before us.

theory of Objects through the most thoroughgoing *a priori* treatment of its subject matter possible.

The way in which the geometrical point of view tends to reach out beyond its own domain becomes even clearer in those cases where, because of some peculiarity of the area it has taken in, it meets with only partial success. In this respect, the efforts of modern psychology to order the "perceptual Objects" ("*Empfindungsgegenstände*")<sup>33</sup> belonging to the different senses and, where possible, to understand their multifarious aspects in terms of spatial representation are particularly instructive. Even if, in regard to visual sensation, where these efforts have brought forth the most tangible results,<sup>34</sup> the name "color-geometry" implies far more praise than is actually deserved, it still becomes undeniably apparent that the character of the pertinent investigations belongs much more to the theory of Objects than to psychology. I trust that it is not excessively personal for me to report at this time that much of the essential nature of the way in which the theory of Objects frames its questions originally occurred to me while I was engaged in supposedly exclusively psychological labors toward clarification of these matters.

What I have called the encroachment of the mathematical approach beyond its strictest limits has an instinctive and unconscious character in comparison with the completely explicit attempts to expand that domain and to generalize to the fullest extent possible that way of framing a problem. These have probably already achieved some importance under the name of the general theory of functions; one cannot fail to see this in such designations as "the theory of extension" and "the theory of manifolds," and even under the frequently misunderstood catchword, "meta-mathematics." From the point of view we have adopted here, these strikingly significant investigations represent the transition from the specialized to the general theory of objects. A similar status may be ascribed to the endeavors and results customarily grouped under the general name of "mathematical logic," even though those endeavors are in many respects intended for an entirely different purpose. On the other hand, it is likely that the treasure of valuable assertions and suggestions, which (non-mathematical) logic, epistemology, and metaphysics from Aristotle to the present have contributed to the area with which we are

33. A term introduced by Witasek, which seems to me very useful. (Cf. his *Grundlagen der allgemeinen Aesthetik* [Leipzig, 1904], pp. 36 ff.)

34. Cf. my "Bemerkungen über den psychologischen Farbenkörper," *loc. cit.*, pp. 5 ff.

concerned, will be primarily of use to the general theory of Objects. Their full value has not yet been realized, despite present knowledge of the history of philosophy. The same applies to linguistic science, in particular to grammar, whose significance, in fact, has not been fully surveyed either by the old or by the new logic; indeed its significance could scarcely be appreciated until the distinction between Object and Objective had been recognized in the distinction between the meaning of words and the meaning of sentences.<sup>35</sup> However different the two cases may be on the whole, one is tempted to say that the general theory of Objects must learn from grammar just as the specialized theory of Objects must learn from mathematics.

As this quick survey shows despite its somewhat cursory nature, the theory of Objects is by no means completely dependent upon work which is yet to be performed. Indeed, one might ask whether the attempt to introduce a "theory of Objects" means any more than a new name for an old concern. One could easily go on to find that it is indifferent to the investigation itself whether it is undertaken by a mathematician, physicist, logician, or a student of the theory of Objects. Nevertheless, a misunderstanding would lurk in this last move—a misunderstanding which was countered explicitly at the beginning of this exposition. It is certainly immaterial who solves theoretical problems and under which name he solves them. If recognition as a special discipline should be successfully obtained for the theory of Objects, one would, now as before, always have to be thankful to mathematicians, physicists, linguists, and the representatives of other sciences for their energetic furthering of the interests of the theory of Objects, even when they do not mean to have departed from the legitimate territory of their own science. But, for many, recognition of this science would clarify the nature of the problems to be solved—especially where (as is commonly the case) the most relevant works are not of the greatest importance. A natural consequence of this is that old problems are rendered precise and new ones introduced. From the point of view of the theory of Objects, the problems and concerns which we have just grouped together—and which at first glance would seem so diverse—present themselves as belonging together; the value of such a point of view is thus confirmed.

35. Cf. *Über Annahmen*, esp. pp. 19 ff., 175 ff.

## 11. PHILOSOPHY AND THE THEORY OF OBJECTS

If I may hope to have shown that the theory of Objects is a science in its own right, distinct from the other sciences, it is now time to consider its relationship to these other sciences. In other words, it is now time to determine, to some extent, the place of the theory of Objects in the system of sciences. The difficulties which one must resolve, particularly if one endeavors to start from the more or less satisfactory definitions of the relevant sciences, are by no means to be charged solely to the account of the theory of Objects or to the "idea" of such a science, which has been advocated here. We see constantly that the growth and success of the most diverse sciences is quite undisturbed by the fact that, so far, no completely unobjectionable definition can be found for them. I conclude from this, not that effort to obtain such definitions should be relaxed, but that the imperfect definitions we already possess may have their uses. Besides, we can test in this way how far we can get along on the basis of certain concrete knowledge without any formal definition.

On such a basis, it will not be difficult, especially for anyone who is at all intimately acquainted with any of those sciences grouped together under the name "philosophy," to recognize one of them as the theory of Objects.<sup>36</sup> The theory of Objects is also philosophy, therefore, and the only question that remains concerns its place in relation to the other "philosophical disciplines." But I already have devoted the major part of the previous exposition to answering this question. It has been shown that the theory of Objects is neither psychology nor logic, and we have seen why this is so. I believe that I have also been able to prove that the theory of Objects is independent of the theory of knowledge. Nevertheless, as I have already indicated, I would like to place less weight on this result. That one cannot work in the theory of knowledge without also working in the theory of Objects, or at least utilizing the most important discoveries of the theory of Objects, seems to me beyond doubt.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, if someone should claim that these studies are properly

36. More details on this point are to be found in my work, *Über philosophische Wissenschaft und ihre Propädeutik*, chap. i. See, most recently, Höfler, "Zur gegenwärtigen Naturphilosophie," *loc. cit.*, pp. 123 (63) ff.

37. Cf. also Höfler, *loc. cit.*, p. 151 (91).

pursued only in the name of the theory of knowledge, his claim may not be a significant dissent.

On the other hand, "ordered relations" between the theory of Objects and another neighboring science which has been mentioned over and over again in the preceding remarks seem to me of much more importance to the position of the theory of Objects. I am referring to metaphysics, under whose name the history of philosophy has actually entered many of the most significant ideas advanced in the theory of Objects. Even one who would consider the theory of Objects to be a part of the theory of knowledge, in the sense which has just been allowed, must face the following problems of demarcation: does the theory of Objects pertain to those areas, or does it in the end constitute just that area, in regard to which epistemology and metaphysics have, as is well known, not yet been able to reach agreement?

Unfortunately, in the very case of metaphysics, understanding without any appeal to definitions is not to be achieved. Bearing this in mind, I may at least mention A. Höfler's proposal, which came to me while I was writing the present study. Based on an ingenious conception of J. Breuer,<sup>38</sup> it proposes to characterize metaphysics as the science of the "metaphenomenal."<sup>39</sup> My reason for not accepting this proposal is essentially the same as my reason for having so long preferred to regard the "phenomena" (*Phänomene*) of light, sound, etc., as the subject matter of the physicist, and "psychological phenomena" as the subject matter of the psychologist. Phenomena, as such, are a class, albeit a very important class, of pseudo-existing Objects. In the case of a *Pseudoexistenz*, what really exists is invariably only ideas (*Vorstellungen*) which are determined at any time with respect to content. To speak only of physics (for the sake of simplicity): ideas are never Objects of physical inquiry, as Höfler himself has demonstrated by means of arguments which are wholly convincing.<sup>40</sup> The phenomenon is certainly not the phenomenal; the appearance is not that which appears—if by the latter we mean that which is known by means of the appearance, and whose existence therefore can be inferred from the fact of the appearance. I would certainly not deny that the things that thus appear are of interest to the physicist. But I cannot imagine how the "phenomena"

38. Communicated in Supplement I of Höfler's repeatedly cited work, "Zur gegenwärtigen Naturphilosophie."

39. *Ibid.*, pp. 154 (94) ff.

40. Cf. "Zur gegenwärtigen Naturphilosophie," esp. pp. 131 (71) ff.

of these (e.g., the "phenomena" that come after the beginning and the end of the appearing thing) can be excluded from the domain of metaphysics

An appropriate evaluation of the importance of what Breuer and Höfler suggest would require me to digress too far from the main theme of this study. For now, these few hints may be enough to show why it still seems to me to be most appropriate, in the characterization of metaphysics, to place the major emphasis on the element of greatest possible generality, where "greatest possible generality" means the most comprehensive range of applicability possible for the ideas it advances.<sup>41</sup> Metaphysics is neither physics, physical biology, nor psychological biology. Instead, it includes in its realm of investigation the inorganic as well as the organic and psychological, in order to ascertain what has validity for everything that falls in such diverse realms. Of course, the emphasis which this definition places on universality renders the necessity for clarifying the relations between metaphysics and the theory of Objects especially obvious. This is so because our attention has also been drawn by the exceptional breadth of the area pertaining to the theory of Objects. But perhaps it is precisely by the simultaneous consideration of the theory of Objects that we are led to a standpoint from which we can perfect our characterization of metaphysics and thereby silence many of the doubts which may previously have been raised about it.

In this way, moreover, I can fall back on what has been said before and, to that extent, cut my discussion short. If, as we may well believe, everything that exists in the world is either psychological or physical, then metaphysics, insofar as it is concerned with the psychological as well as the physical, is the science of reality in general (*von der Gesamtheit des Wirklichen*). To this extent, then, to cite an example, both the fundamental thesis of monism, which asserts the essential identity of the physical and the psychological, and that of dualism, which asserts their essential difference, are metaphysical. But any one who knows things to be identical or different certainly knows something about these things; yet his knowledge, however, also concerns identity and/or difference, and identity itself is as far from being a thing as is difference. Both identity and difference stand outside of the disjunction between the physical and the psychological, since they stand beyond the real

41. *Über philosophische Wissenschaft, etc.*, p. 7.

(*ausserhalb des Realen*). There is also knowledge of what is not actual (*von Nichtwirklichem*). No matter how generally the problems of metaphysics are construed, there are questions which are even more general; these questions, unlike those of metaphysics, are not oriented exclusively toward reality. The questions of theory of Objects are of this kind.

But one will immediately ask: is it not forced, or at least arbitrary, to exclude in principle all ideal objects<sup>42</sup> from the area of metaphysical investigation? I answer that in the first place they are by no means excluded in every sense. Our metaphysical interests would certainly be in a sorry plight indeed, as the example of monism and dualism has just shown, if one could not speak in metaphysics of identity and difference, nor of cause, purpose, unity, continuity, and many other objects which are either entirely or partially of an ideal nature. However, many Objects of this type are also discussed in physics, although no one would count them among the Objects of physical inquiry. In any case, the restriction of the realm of metaphysics to reality is intended with a very definite reservation. Presupposing such a reservation, however, I believe in fact that this restriction is entirely compatible with the spirit in which metaphysics has been carried on both in ancient and in modern times, in accordance with that natural pre-eminence of the real which has been repeatedly touched upon. "Ontology," the "theory of categories," and the other subjects assigned more or less unanimously to metaphysics have occasionally allowed a place for interests extending beyond the limits of the real; but this is an indication only of the correctness and unavoidability of these interests. However, as far as I can see, there is no room for doubting that the fundamental intention of all metaphysics has always been directed toward comprehending the "world" in a strict, natural sense, i.e., the world of reality. This is so even when this comprehension seems to show that what is to be comprehended has no claim at all to the title of a real object. But even if our present view of the character of metaphysics up to this time should not convince everyone, indeed even if it should be shown to be historically incorrect, the error concerns only the definition "*de lege lata*," as it were, and the definition "*de lege ferenda*"<sup>43</sup> would remain open for consideration. On this assumption, the characterization of metaphysics advanced above would be a proposal for a definition: the restriction of the

42. "Über Gegenstände höherer Ordnung," pp. 198 ff.

43. Breuer, in Höfler, *loc. cit.*, p. 189 (129).



name "metaphysics" to the general science of reality would be just as desirable in the interest of a clear formulation of the problems of metaphysics as it would be in the interest of its distinct delimitation in relation to the theory of Objects.

Only one point concerning the latter problem still requires clarification. If metaphysics is a general science of the real, should we say that the theory of Objects is, in contrast, the general science of the non-real? This would obviously be too narrow. Why should real Objects be excluded from the theory of Objects as such? Or would it be more appropriate to describe the theory of Objects as the theory of the subsistent, contrasting the words "subsist" and "exist"<sup>44</sup> in such a way that, whereas all existing things subsist, it is not true that all subsisting entities (e.g., difference) also exist? Even in this case, the area which the theory of Objects comprehends, as we have seen, would not be included in its entirety; the non-subsistent, the absurd, would be excluded. To be sure, the non-subsistent is of little concern to the natural interest, and it provides an even smaller point of purchase to intellectual understanding.<sup>45</sup> But it does belong to the "given" (*Gegebenen*), after all, so that the theory of Objects can by no means ignore it.

Such an omission can be met simply by the stipulation that the theory of Objects concern itself with the given, without paying any attention to its being (*Sein*), and that it consider only the knowledge of its *Sosein*. Yet, something which might give us pause in connection with this definition is already intimately tied up with the theory of Objects. If the theory of Objects chose to make one of its fundamental principles that of indifference to being, then it would have to renounce all claims to be a science, and even the knowledge of *Sosein* would thereby be excluded. As we know, it is completely unnecessary that the Object of knowledge should have being. However, all knowledge must have an Objective which has being; and if the theory of Objects concerns itself with a *Sosein* which did not have being itself, then, provided that we ignore the exceptional situations to be passed over here, it no longer has any claim to be a theory. Of course, the fundamental principle could always be formulated as follows: the theory of Objects neglects being only in the case of its Objects, but not, however, in the case of (certain) Objectives. But why then the absence of uniformity? Moreover, or perhaps first of all: whether this or that Object is

44. "Über Gegenstände höherer Ordnung," p. 186.

45. See E. Mally, in No. III of these studies, chap. i, Secs. 5 f.

absurd by nature, whether it subsists or could equally well exist—these are questions which are actually of interest to the theory of Objects and which are ultimately questions about being. In brief, therefore: even the restriction to *Sosein* probably cannot be brought into harmony with the essential nature of the theory of Objects.

There may be, however, a rather simple source of assistance here. It is a methodological distinction, and one which, so far as it concerns the nature of the sciences, people heretofore have sought to make with too much, rather than too little, ardor. As is generally known, some cases of knowledge are justified in terms of the characteristics, the *Sosein*, of their Objects or Objectives. Again, there are other cases of which this is not so.<sup>46</sup> The first type of knowledge has long been called *a priori*, and the latter, empirical. Nowadays we occasionally meet with failure to recognize this distinction, but such failure no more affects the validity of the distinction than does the fact of color blindness affect the distinction between the various colors. (The state of color blindness, however, is psychologically much more interesting.) If we now make use of the distinction between *a priori* and empirical, we will have no difficulty, it seems to me, in making a satisfactory differentiation between our two disciplines. What can be known about an Object in virtue of its nature, hence *a priori*, belongs to the theory of Objects. This involves, in the first place, the *Sosein* of the "given." But it also involves its being (*Sein*) insofar as that can be known from its *Sosein*. On the other hand, that which is to be determined about Objects only *a posteriori* belongs to metaphysics, provided that the knowledge is of a sufficiently general character. That the domain of reality will not be overstepped as long as the knowledge in question is affirmative in nature is assured by the *a posteriori* character of this knowledge. There are, therefore, precisely two sciences of highest generality: an *a priori* science which concerns everything which is given, and an *a posteriori* one which includes in its investigations everything which can be considered by empirical knowledge, i.e., reality in general. The latter science is metaphysics, the former is the theory of Objects.

The most striking feature of this definition is that metaphysics appears as an empirical science; yet the representatives of the separate sciences have reproached both ancient and modern metaphysics mainly for a lack of sufficient empiricism. I would not wish

46. *Über Annahmen*, pp. 193 f.

to defend anyone deserving such a reproach. I would hope to be far from this in what I have said above, for, in the very definition of metaphysics, I have rendered a just account of the claims of empiricism. Ultimately, experience is the only source of knowledge at the disposal of any science of reality, whether that science be special or general. I say "ultimately" because what is required is, not that everything be experienced directly, but that we be able to infer from experience what is not experienced, and perhaps even what cannot be experienced. But the indispensable foundation of empirical knowledge always remains empirical and is *toto coelo* different from the general epistemological character of the *a priori*. In this sense, there is no knowledge of what exists other than empirical knowledge. If the experiences which would be necessary for the characteristically general thesis are not suitable to metaphysics, then—there is no metaphysics, or at least no scientific metaphysics (and it is only with scientific metaphysics that we are concerned). It has already been mentioned that, for purposes of the present discussion, we need not consider here the extent to which the desire for a scientific metaphysics has so far been realized. So it is only an apparent paradox, which can be removed by brief reflection, if I must say: No matter how much or how little metaphysical knowledge is accessible to us, this knowledge ultimately can be nothing but empirical knowledge.

If one objects, however, that the word "metaphysics" has often been used as a name for intellectual endeavors or even for results which employ, unmistakably and perhaps downright fundamentally, extra-empirical (and consequently *a priori*) methods, he forgets that we are now taking the standpoint, *sit venia verbo*, of "*definitio ferenda*." Naturally I am aware that the two areas of knowledge we are now concerned to mark off clearly are by no means always thus marked off. However, that the present division cannot be entirely worthless—assuming that I have succeeded in making it clear—may be indicated here by the ontological argument, or at least by arguments like it (even now there may be some who have not outgrown such reasoning). The ontological argument is characteristic of attempts to solve a metaphysical problem in merely *a priori* fashion—to deal with it on equal terms with a problem that belongs to the theory of Objects. This and similar arguments are to be judged by this fact.

It is improbable that all difficulties concerning the boundary between metaphysics and the theory of Objects are eliminated by means

of this division. But it would be unfair to demand in this instance what has not been clearly achieved in any instance of contiguous sciences. A more important objection emerges specifically from the standpoint of the theory of Objects. We have treated this as if it were simply a general science, even though we had to make a quite explicit distinction above between a general and a specialized theory of Objects. Here is an imperfection which cannot be removed, at least in the present state of knowledge of matters pertaining to the theory of Objects; there are practical reasons for this. It is clear that mathematics, insofar as it is a specialized theory of Objects, could be accompanied by still other specialized theories of Objects, their number scarcely to be determined. However, these areas are at present so incompletely known to us that in studying them there is not yet any need to specialize. The specialized theories of Objects divide at this time, therefore, into mathematical and non-mathematical. What can now be said about the second member of this wholly primitive division is so obvious that it easily finds a place within the limits of the general theory of Objects. To this extent, there is at present no specialized theory of Objects other than mathematics. Of course, one cannot predict how long this will be so. Development along these lines will not be forestalled by the definition proposed above. Just as specialized empirical sciences are set over against the general empirical science, specialized *a priori* sciences can accompany the general *a priori* science. For the time being, this possibility is realized only in mathematics; in subsuming mathematics under the standpoint of the theory of Objects, we have placed it alongside of disciplines which are not now actual, but they are disciplines which at least are possible. In any event, mathematics need no longer find itself in that odd isolation from which earlier theoretical conceptions of mathematics suffer.<sup>47</sup>

I must finally return to placing the theory of Objects among the philosophical sciences, which was accomplished above without appealing to a definition. On occasion, I have attempted to classify as philosophical those sciences which are occupied *only* with psychological matters or which are occupied *also* with psychological matters. The opinion has been expressed very recently<sup>48</sup> that my work in the theory of relations and complexes may have led me by now to ascribe an essentially twofold object to philosophy: firstly, psychological matters and, secondly, relations and complexes. That

47. See above, Secs. 2 and 7.

48. By Höfler in his study, "Zur gegenwärtigen Naturphilosophie," p. 124 (64).

such a modification would destroy completely the unity of the original definition is amply evident. One should be scandalized to find the objects of philosophy turning out to be a hodgepodge of left-overs from the natural sciences, unless one believed that philosophy should generally be characterized by reference to whatever the natural sciences happened to leave over.<sup>49</sup> On such a view the function remaining for philosophy could hardly be called worthy. And even if the introduction of a scientific activity intended essentially for picking up left-overs could have some practical justification, this should scarcely alter the theoretical fact that in themselves these left-overs taken together do not comprise materials for a science. On the other hand, it is certain that complexes and relations, insofar as they are ideal—today I would rather say: ideal complexes and ideal relata<sup>50</sup>—are neither physical nor psychological (*psychisch*); for they are not real at all. But to include them within philosophy—in other words, to be able to consider the theory of Objects as a philosophical discipline—we need not revise our conception of philosophy any more than we do in connection with the other universal science. If I may count metaphysics among the philosophical disciplines because it conceives its problems broadly enough that, along with the physical, the psychological is *also* to be included in it, then nothing hinders our treating the theory of Objects as a philosophical science for the same reasons. The theory of Objects has to do with the given taken in its entirety; we may recognize that the psychological belongs to the given, but without prejudice to the fact that physical and ideal Objects are likewise included therein and must be considered too. The foregoing can be said quite independently of the fact that, in connection with ideal Objects (which by nature are always superordinate [*superius*]), psychological Objects can sometimes enter into consideration as indispensable subordinates (*inferiora*).

Of course, I do not hesitate to admit that the parallelism which has just been shown to hold between the theory of Objects and metaphysics also holds in other matters which are fundamentally of more practical than theoretical significance. From the fact that metaphysics is concerned with the psychological, and not *only* with the psychological but *also* with the physical, I have concluded, on the side of metaphysics, that the representative of the psychological

49. Cf. J. Breuer, in Höfler, *loc. cit.*, p. 190 (130).

50. Concerning the reasons for this change in the terminology I have used heretofore, see No. III of these studies by Mally, chap. i, Secs. 9, 11.

sciences, as well as the representative of the physical sciences, can legitimately deal with metaphysical problems and may be called upon to do so. Now it seems to me that one cannot help but make exactly the same concession for the theory of Objects. Indeed, as far as research techniques are concerned, those engaged in the scientific study of psychological experiences may have a certain advantage in the theory of Objects as well as in metaphysics. In the theory of Objects it is disastrously easy, as we know, to collapse into psychology; this fact speaks a language which is not to be misunderstood. But these are considerations only of technique; even in terms of what has just been said, we cannot fail to see that under special circumstances such considerations may be more than balanced by some particular technique contributed by another science. Insofar as mathematics in particular can be regarded as a specialized theory of Objects, it would be ungrateful to forget that research of the type which belongs to the theory of Objects often leads to splendid results without any thought for other philosophical interests.

## 12. CONCLUSION

If the foregoing exposition has demonstrated—at least in rough outline—the nature and the legitimacy of a distinctive science, “the theory of Objects,” and of its place among the sciences in general, it may now be appropriate to explain more precisely the problems and the methods of the new science. We should note, on the one hand, that the most important of these considerations has already arisen quite of its own accord: for once the subject matter of a science is known, its problems are, in general, already defined. This is particularly true if the *a priori* nature of the science in question has been shown. And the latter qualification determines what is most important as far as method is concerned. On the other hand (and of primary significance), however, making plans is notoriously “many, many times a vain and ostentatious intellectual show.” And showing others a path one declines to take oneself is even more so. I may hope that my previous relations to this science will exclude any suspicion that I am one who is content to set up projects without putting a hand to their fulfillment; otherwise the foregoing treatise about a science that is only coming into being might better have been withheld. It requires so much more to be a Prometheus than an Epimetheus, that I shall certainly not appear to indulge in self-

praise if I note that for years—indeed for decades—my scientific endeavors have been under the influence of interests pertaining to the theory of Objects without any suspicion of the true nature of these interests having occurred to me. The fact that their nature at first burst in upon me with complete autonomy in practice, and later—I could scarcely say exactly when myself<sup>51</sup>—in theory, presents me with a new argument for the validity of the claims which have been made above in the name of the theory of Objects. (This is clearly not a formally rigorous argument, but its force is nonetheless not to be underestimated.) The claims themselves thus signify for me a view which is much more retrospective than anticipatory. Given the chance to demonstrate how fruitful the point of view of the theory of Objects can be, in the face of old problems as well as ever so many new ones, I would say that any attempt to gain recognition for this point of view, by outlining its distinctive character, can by no means be premature.

However, the occurrence of this essay in the framework of the present collection of studies has a more special motive. It was inevitable that researches along the lines of the theory of Objects should receive devoted attention in the circle where its significance was first appreciated. Thus it has been possible to place two studies\* devoted to the theory of Objects at the beginning of the present collection; other parts of the collection may bear witness here and there to the utility of knowledge and skill in the theory of Objects for psychological research. In consideration of this, it seemed fitting to mention the theory of Objects explicitly in the title of the entire collection and to permit a sort of basic explanation of what is meant by this expression to precede the two treatises indicated. Thus, even in the present publication, what has been said above about a new science is not presented as a comfortable dream of the future or as some utopia, but as a goal which we may clearly hold before our eyes, and which we have already begun to use our best abilities to achieve.

Accordingly, if the present explanations are to-function at the same time as a kind of special preface to the part of the present book which has to do with the theory of Objects, this is the appro-

51. In any case, it was long before 1903, when I took an opportunity for the first time to refer to the theory of Objects explicitly by this name. Cf. "Bemerkungen über den Farbenkörper, etc.," *loc. cit.*, pp. 3 f.

\*The essays to which Meinong here refers are: "Beiträge zur Grundlegung der Gegenstandstheorie," by Rudolf Ameseder, and "Untersuchungen zur Gegenstandstheorie des Messens," by E. Mally.

prate place for a few remarks about the two works which follow. It is not only the editor of these essays who speaks in these remarks but perhaps even more the academic teacher, who, not too long ago, had the pleasure of introducing the authors of the following investigations to the philosophical sciences, and who thereby considers himself authorized (or under the present circumstances, *obliged*) to bar the way at the outset against certain obvious misunderstandings about the intentions of the works I am discussing.

After what has gone before, I can hardly be suspected of ingratitude for the preparatory work that has been so useful to the theory of Objects on many sides, if I nevertheless go on to say: the theory of Objects is a young, a very young, science. Anyone who betakes himself to its domain finds an immeasurable wealth of problems-to-be and possible solutions. However, even with the most careful consideration, he cannot hope to hit the correct answer every time. Instead, he must expect that what he believes to have been established firmly will oftentimes fall victim to advanced knowledge and to the developed research techniques of the future. It is also obvious that in the beginning the individuality of the investigator must play a more determinative role in the results than it does in times of established traditions and more polished methods of investigation. The opinions advanced in the following essays are not put forward as conclusive results. They are, rather, preliminary considerations (though, as the editor can testify, by no means hastily conceived); they are advanced with the expectation that much still remains to be improved—with the thought, therefore, that which is offered here is intended less for the reader's passive absorption than for his criticism and further cultivation.

On such a presupposition, there will be no grounds for objection if the opinions advanced in the two essays do not always agree as to ideas and as to terminology with each other, and with the conceptions I have introduced myself, even though they have more than once found themselves forced to go into basic questions, and consequently sometimes to go into ones I have touched on. This is itself a sign of the primitive state of the theory of Objects. One might very well reproach us for not having smoothed out our differences in oral conversation in order that we might appear before the public with a firmly unified system of harmonious concepts and terms. The demand that controversies ought to be decided in private rather than in print is certainly legitimate, but I can report that we are not sparing of discussion in the Graz Philosophical Institute. Naturally,

the principle of the greatest possible freedom of conviction holds at the same time; had we decided not to allow individual views to be expressed beyond certain limits, we would have paved the way for predispositions which can be most harmful at the beginning of inquiry. And if in what follows we had offered something more rounded and more unanimous, we would have been able to do it only at the price of forfeiting stimulating influences which might be fruitful for the further development of the theory of Objects.

Another defect in the two contributions which follow, one with which the authors themselves are well acquainted, is at least in part based on analogous considerations. The literature on a given subject may stimulate one person who sets out to explore that subject; but it may also serve, by the power of suggestion, to cut off any capacities for development he may have. I hope that herein lies at least part of the justification for the fact that for a very long time I have followed and taught as a first principle of research the fundamental law: First observe and consider, then read. But I cannot fail to recognize the fact that to some extent this fundamental law involves the danger that the use of literature may become too abbreviated, especially if the completion of a work is bound to a definite time, or special circumstances make access to the literature difficult. Both of these things have happened in the following studies in the theory of Objects. Since the outward occasion for the present publication required the appearance of the book before the end of 1904, I was obliged to press the authors to finish off their contributions, at a time when they certainly had no illusions about the conclusiveness of these works. On the other hand, as indicated by the occasional citations above,<sup>52</sup> access to the literature on the theory of Objects is anything but easy at this time. It is scattered to the four winds, and it can be disclosed, to say nothing of being fully absorbed, only by a deeply penetrating study of adjoining sciences. Thus one will search in vain in the two treatises which follow for anything resembling a uniform usage of the relevant mathematical literature, despite the profound importance it has for the foundation of the theory of Objects. None of us believes the matter can rest there. For my part, I hope that the principle of considering and reading will always be maintained in spite of special circumstances. •

If I am not mistaken, the reader will take no offense at the great number of new concepts and terms, of which many may appear to

be superfluous and burdensome (and insofar as they really are, they will certainly not endure). Nor will he take offense at the fact that we have decided to give this or that concept a name different from the one I have used in earlier works. A good term is as much as half a discovery; and it is better to replace a bad term when a better one has been found than to continue dragging along the evil consequences of the old for the sake of conservatism.

I may now summarize. In the foregoing, an attempt has been made to demonstrate the legitimacy of the theory of Objects as a separate science in its own right. The two treatises that follow—incidentally and implicitly the other studies assembled in this book as well—are intended to make contributions to this science. In this respect, to demand completeness and irrefutability can hardly be reasonable as things now stand. It is enough if we should have been able successfully to set forth a consideration and critique of ideas that strive to go still further, and by this to show that the path we have taken is worthy of confidence, and one by which anyone who resolves to take it will be advanced. It is to be hoped that what we have been able to offer here will bring friends and recognition to the new science of the theory of Objects.

*Realism & The Background  
of Phenomenology*  
ed. Rodolphe Christakos  
Free Press 1960

52. See Sec. 10.