

Understanding Mally

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1. Introductory remarks

1.1 *Two essays*

In what follows I shall consider only two of Mally's papers: *Untersuchungen zur Gegenstandstheorie des Messens* (1904, henceforth *Untersuchungen*) and *Gegenstandstheoretische Grundlagen der Logik und Logistik* (1912, henceforth *Grundlagen*). It may be of some interest to note that the first edition of Meinong's *Über Annahmen* was published in 1902, two years before Mally's *Untersuchungen*, whereas the second amply revised edition was published in 1910, two years before Mally's *Grundlagen*.

As far as I know, in that period Meinong and Mally were quite close. The differences between the first and the second editions of *Über Annahmen* are quite significant and I am not sure we can simply say that the second edition is only an improved version of the first one. Nevertheless, Meinong is not my concern here and I shall not directly consider his ideas. I shall instead examine some developments in Mally's thought between the theses presented in the study of 1904 and those in the paper of 1912. It should be stressed, however, that an analysis of Mally's ideas is also, at least in part, a contribution to analysis of Meinong's ideas.

My first task is to set out the main differences between the work of 1904 and the work of 1912. This is not an easy understanding because both papers are dense with ideas and, unfortunately, Mally's laconic style sometimes makes it very difficult to grasp his meaning.

1.2 *Russell's review*

The above points were clearly stated by Russell in his review of Meinong's *Untersuchungen zur Gegenstandstheorie und Psychologie*.¹ At the beginning of the review, we read, for instance, statements like the following: "Meinong's (essay) and the two which immediately follow it [respectively written by Ameseder and Mally] deal with what Meinong calls *Gegenstandstheorie*, and are largely concerned with matters of fundamental philosophical importance"; "The philosophy set forth in them is a development of that contained in Meinong's *Über Annahmen*, and its value appears to me to be very great" (77). At the end of Russell's review, we read: "The book as a whole does the highest credit to the Graz school of psychology and philosophy; and its main articles contain theories which demand and deserve careful study. The second and third articles, by Ameseder and Mally, contain so many important definitions in quick succession that it has been impossible to give an adequate idea of their contents in the space of a re-

¹ Russell 1973b.

view” (88). From these remarks it should be clear that Russell had a clearly positive attitude towards the contributions contained in this book edited by Meinong. Evidently, however, this positive attitude did not prevent him from underlining the negative features of these contributions. As far Mally's own paper is concerned, after presenting some of the definitions given in the work, Russell stresses “I hope other readers do not find these definitions perfectly easy to follow. I believe the meaning is really quite definite, but the technical terms introduced are so numerous, and the fundamental ones so hard to apprehend, that the definitions become very puzzling” (83). This latter quotation reveals Russell's dual attitude towards Mally: on the one hand, he considers his ideas as important, on the other, he describes the presentation of these same ideas as obscure and inadequate. A couple of quotes exemplify this: “Still more definiteness is given to the subject of non-subsistent objects by Mally in the third article” (79); “Mally's essay, before it reaches the subject of measurement, treats afresh all the fundamentals of the theory of objects; it does this in a series of definitions, often (I think) embodying important ideas, but so obscurely expressed that it is very hard to understand what they mean. I shall not attempt a summary, as no summary could be more condensed than the original, in which single pages contain more matter than one usually finds in twenty” (81-2).

At this stage, the main point should be clear: if we trust Russell's opinion (and intuition), the work published by Mally in the 1904 book seems to contain a number of important ideas, but these ideas are so badly presented that it is hard to understand their real value. If this is so, it is also clear that our task is to try to understand and clarify (at least some of) these ideas.

1.3 The first and the second phase of Mally's Gegenstandstheorie: a rapid overview

Both papers are extremely dense. The general impression is that the first essay is much more obscure and difficult than the second one. Although the 1904 paper presents its theses in the fashion of a systematic theory, careful reading shows that it can be more properly described as a working proposal. For this reason it represents an initial stage in the development of the theory of objects. As we shall see, the main difference between the 1904 and the 1912 papers is the introduction in the latter of the difference between positional and non-positional attitudes. From this distinction stems almost all the other differences between the two papers. Of these I mention the following two. The 1904 proposal uses a theory of qualities, which is omitted from the 1912 theory. Secondly, the first essay uses the distinction between explicit, implicit and fictitious, whereas the second leaves out fictitious and uses the distinction between explicit and implicit with caution. It instead introduces the distinctions between *formale* and *ausserformale* that have become so famous in contemporary Meinongian semantics under the labels of ‘nuclear’ and ‘extranuclear’ predication.²

There are further aspects that render Mally's works hard to assimilate intellectually. Sufficient it to mention their lack of the concept of universe of discourse. This point alone shows that Mally is concerned more with traditional logic than with modern logic, that is, Schröder more than Frege.³

² The terms ‘nuclear’ predication as opposed to ‘extranuclear’ predication have been introduced by Findlay, he uses them to translate Meinong's *konstitutorische* and *ausserkonstitutorische* properties [Meinong 1915, 176-7], which are used by Meinong as equivalents of Mally's distinction between *formale* and *ausserformale* properties [Mally 1912, 76. In fact, Mally also talks of ‘*konstitutive Bestimmungen*’. See for example p. 64]. Extranuclear predication, however, is predication of properties of a higher order: simplicity, sameness, difference, etc. These are not ‘markers’ (*Merkmale*), i.e. objects that determine other objects [Mally 1912, 64].

³ On the concept of traditional logic see Poli 1993a and 1993b.

1.4 General structure of the 1904 theory

The general purpose of the 1904 essay is to lay the foundation for the theory of measurement. Note that Mally's aim was not to construct a *mathematical* theory of measurement, but to analyse the *ontological* concept of magnitude. For this reason is important to ensure that the ontological (or metaphysical) theory of magnitudes does not overlap with the mathematical (or physical) theory of measurement. The mathematical theory of measurement considers objects only from the point of view of their magnitude, while the philosophical analysis concerns the nature of magnitudes and of the features that an object should have in order to be a *quantum*, that is, something that can be measured.⁴

As already mentioned, Russell pointed out that “Mally's essay, before it reaches the subject of measurement, treats afresh all the fundamentals of the theory of objects”. Considering the aim of this paper, we shall examine only some of the general features of Mally's work, without analysing his theory of magnitudes.

Bearing these limitations in mind, the main features of the *Untersuchungen* can be summed up as follows:

1. Introduction of the principle of the independence between *Sosein* and *Sein*.
2. Distinction between two modes of *Sosein*-determination: *Wiesein* and *Wassein*.
3. Distinction between explicit, implicit and fictitious objects.

According to (1) the *Sosein* of an object does not depend on the *Sein* of the object. This amounts to saying that the way in which the object is given or shaped does not depend on its existence.⁵ According to (2) any *Wassein* can be reduced to a corresponding *Wiesein*. Otherwise stated, the theory of qualities has a primarily foundational role. The third point is much more difficult to summarize. Russell advances the hypothesis that Mally's distinction between what is explicit and what is implicit amounts to a theory of denotation. He writes: “In place of the theory of denoting, Mally, in the third essay, develops a theory of explicit and implicit Objekte, which serves a similar purpose” (81). And again: “As to his explicit and implicit objects, their relation seems to be that of denoting concept to object denoted” (83). Even if there is some truth to this interpretation, it is nevertheless rather misleading, amongst other reasons because it seems unable to explain the role of fictitious objects. In describing these objects, Russell himself is forced to admit that “this distinction is an elusive one; at the same time, it is certainly genuine and important” (82). Before considering a different interpretative proposal, I shall make brief examination of the 1912 paper.

1.5 General structure of the 1912 theory

The main points of the *Grundlagen* can be summarized in the following theses:

1. Abandonment of the principle of independence.
2. Distinction between two types of predication: nuclear and extranuclear.
3. Distinction between positioning and non-positioning acts.

According to Findlay, Mally's 1912 book “rejects entirely the principle of the independence of so-being from being, and bases itself on a more careful analysis of the

⁴ Capone Braga 1914-15, 300.

⁵ In the 1904 paper we find both a principle of dependence and a principle of independence. The principle of dependence states that the *Sein* of an object depends on the *Sosein* of the object [Mally 1904, 126]. The principle of independence states that the *Sein* of the *Sosein* of an object does not depend on the *Sein* of the object [Mally 1904, 127]. One should be careful not to confuse the realm of the contradictoriness of the determinations of the *Sosein* with the realm of the impossibility of the object. These are two hierarchically distinct levels. For more details see Poli 1990, 119-20.

relation of the object to the objectives which concern it". This more careful analysis is based on the new theory of determinations.

The point stated by Findlay is not clear, at least not to me. And it is not clear for the reason that, as we will see, the theory of determinations is clearly present, even if differently formulated, in the 1904 paper. This is why the above summary does not include a fourth point like "Introduction of the theory of determination".

1.6 Some terminological points

In order to develop the comparison between the two essays it is important to remember that Mally uses different terminologies. In the 1904 book we find terms like *Eigenschaftsgegenstand*, *Bestimmungsgegenstand*, *bestimmende Gegenstand*, *Bestimmung*. In the 1912 book we find *Begriffsgegenstand*, *Ding*, *Fall*, *Determinand*, *Determinator* and *Determinat*. The last three are taken from the *Logik* by Wundt. Sometimes it is possible to find a correlation between the 1904 terms and the 1912 terms (*Bestimmungsgegenstand* = *Determinand*; *bestimmende Gegenstand* = *Determinator*; *Bestimmung* = *Determinat*), sometimes not.

In order to simplify comparison, I assume that if an idea is present in both papers it is the same idea, unless some explicit statement can be formed to the contrary.

2. Analysis of the 1904 paper

2.1 General structure

The 1904 paper contains an important inner tension. And it is precisely this tension that makes the work so interesting and so difficult. On the one hand, we have the thesis that anything is an object (and this is the *Gegenstandstheoretic* aspect of the book); on the other, the theory is developed on four different levels. We can also say that there are four connected but nevertheless different theories: of objects, of qualities, of relations and of complexions (*Komplexionen*). Each of the four theories has two sides: the side of the objects and the side of the objectives. Thus:

objects:	<i>Objekt</i>	<i>Objektive</i>
qualities:	<i>Quale</i>	<i>Qualität</i>
relations:	<i>Relat</i>	<i>Relation</i>
complexions:	<i>Komplex</i>	<i>Komplexion</i>

Qualen, *Relaten* and *Komplexen* are objects; *Qualitäten*, *Relationen* and *Komplexionen* are objectives. The choice itself of these names shows that the last three theories (of qualities, relations and complexions) are developed mainly from the side of objectives, whereas the theory of objects is developed from the side of the objects.

We may start by assuming the following three theses: (1) Everything is an object; (2) Any object has *Sein* and *Sosein*; (3) *Sein* and *Sosein* are objectives.

From these theses it follows, for instance, that also objectives have *Sein* and *Sosein*. In this sense we can speak of the *Sein* of the *Sosein* of an object, or of the *Sosein* of the *Sein* of an object, etc.⁶

The *Quale* is an inner determinant of the object. The *Qualität* is an inner determinant of the objective. The *Relat* is an external determinant between or among objects. The *Relation* is an external determinant between or among objectives.

⁶ For more details on this point, see Poli 1990, 126.

The *ratio* is quite simple:

Quale \Rightarrow Objekt \Rightarrow Relat \Rightarrow Komplex

Qualität \Rightarrow Objektiv \Rightarrow Relation \Rightarrow Komplexion

The four theories of 1904 use a categorial framework which displays the same conceptual structure. The main features of this structure are the two oppositions between (i) real and ideal and among (ii) explicit, implicit and fictitious, and (iii) the property of coincidence. I now examine these oppositions in the following order: real-ideal, coincidence, explicit-implicit-fictitious.

2.2 The opposition between real and ideal

This opposition is a predominant feature of the whole book and is one of Mally's main contributions to Meinong's theory of objects. By definition, we shall say that something is real when its nature does not exclude existence. For complement, something is ideal when its nature does exclude existence. The nature of the object is its *Sosein*.

Therefore, in order to know if something can exist, it is sufficient to analyse its *Sosein*. Note that, according to this definition, the theory of objects does not address the existence or the non existence of the objects, but rather their possibility of existing or not existing. This explains why the theory of objects is a purely *a priori* theory. The pure analysis of the *Sosein* tells us whether something can be an existent, real object or a non existent, ideal object.

2.3 The concept of coincidence and the theory of objectives

The concept of coincidence is the real cornerstone of the 1904 theory and constitutes the main differences between this theory and its 1912 counterpart. Indeed, such a profoundly different character to the 1912 theory is precisely the disappearance of the concept of coincidence (and of essential coincidence, as we shall see).

Mally's definition is quite clear: the objects x and y are termed *coincident*s iff both determine z . Formally, the definition can be stated as: $C(x,y) \equiv (\exists z)(z \text{ is } x \wedge z \text{ is } y)$.

Then follows the definition of essentially coincident objects. The objects x and y are essentially coincident objects iff they are coincident objects of the same quale. A formal counterpart could be: $EC(x,y) \equiv (\exists z)(z = Q \wedge z \text{ is } x \wedge z \text{ is } y)$.⁷ The point, therefore, is this: what is a 'quale'?

In his 1904 paper Mally starts with an analysis of the two fundamental modes of determination. The first mode answers the question 'what is A?'; the second mode answers the question 'what is A like?'. Mally's examples are, respectively, the following: 'this thing is a lever' and 'the sky is blue'. In Mally's words, to the *what* there corresponds a *quid*, to the *what... like* there corresponds a *quale*.

Mally then observes that every *quid* is entirely determined by a *quale*. This statement enables us to state that the *quale* is the fundamental feature of the predication. I have already pointed out that *quid* and *quale* or, as Mally also calls them, *Wassein* and *Wiesein*, are species of *Sosein*.

We have seen that according to Mally, the coincident objects of the same *quale* are 'essentially coincident objects'. This means, adds Mally, that they can be distinguished

⁷ In this context the identity can be defined thus: $x = y \equiv x \text{ is } y \wedge y \text{ is } x$.

only formally. Following Mally's exemplification we may say that the *quale* 'A is red' coincides essentially with the *quid* 'A is something red'. That is, we can state that 'A is red' (*Wie*) essentially coincides with 'A is something red' (*Was*). In German it is possible to say that 'A ist rot' (*quale*) is essentially coincident with 'A ist etwas Rotes' (*quid*) or even with 'A ist ein Rotes' (*quid*).

In order to conduct better analysis of the theory of the *quid* and the *quale*, we must employ the structure of the objective, and this is a rather complex task.

At first sight, it is usually maintained that the objective presents *three* different objects: the object of determination; the determinant object, and the determination. However, for full understanding of the many subtleties of the theory, it is much more correct to state that the objective is connected to *four* different objects: as well as the three just mentioned, we must also to consider what Mally calls the *Eigenschaftsgegenstand*.

The difference among all these objects becomes clearer if we consider the judgement or the assumption 'this thing is a lever', where 'this thing' is the object of determination, 'lever' is the determinant object, 'the being a lever of this thing' is the determination. The same applies to the judgement 'the sky is blue': 'the sky' is the object of determination, 'blue' is the determinant object and 'the being blue of the sky' is the determination. The difference between the two examples is the fact that in the former case the determinant object (lever) is a *quid*, whereas in the latter case the determinant object (blue) is a *quale*.

Object of determination, determinant object and determination are explicitly present in the objective. That is, if the objective is given, then those objects are also given. But we have said that the objective has also another object, the object that Mally calls *Eigenschaftsgegenstand* (henceforth, EG).

Mally is extremely laconic in his description of the EG, as if its status were absolutely clear, beyond any reasonable doubt. And indeed it is so, providing it is placed within the context of the discussion in Mally's period. The EG is the object described by the objective. More precisely, it is the object described by the objects that compose the objective. These last objects are the aforementioned 'object of determination', 'determinant object' and 'determination'. As I show below, the point is that the EG can be qualified as an explicit, implicit or fictitious object. Hence it follows that there can be three different objects determined by the objects that compose the objective.

This is an appropriate moment to provide a systematic distinction among the different objects we have discussed. Following Mally's own conventions, we may say that the 'A' in 'A is B' or in 'A is β ' represents the object of determination, and the 'B' and the ' β ' represents the determinant object, respectively considered as a *quid* and as a *quale*. When it does not matter whether the determinant object is a *quid* or a *quale* I shall write 'A is b'. That is: $A \text{ is } b \equiv A \text{ is } B \vee A \text{ is } \beta$. The determination will be written as 'that A is b'. At this point we can give technical expression to the *Eigenschaftsgegenstand* by using the structure 'A, that is b'.

On the basis of the discussion so far, we can say that there are at least three different problems: (a) the problem of the *ontological* connection between the qualia and quids; (b) the problem of the *linguistic* connection between a subject and its predicates; (c) the problem of the *metaphysical* connection between the objective and its bearers.

Although each one of these problems raises numerous difficulties, I shall mention only two of them.

First, it is not clear why every *quid* should be entirely determined by a *quale*. For instance, which is the *quale* that determines the *quid* 'lever'? The only partial connection that one can discern is with so-called adverbial theories. These theories were developed by Brentano, in the so-called second (reist) phase of his career, and, in recent

times, they have been developed by, among others, Ducasse, Sellars and Chisholm (but, note that the first proponent of this kind of theory was Abelard). It is impossible to know if at this point Mally was thinking of Brentano, since he does not explain his position, but simply says that things are such and such.

Second, there is the problem of explaining the difference between (b) and (c), that is, between the ‘predication’ case and the ‘determining the bearer’ case.

2.4 *The opposition among explicit, implicit and fictitious*

The opposition among explicit, implicit and fictitious objects is one of the most obscure and complex parts of Mally's paper. I have already quoted the opinion of Russell on this distinction and it is not necessary to repeat it again.

Clarifying the meaning of the distinction among explicit, implicit and fictitious objects will give understanding of the difference between ‘predication’ and ‘determination of the bearer’. In what follows, I shall consider only *Sosein* objectives, that is, objectives of the type ‘A is b’ or ‘that A is b’, not those of the type ‘A is’ or ‘that A is’.

In Mally's theory, ‘explicit’ means ‘grasped by judgement’. There are explicit objectives, explicit objects of determination, explicit determinant objects, explicit determinations and explicit EG. This amounts to saying that any one of the distinct objects we have so far introduced into the theory can be grasped by judgement.

If we pass to the implicit objects, we find a first important difference. In fact, Mally does not speak of implicit objectives, nor of implicit determinant objects, but only of implicit objects of determination, of implicit determination, and of implicit EG. Objectives, and determinant objects are *always and only explicit*. This means that they can be grasped only by judgements, they are judgement-dependent.

But what does ‘implicit’ mean? Mally's definitions run as follows:

1. x is an implicit object of determination iff x is a object of determination and it *essentially coincides* with an explicit object of determination without being an explicit object of determination;
2. x is an implicit determination iff x is a determination and it *essentially coincides* with an explicit objective without being an explicit objective.
3. x is an implicit EG iff x is an EG and it *essentially coincides* with an explicit EG without being an explicit EG.

All the definitions exhibit the same structure. In order to understand their exact meaning, it is necessary to understand the clause ‘essentially to coincide with a so-and-so without being a so-and-so’. The first step is recognizing that anything that is implicit is always coincident with something (of the same type) that is explicit. That is to say it has to be grasped by some judgement (because it coincides with something explicit), even if it is not a judgement (because it is implicit).

Recall that two objects were said to be ‘coincident’ if they ‘determine the same object’, and that they were defined ‘essentially coincident’ when the determined object was a quale. Now Mally defines qualias as those implicit determinations, that is those determinations that essentially coincide with some explicit determinations, which are not objectives (that is, that are objects).⁸

The third ‘category’ introduced by Mally is the category of fictitious. This is used for objectives, determinations and EG, but not for objects of determination and determinant objects. Mally says that x is fictitious when it is explicit and contains the determination ‘being implicit’.

⁸ Implicit determinations are said objects or objectives *in a wide sense*. We will see later (§ 3.2) the correlative ‘object or objective *in a strict sense*’.

Fictitious objects are impossible objects. Generally speaking, they are abstract names.⁹ The introduction of fictitious objects is a decisive step in the development of *Gegenstandstheorie*, because it significantly widens the field of impossible objects. From this point on, impossible objects are not only objects with a contradictory *Sosein* (as in the famous ‘round square’), but also all the explicit objects determined as implicit objects.

2.5 Analysis of the Eigenschaftsgegenstand

Let us now consider in more detail the case of the *Eigenschaftsgegenstand*. Employing a different terminology, we can say that the explicit EG is the immanent object and that the implicit EG is the transcendent object (1904, 145). This statement fits very well with the other details of the picture we are drawing. We can also add that the existence of qualia depends on the existence of their implicit EG (and viceversa). That is, the implicit EG is the bearer of qualia.

At this point, the fictitious EG, that is, an explicit EG with the determination ‘being implicit’ seems to be nothing other than the *Gegenstandstheoretische* correlate of the ideal objects of a Platonic ontology. Otherwise stated, they are the mathematical objects of all the other sciences of idealized objects. Among the few quotations I can adduce to support my thesis, the most explicit is the sentence where Mally says that general objects and universals are fictitious objects.

The picture is now quite complete. Mally's theory has a place for the objects in the world (implicit EG), for the immanent objects (explicit EG), for abstracta (fictitious EG) and for the objects that compose the objectives. It is now clear that when Russell, wrote that explicit and implicit objects seem to play the role of a theory of denotation, he was able to grasp some of the components of the theory of Mally, but only some of them and wrongly connected.

3. Analysis of the 1912 book

3.1 General framework

The book starts with a short analysis of the two different cases of apprehension (*Erfassen*), that is, apprehension of objects and apprehension of objectives. This latter case concerns judgements and assumptions. When apprehension concerns objects, it is called apprehension in a strict sense (*Erfassen im engern Sinn*). The general theory of apprehension is what is usually called *Erkenntnistheorie*. Other theories of theoretical relevance are the theory of objectives (or *Aussagentheorie*), the theory of things (*Dinge*) (or *Kategorienlehre*) and the theory of instances (*Fälle*) (or *Lehre der Urteil*).

A similar but not completely equal division involves Mally's distinction of the object into the thing (*Ding*) and the class (*Klasse*), and the distinction of the objective into the objective itself (*Objektiv*) and the instance (*Fall*). Curiously enough, at least from our intellectual standpoint, Mally really does not include the theory of classes among the aforementioned theories of general theoretical relevance.

The two cases of objects and the two cases of objectives together constitute the four cases of ‘position’ (*Setzung*). ‘Having position’ (as *Ding*, *Klasse*, *Objektiv* or *Fall*) is a constitutive feature of the objects of some, but not all, of the psychological attitudes. For instance, the objects of ‘to mean’ have position, whereas the objects of ‘to think’ do not. For Meinong and Mally, the acts that give position are the acts of judgement and of

⁹ Mally remember that in German they are the names that end in -keit, -heit, et similia.

assumption. To give position is a guise (*Weise*) of apprehension (*Erfassen*). That is, in the apprehension we give position to a *Gegenstand* in the guise of thing, class, objective or instance. Indeed, according to Mally, logic concerns objects (*Gegenstände*) in the position of things (*Dinge*), that is, as if they were things. Otherwise stated, logic is *Kategorienlehre*.

When we grasp or apprehend an objective, we understand an instance of the objective or an individual thing. In one of the most significant passages of the essay, Mally declares that from any apprehended objective α , we implicitly obtain: (1) every consequence of α (which are objectives); any instance of α (which are objects, not objectives); (3) any object exemplifying α .

Ad 1, ‘consequence’ is understood as in the usual logical sense. Hence, from a we can obtain $a \vee b$, etc. 2 deals with the problem of the relationship between the proposition and its instances. 3 gives us the Schröderian calculus of classes, presented in such a way that if the object is given then the class relative to it is also given. To apprehend an objective is to grasp an object exemplifying that objective. According to the terminology of the 1904 paper, instead of ‘exemplifying’ we should have said ‘coincident with’. An object a exemplifying an objective α falls under the concept A . The totality of a 's form the class A . The analysis so far is straightforward, since it is only a strongly extensionalist position. But then Mally adds that we must distinguish between the *Klasse* and the *Menge*, because the latter is transposable, whereas the *Klasse* is not. The *Klasse* is not transposable because its being lies in the objects that it contains. If we change its objects, we change the *Klasse*. The *Menge* instead is transposable because it has its being not in the objects it contains, but in a definition. For this reason we can have two or more different *Menge* fulfilling the very same definition even though they contain different objects. But thus raises the problem of the place of a theory of *Menge* in the general framework just outlined. Why does Mally not consider it? Why is it not considered together with the other relevant theories?

Before continuing, further specification should be given to the connections among the four guises of position.

I have already said that objectives are exemplified by instances and by things. The converse relation of ‘being exemplified’ is ‘being implicit’. It follows that any objective exemplified by an instance is implicit in such an instance. The same holds for the connection between things and instances. The actual concept of thing corresponds to the old ‘implicit EG’ of the 1904 paper. The thing is the implicit *determinatum* of the connected objectives. Mally says that the properties of the things are implicit determinations of the corresponding objectives that are themselves not objectives but are graspable through equivalent objectives.

For any thing there is a corresponding objective. But not viceversa. There are objective without a corresponding *Ding* although this does not mean that there is no corresponding *Gegenstand*. For instance, there is no *Ding* corresponding to the objective ‘the round circle is green’.

Note that ‘*Ding*’ is more restricted than ‘*Gegenstand*’: the former concerns completely determined individua, whereas the latter concerns also incomplete and contradictory objects.

In the 1912 book, Mally's definition of ‘implicit’ is not longer ‘being grasped by judgement’, but now becomes ‘being intellectually apprehended’. The shift is a subtle and seemingly minor one, but it will have profound consequences.

3.2 Absolute and relative things

Things can be divided between things in an absolute sense and things in a relative sense. Any indeterminate objective with its negation can serve as a litmus paper for this

distinction. Consider such objectives as ‘being coloured or non coloured’, ‘being high or not high’, etc. A thing in an absolute sense is the thing that, relative to such objectives, always occurs in the guise of a *Ding*. A thing in a relative sense is the thing that, relative to such objectives, can occur not only in the position of a *Ding* but also as an instance, objective or class. Bodies are things in an absolute sense. Things in a relative sense are ‘this or that shade of red’.

3.3 Properties

At this point, one can quite easily grasp the meaning of the definition of property. According to Mally, the properties of a thing are (i) the implicit determinations of the objectives that (ii) are not objectives, but (iii) can be explicitly apprehended in equivalent objectives.

Note first that the category of property is an ontological category, not a category of the apprehension. This means that a property is something implicit, not something explicit. For this reason we should consider it something coincident with the objective, not the objective itself. Second, among the several entities that are coincident with the objective, we should look for coincident objects, not for coincident objectives. Third, of these objects, we have to consider those components that can be apprehended in one of the pertinent objectives.

At this point of our reconstruction, it is evident that the *Ding* of the 1912 paper, intended as the implicit object of determination of a system of objectives, corresponds to the implicit *Eigenschaftsgegenstand* of the 1904 paper.

3.4 To exemplify and to determine

The other point that requires clarification is the difference between ‘to exemplify’ and ‘to determine’. In order to explain the distinction, we must use the concept of indeterminate objective. An indeterminate objective is an objective of the form ‘A is red’; ‘A is square’; etc. It is indeterminate because we do not know which object is red, or square, etc. It is quite easy to transform the indeterminate objective into the equivalent forms ‘being red’, ‘being square’, etc. So doing, we can say that the object ‘A’ is determined by the forms ‘being red’, ‘being square’, etc. In Mally's terminology, the object A is termed an abstract object because it is determined only by the form explicitly used for its characterization. This is an absolutely crucial point. The abstract object is determined by the forms that compose it. What distinguishes the abstract objects from the non-abstract objects is the fact that the former do not exemplify the objectives that compose it, whereas the latter do. A red table has the feature of ‘being red’ and exemplifies redness. A round square has the feature of ‘being round’ but does not exemplify roundness.

The same applies not only to contradictory objects, but to all abstract objects, including the objects of mathematics and of the other formal sciences. Let us consider the abstract object ‘circle’ and its definition ‘closed line with constant curvature’ or ‘locus of points equidistant from a given point’. According to Mally, the state of affairs formulated by the definition determines the circle but does not exemplify the circle because it is not a circle. That is to say, it is a definition of the circle, not a circle. The defining notes are only formal determinations of their objectives.

The incomplete objects are objects that are only formal determinations of some objectives, but do not exemplify them.

We can now distinguish between that which can exemplify an objective and that which determines an objective. According to Mally, this distinction rests on the difference between thinking and meaning. When thinking we have the pure play of the

combination of constitutive and defining notes; when meaning we have a *reference* to the object that may be able to satisfy the intention underlining the act of meaning. This is why *thinking* is one of the psychological attitudes that *does not have a positional character*, whereas *meaning does*.

4. Analysis of the main differences between the two papers

The foregoing analysis has revealed numerous connections between the two papers we have considered. I consider, finally, the reasons for the main changes in Mally's theory between 1904 and 1912.

One of the most obscure points of the 1904 paper is the definitions of fictitious. We can perhaps explain the idea that Mally was trying to express as follows. The problem is finding a general characteristic able to explain the coordination between abstract terms and the things in the world. But since the *Gegenstandstheoretische* analyses always start from the *Sosein*, if the abstract terms contain an inner determination of the type 'being exemplified', then the problem is preventing the inference from this determination to its actual exemplifications. According to Mally, we obtain this result if we realise that the objects so determined are impossible objects. What matters is the fact that, according to this theory, abstract terms denote objects that act in the same way as impossible objects, and impossible objects cannot be exemplified.

What changes between the 1904 and the 1912 paper is precisely the fact that this problem is solved by substituting the 'fictitious' with the *Formdeterminat*.

This device can be of some help in also solving the famous objection to Meinong advanced by Russell. We know the point. If the round square is round and square, the existing round square should be round, square and existing. But if we accept the distinction between 'to encode' and 'to exemplify', or between 'thinking' and 'meaning', the counterexample loses its strength.

From this tentative reconstruction, we can also see that Findlay's opinion is open to dispute. What matters in the difference between the 1904 and the 1912 papers is not the omission of the principle of the independence of *Sosein* from *Sein*. As far as one can tell from Mally's theories, it seems that the principle of independence is still present in the 1912 paper. What matters is the distinction between positioning and non-positioning acts.

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