Meinong's Theory of Objects. A Selected Bibliography (First Part: A - L)

General bibliography from 1872 to 1987:


BIBLIOGRAPHY


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   A cura di Carola Barbero e Venanzio Raspa.


"The paper deals with Gustav Bergmann's analysis of Meinong's ontology, carried out in Realism: A Critique of Brentano and Meinong (1967); more specifically it aims at making it clear in what sense Meinong can be regarded as a "reist". Reism is characterized by Bergmann as a position -- largely dominant in the philosophical tradition -- which
(i) neglects the ontological category of facts;
(ii) neglects or downplays nexus (and more in general subsistents);
(iii) tends to consider all entities as things or thing-like.
As a by-product, some light will be thrown on the sense of Bergmann's ontological enterprise."


"Anti-Meinongian philosophers, such as Russell, do not explain what they mean by existence when they deny that there are nonexistent objects - they just sense robustly. I argue that any plausible explanation of what they mean tends to undermine their view and to support the Meinongian view. But why are they so strongly convinced that they are right? I argue that the reason is to be found in the special character of the concept of existence, which has been insufficiently examined by anti-Meinongian as well as by Meinongian philosophers."


"This article presents a detailed analysis of Meinong's paper on "The theory of objects" in order to untangle the complex dialectic of his argument. It is argued that Meinong's position has been grossly misunderstood; far from maintaining that all objects of reference must have some kind of logical being, Meinong explicitly denies such a 'solution' to the problem of how reference is to be understood when the expression which occurs referentially in a linguistic context fails to refer to an existing object. He is not ontologising the logic of our ordinary use of referring expressions. Rather, Meinong's position is that being is not intrinsic to having the logical status of an object, But rather is only relevant when we come to determine whether the existential proposition concerning some object is true.
The question of being does not arise when an object is considered as such. Just what this is to be taken as
meaning is developed through a discussion of intentionality. It is proposed that Meinong can be understood as holding that the meta-Remark 'reference is there being made to x' does not entail the existence, nor the non-existence of x."


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Reprinted in: *Brentano and Meinong studies* - pp. 98-113


"Meinong wrote: "There are objects of which it is true that there are no such objects." (1) But he was well aware that this statement of his doctrine of Aussersein was needlessly paradoxical. Other statements were: "The non-real" is not "a mere nothing" and "The object as such ... stands 'beyond being and non-being." (2) Perhaps the clearest statement was provided by Meinong's follower, Ernst Mally: "Sein is independent of Sein." (3) We could paraphrase Mally's statement by saying: "An object may have a set of characteristics whether or not it exists and whether or not it has any other kind of being."
It is commonly supposed that this doctrine of Aussersein is absurd and that whatever grounds Meinong may have had for affirming it were demolished by Russell's theory of descriptions. I believe, however, that this supposition is false. I shall attempt here to set forth the doctrine in its most extreme form and I shall then consider what may be said in its favor."


Reprinted in: *Brentano and Meinong studies* - pp. 80-91


"In 1907 Meinong introduced the expression 'homeless object' (Heimatlose Gegenstände) to refer to certain objects which, he said, did not fall within the subject-matter of any of the generally accepted branches of knowledge. One might also characterize such objects by saying that they are neither 'concreta' nor 'abstracta'. Three such objects are discussed in the present paper: (1) certain 'intentionalia', or objects of thought; (2) what Meinong called 'Objektive' and what might also be called 'states of affairs'; and (3) 'incomplete objects', or objects that are not completely determinate. Meinong's position with respect to these types of
object is here assessed and to a certain extent defended."


"I present these papers on Brentano and Meinong in the hope that they will lead the reader back to the original sources. Some of the papers are expositions and commentaries. Others are developments of certain suggestions first made by Brentano or by Meinong."

(...) The third and fourth papers are concerned with Meinong's theory of objects, a theory that grows out of Brentano's theoretical philosophy. "Homeless Objects" first appeared in the Meinong issue of *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, Vol. 22 (1973). "Beyond Being and Nonbeing" was presented to the Colloquium on Meinong that took place at the University of Graz in September and October, 1970. It first appeared in *Jenseits von Sein und Nichtsein*, edited by Rudolf Haller (Graz: Akademische Druck-und Verlagsanstalt, 1972). The paper makes clear, I think, that Russell's theory of descriptions - despite its great philosophical merit - does not provide a refutation of Meinong's theory.

The four papers that follow are concerned with the theory of value, as it had been conceived by Brentano and developed by Meinong.

(...) "Objectives and Intrinsic Value" is a revised version of a second paper that I presented to the Meinong Colloquium in 1970; the original version appears in *Jenseits von Sein und Nichtsein*. "Supererogation and Offence" first appeared in *Ratio*, Vol. V (1963). In this work I make use, not only of certain insights of Meinong, but also those of one of his followers, Dr. Ernst Schwarz. Schwarz's excellent book, *Uber den Wert, das Soll, und das richtige Werthalten*, has been almost entirely neglected. It was first brought to my attention by Hofrat Dr. Rudolf Kindinger who first introduced me to Graz. I hope that these essays will be thought of as carrying out the tradition of the Brentano school." (From the Foreword)


"The most striking feature of Meinong's theory of intentionality is his thesis that every mental act has its reference-object beyond being and non being. This theory seems, at first, to be a clear example of the so-called object-theory of intentionality, as it introduces special postulated entities in the target-position of the mental act. Closer examination, however, reveals in Meinong's works important elements of the mediator-theory. Meinong speaks of auxiliary incomplete objects situated between the subject and the object of reference and mediating the intentional access to the (complete) reference-object. Moreover, even if the object of reference is of the simple nominal form, the mediating structure involves essentially propositional entities (objectives). In the paper we attempt to give a set-theoretical interpretation of Meinong's theory in the frame of which we could eventually do without the incomplete mediating objects. Yet, some general epistemological considerations suggest the indispensability of such incomplete mediating structures."


"Nowadays the philosophers that are sympathetic to Meinongian ideas are accused of planting an ontological jungle. However in the paper it is shown that a significant part of Meinong's philosophy can be interpreted within the framework of an astonishingly sparse ontology. The proposed interpretation does not introduce any nonexistent entities but instead uses supervaluational techniques and substitutional interpretation of quantifiers."

"The most striking part of Meinong's theory of objects is his thesis that the 'pure objects' should be considered as ontologically neutral. Meinong says that they are 'beyond of being and non-being'. There are three prima facie plausible ways how this ontological neutrality could be analyzed. It can be construed as (i) an expansion of ontology; (ii) an introduction of an ontologically non-committing quantification; or as (iii) a version of free logic."

In *Gegenstandstheorie Und Theorie Der Intentionalität Bei Alexius Meinong*, Dordrecht: Springer.


Reprinted in *Logical studies in Early Analytic Philosophy* pp. 119-151. "A reconstruction of Bertrand Russell's pre-1905 theory of nonexisting individuals is contrasted with terry parsons' reconstruction of Meinong's theory in this book "nonexistent objects". Meinongian objects, complete and incomplete, possible and impossible, are shown to be parasitic upon Russellian individuals, and Meinong's distinction between nuclear and extra-nuclear properties and relations is explained in terms of the distinction between those properties and relations which can hold only of existing individuals and those which can hold of nonexisting individuals as well."

This paper is now superseded by the chapter 4. "Russell's robust sense of reality" of "The ontology of the analytic tradition and its origins" (1996). (Personal communication by Jan Dejnozka).


"Some commentators have found Russell's treatment of Meinong to be a 'travesty,' but it is argued that the letters between Meinong and Russell and Russell's reading notes (all in the Bertrand Russell archives at McMaster) show Russell to have been a careful student whose interpretation was welcomed by Meinong."


"I argue here that on one plausible reading Meinong's theory of objects, far from being mistaken in the way Russell thought it was, shows considerable insight into the notion of existence. In particular, Meinong can be seen as making an important distinction between what can be significantly referred to and what exists. This distinction is very close to one made recently by Fred Sommers."

"I argue here that on one plausible reading Meinong's theory of objects, far from being mistaken in the way Russell thought it was, shows considerable insight into the notion of existence. In particular, Meinong can be seen as making an important distinction between what can be significantly referred to and what exists. This distinction is very close to one made recently by Fred Sommers."  

"For several years I was told, and believed, that while Russell's theory of descriptions might be flawed (viz. in the way Strawson showed), his rejection of Meinong's theory of objects, which led to the theory of descriptions, was undoubtedly correct. Now I doubt very much if this is so. The "official" view is that Meinong had the mistake of multiplying the senses of "exists" unnecessarily. According to this view, Meinong, since he held that the descriptive components of any meaningful sentence must refer to something, was forced to provide a special kind of existence, subsistence, for entities which are nonexistent but referred to meaningfully. Russell avoided this position by claiming that statements referring to nonexistent entities are meaningful but false (since they logically entail the existence of the entity referred to). I think the official view underestimates Meinong's philosophical abilities. Indeed, I think, rather than engaging in the philosophically dangerous task of multiplying kinds of existence, Meinong was expressing a keen insight into the nature of existential commitment." p. 80


Contents of the Second Edition: Preface to the Second Edition V-XV; I. The Doctrine of Content and Object 1; II. The Pure Object and Its Indifference to Being 42; III. The Theory of Objectives 59; IV: The Modal Moment 102; V. Objects of Higher Order 113; VI. The Theory of Incomplete Objects 152; VII. The Modal Properties of Objectives 185; VIII. The Aprehension of Objects 218; IX. Valuation and Values 264; X. Dignitatives and Desideratives 303; XI. Appraisal of Meinong 322; Index 349-353.  
Second edition in 1963 (Gregg Revivals Reprint); the chapters IX and X were added in this edition.  

62.


66. Gellman, Jerome I. 1969. "Suter on Russell on Meinong." Philosophy and Phenomenological Research no. 29:441-445. "The author replies to Ronald Suter's 'Russell's refutation' of Meinong in 'On denoting', "Philosophy and phenomenological research," June, 1967. Suter's interpretation of one of Russell's arguments is criticized on exegetical grounds, And his defense of another argument is rebutted on logical grounds. Meinong's thesis is presented as the thesis that all statements of a certain form are true. It is argued that all of Russell's arguments are attempts to pose counter-examples to this single view. Meinong is defended against Russell's counter-examples."

67. Griffin, Nicholas. 1977. "Russell's 'Horrible Travesty' of Meinong." Russell. The Journal of the Bertrand Russell Archives:39-51. "For a long time it was widely believed that Meinong held that every object of reference had being. This has since come to be recognized as a 'horrible travesty' (Findlay's phrase) of Meinong's position. However, A new horrible travesty has grown up: namely, that the original misinterpretation of Meinong was due to Russell's early discussions of his work. While it is conceded that Russell's later writings contained travesties of Meinong, it is shown (using unpublished documents in the Bertrand Russell archives as well as Russell's published writings) that, in his early critical discussions of Meinong, Russell was fully aware that for Meinong some objects had no kind of being at all."

68. ———. 1979. "The Independence of Sosein from Sein." Grazer Philosophische Studien no. 9:27-34. "Meinong's theory of objects is at last getting some of the attention it deserves, and it now seems that the time has passed when the theory could be dismissed as merely a source of philosophical amusement. But, despite the fact that Meinong's position is now taken much more seriously than it used to be, the theory is, for the most part, still rejected, and even Meinong's more careful critics still fail to do justice to the plausibility of his theory of objects. Recently Reinhardt Grossmann (1) has presented a series of arguments designed to show that the greater part of the theory of objects is mistaken, although he concedes that 'Meinong's doctrine is neither too obscure to be understood nor too wrongheaded to be enlightening' (p. 67). In this paper I shall be concerned with showing how Meinong's theory can be defended against Grossmann's arguments. Grossmann usefully lists the four central theses of Meinong's theory of objects (p. 67):
(1) Nonexistent objects (2) have no form of being whatsoever.
(2) Such objects are, nevertheless, constituents of certain states of affairs.
(3) They even have a number of quite ordinary properties - the golden mountain, for example, is golden.
(4) Being is not a part of any object.
He then argues that, of the four, only the first is true. My own view is that all four are true." p. 27
(1) See R. Grossmann - Meinong's doctrine of the Aussersein of the pure object - Noûs, 8 (1974) pp. 67-82. All references, except where otherwise indicated, are to this paper.
(2) Grossmann standardly uses the term 'entity' for Meinong's 'Gegenstand', which is usually translated as 'object'. Since the Oxford English Dictionary defines 'entity' as 'thing that has real existence', this switch is unsatisfactory. Accordingly I have switched back either to 'object' or to the even more neutral term 'item'.

69. ———. 1986. "Russell's Critique of Meinong's Theory of Objects." Grazer Philosophische Studien no. 25/26:375-401. "Russell brought three arguments forward against Meinong's theory of objects. None of them depend upon a misinterpretation of the theory as is often claimed. In particular, only one is based upon a clash between Meinong's theory and Russell's theory of descriptions, and that did not involve Russell's attributing to Meinong his own ontological assumption. The other two arguments were attempts to find internal inconsistencies in Meinong's theory. But neither was sufficient to refute the theory, though they do require some revisions, viz. a trade-off between freedom of assumption and unlimited characterization. Meinong himself worked out the essentials of the required revisions."

New York: Routledge.


Contents: Preface IX-X; I. Individuals and Properties 1; II. Ideal and Real Relations 21; III. Ideas and Their Intentions 48; IV. Objects of Higher Order 57; V. Assumptions and Objectives 78; VI. Being and Aussersein 106; VII. Empirical Knowledge: Perception and Introspection 121; VIII. Relational Knowledge: The Theory of Entities 156; IX. The Apprehension of Objects 182; X. Modalities 199; Appendix I. Meinong's Ontology (by Meinong) 224; Appendix II. Meinong's Life and Work (by Meinong) 230; Notes 237; Index 255.

"This book on Meinong is primarily concerned with his arguments for the positions for which he is famous among some philosophers and infamous among others. But philosophical contentions carry little weight when they are viewed in isolation. Matters are too complex, too difficult, to be settled in an isolated way. Every argument must be evaluated against a background which includes a philosopher's other arguments and some of his basic assumptions or -- if you wish -- prejudices. I therefore discuss Meinong's arguments within the context in which they appear, but with an eye on his earlier positions as well as on his later changes of mind. There are at least two further reasons for adopting this particular approach in Meinong's case.

Findlay, in his classic study of Meinong's philosophy, compares him with G. E. Moore.(1) Although this comparison is apt, there is one respect in which Meinong differs greatly from Moore. Meinong's philosophy develops over the years from a sparse ontology into an ample one. Every new idea is built upon an old one; new problems arise in the wake of earlier solutions; certain questions are raised time and again, but their answers are more and more refined. In short, there is a definite development, with a definite trend, definite stages, and a distinct final view. I also wished to impress on the reader how misleading the prevalent view is that Meinong was a spendthrift metaphysician who delighted in multiplying entities continuously and needlessly. If one becomes aware of how Meinong's full ontology develops very slowly over many years from very austere beginnings, how he resists the temptation to solve a problem by admitting a new kind of entity, and how he gives in only after a whole series of arguments for the new kind of entity has accumulated, one will, hopefully, be less inclined in future to think of Meinong as the 'supreme entity multiplier in the history of philosophy'.(2)" (from the Preface).

(2) This phrase if from Gilbert Ryle's article in the Oxford Magazine 26 October 1933.


"Meinong's doctrine of the Aussersein of the pure object consists, in my view, of the following four main theses: (1) Nonexistent entities, like the golden mountain and the round square, have no form of being whatsoever. (2) Such entities are, nevertheless, constituents of certain states of affairs. (3) They even have a number of quite ordinary properties-the golden mountain, for example, is golden. (4) Being is not a part of any object. I shall try to explain and evaluate these four theses, and I shall claim that only the first one is true. However, even if my arguments fail to convince, they may at least show that Meinong's doctrine is neither too obscure to be understood nor too wrongheaded to be enlightening."

"Some years ago, I published an article about Meinong's theory of objects. (1) I listed there four main theses of Meinong's view:
(1) The golden mountain (and other nonexistent) has no being at all.
(2) Nevertheless, it is a constituent of the fact that the golden mountain does not exist.
(3) Furthermore, it has such ordinary properties as being made from gold.
(4) Existence is not a constituent of any object.
And I argued in that paper that only thesis (1) is true. In particular, I insisted that (3), which I consider to be the most characteristic feature of Meinong's view, is false.
Since then, there have been quite a few discussions of Meinong's view. I would like, in response to some of these works, to reiterate my earlier criticism of Meinong. My purpose is threefold. Firstly, I would like to state once more my own view, which is a version of Russell's theory of definite descriptions, as clearly as possible. Secondly, I shall defend my past contention that the golden mountain is not golden against some recent objections. And thirdly and most importantly, I want to describe the dialectic of the philosophical problem as I perceive it. It seems to me to be an exasperating shortcoming of the discussion that most participants do not clearly state the basic options and their reasons for preferring some to others."


"Seldom has a modern philosopher become as famous for a view which he does not hold as Alexius Meinong. One generally attributes to him the belief that there are, not just such ordinary things as mountains and relations, but even such things as the golden mountain and the round square. He is therefore often viewed as a spendthrift ontologist who delighted in multiplying entities continuously and needlessly. But this conception, I shall try to show, is mistaken. Anyone who has studied Meinong's philosophy carefully will come to the conclusion that he is not the 'supreme entity-multiplier in the history of philosophy' as Gilbert Ryle claims.(1)
But even though Meinong never embraced the rather extreme view that there are, in addition to existing things in space and time and subsisting things (ideal things) outside of space and time, also such things as the golden mountain, and even such contradictory things as the round square, he nevertheless insisted on another ontological principle not any less mistaken than what I just called the 'extreme' view. It is this insistence, and not his ontological inventory, which I consider to be Meinong's main mistake. I shall, therefore, first defend Meinong against the kind of accusation implied in Ryle's description of Meinong. And then I shall, secondly, show where Meinong really went wrong in his ontology."

(1) See Ryle's article in the Oxford Magazine 26 October 1933.

"The paper comprises a presentation and defence of Meinong's discussion on magnitudes and measurement found in his Über die Bedeutung des Weber'schen Gesetzes. The first and longer part of the presentation examines Meinong's analysis of magnitudes. According to Meinong, we must distinguish between divisible magnitudes and indivisible ones. He argues that relations of distance, or dissimilarity, are indivisible magnitudes that coincide with divisible magnitudes called stretches. The second part of the presentation is concerned with Meinong's account of measurement as a comparison of parts. Meinong holds that measuring is comparing parts and, thus, only divisible magnitudes are directly measurable. When indivisible magnitudes like distances are indirectly measured, they are measured by means of divisible magnitudes like stretches. Meinong's account allows us to reject important objections against measurement of similarity and to reconsider the logical form of the sentences involving comparative similarity."
"In Meinong's object theory the object is by its nature indifferent to being. Incomplete objects are distinguished from complete = existing objects which are objects completely determined. That is, Objects to which one of all possible predicates is predicable. To grasp complete objects we are relying on incomplete ones, which are objects not determined in every respect. Functional objects are a subclass of incomplete objects, in some cases related -- but never identical -- to existing (complete) objects."
on the notions of negation and existence. The discussion raises issues about functions, properties, predication, the "concept" of existence and relations. These lead to a consideration of recent revivals of moderate nominalism in the form of trope theories. An argument against such theories suggests a fundamental principle of ontology and a reformulation of the nominalism-realism dispute.


"The paper explores connections among and problems related to (1) Sartre's notions of Being and Nothingness, (2) Meinong's concerns with non-being, Aussersein, objectives and negation, (3) Russell's diverse views of negative facts, and (4) the respective rejections (and sometimes purported refutations) of idealism stemming from considerations of the act-object distinction and the focus on "intentionality" that characterized the Brentanist turn in philosophy. Alternative ontological analyses of negation and their connections to the "relations" of diversity and identity are also considered, along with Sartre's attempt to place consciousness outside of any causal framework and to found an "ethic of existentialism" on his accounts of consciousness, being and negation."


"Interest in the concept 'about' has often centered around Meinong's argument: I.) the golden mountain does not exist. II.) sentence (1) is about the golden mountain. III.) if sentence (1) is a sentence about a golden mountain, then there is golden mountain which it is about. IV.) there is a golden mountain. This argument, Which is formally valid, depends on two assumptions: 1) that it is generally correct to say, if a sentence has "x" as its grammatical subject then it is about 'x'; 2) that to say that a sentence is about something is to say the sentence stands in some relation to some object. Most attacks on Meinong's argument deal with the first of these assumptions while I argue that in the relevant sense the second assumption is false. Goodman has developed formal definitions of two senses of "about" which would forestall the argument a step IIIand I show that his definitions are inadequate. Having shown that (2) above is false I examine a number of attacks on Meinong's argument including those of Ryle, Linsky, Strawson and Cartwright. Each of these attacks in the transition from (i) to (ii) above and in so doing runs counter to our intuitions concerning the concept of 'being about'."


"Terence Parsons has recently given a consistent formalization of Meinong's theory of objects. The interest in this theory lies in its postulation of nonexistent objects. An important implication of the theory is that we commonly refer to nonexistent objects. In particular, The theory is committed to taking fictional entities as objects of reference. Yet it is difficult to see how reference to fictional entities can be established if Parsons' theory is correct. This difficulty diminishes the attractiveness of the theory and also raises questions as to the ability of the theory to give a satisfactory account of intentional attitudes towards fictional entities."


"In his difficult work On Emotional Presentation, Meinong introduces the concept of defective objects. These are meant to provide part of the solution to Mally's paradox about self-referential thought. But the discussion of defective objects is ambiguous in ways which give rise to a dilemma. It is not clear whether defective objects are supposed to be a special kind of intentional object on
Meinong's theory, or whether they are not really supposed to be intentional objects at all. If defective objects are a special kind of intentional object, then it is possible to put forward a strengthened version of Mally's paradox which cannot be solved by the theory of defective objects. The strengthened paradox represents a counter-example to the intentionality thesis, according to which every psychological experience is directed toward an object of intention. But if defective 'objects' are not really intentional objects at all, then psychological experiences which have defective objects will themselves constitute counter-examples to the intentionality thesis. In either case, the thesis cannot be consistently maintained." p. 1


"Meinong's doctrine of the modal moment and the watering-down of extranuclear properties to surrogate nuclear counterparts was offered in response to Russell's problem of the existent round square. To avoid an infinite regress of successively watered-down factualities, Meinong stipulates that the modal moment itself cannot be watered-down. This limits free assumption, since it means that the idea of the existent-cum-modal-moment round square cannot be entertained in thought. It is possible to eliminate the modal moment and watering-down from Meinongian semantics in favor of a strict enforcement of the distinction between nuclear and extranuclear properties. This provides a simpler, more economical Meinongian object theory, and regains unrestricted free assumption."


"The consistent formalization of Meinong's object theory in recent mathematical logic requires either plural modes of predication, or distinct categories of nuclear or constitutive and extranuclear or nonconstitutive properties. The plural modes of predication approach is rejected because it is reducible to the nuclear-extranuclear property distinction, but not conversely. And because the nuclear-extranuclear property distinction offers a more satisfactory solution to object theory paradoxes."


"A formalization of four distinct quantificational modal Meinongian logics is given, with nonstandard model set theoretical semantics. The derivation of Barcan and converse Barcan theorems prompts revision of two systems of modal Meinongian logic to restore congruence of semantic and inferential structures of Meinongian systems with identical uniform domain distributions of existent and nonexistent objects. The problem of transworld identity of incomplete and impossible objects is examined, and world-indexing of nuclear properties is recommended as a solution."


"The key assumption of Anselm-inspired ontological proofs for the existence of God, that existence is part of God's essence or greatness, is submitted to a Meinongian criticism. Meinong's distinction between nuclear and extranuclear properties disallows existence to be included as a constitutive property of any existent or nonexistent object. The unsolved problem of evil suggests instead that to be omniscient, omnipotent, perfectly benevolent, and the author of an actual world in which there is natural evil, is tantamount to being a round square, Meinongian logic implies that even if God exists, an existent God could not possibly be greater or more perfect than an impossible necessarily nonexistent Meinongian object God."


"Meinong introduces the concept of implicative being and nonbeing to explain the metaphysics of universals and as a contribution to the theory of reference and perception. Meinong accounts for Aristotle's doctrine of the inherence of secondary substances in primary substances in object theory terms as the implication of incomplete universals in complete existent or subsistent objects. The derivative notion of implicative so-being is developed by Meinong to advance an intuitive modal semantics that admits degrees of possibility. A set theoretical interpretation of Meinong's mereological concept of the implection of incomplete beingless objects in existent or subsistent complete objects is proposed. The implications of Meinong's concept of implection are exploited to answer extensional objections about "Meinong's jungle," defending the ontic economy of an extraontological neo-Meinongian semantic domain that supports individual reference and true predication of constitutive properties to beingless objects."


"The logic of existent and nonexistent objects provides a formal theory of reference and true predication for ordinary discourse, the semantics of ontological commitment, and logic of fiction. The intensional logic proposed in what follows offers a rigorous object theory semantics with nonstandard propositional and predicate inference machinery. The system is distinguished from previous formalizations of object theory by formal criteria for nuclear (constitutive) and extranuclear (nonconstitutive) properties, three-valued propositional semantics for predications of nuclear properties to incomplete nonexistent objects for which the objects ostensibly are undetermined, nonstandard set theory semantics with unrestricted comprehension for object theory predicate semantics (licensed by existence restrictions on abstraction equivalence), demonstrations of internal determinacy, consistency, and Henkin completeness, nonstandard deduction theorem, and consistency considerations in light of free assumption and unrestricted comprehension."


Contents: Preface IX; Introduction 1;
Part One: Meinong's theory of Objects.
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Bibliography 269; Index 285.


"This essay offers a detailed critical exposition of Alexius Meinong's theory of free assumption in its relation to inner perception in his book, On Assumptions. I argue that the concept of free assumption is key to understanding the basic principles of Meinong's object theory, and his extra-ontology of nonexistent objects, including the golden mountain and round square. I situate Meinong's object theory in the context of Brentano's descriptive psychology, and consider the phenomenological foundations of the Meinongian domain.

Meinong's theory of assumption introduces a fourth category of assumptions to supplement Brentano's tripartite division between presentations, judgments, and emotions, on the grounds that assumptions are phenomenologically distinct from and in some sense stronger than presentations, and also distinct from and in some sense weaker than judgments."


"Russell's objections to object-theory have been refuted by the proofs of the consistency of Meinong's system given by various writers. These proofs exploit technical distinctions that Meinong apparently uses very little if at all. Instead, Meinong introduces a theoretical postulate called the modal moment. I describe this postulate and its place in Meinong's system, and I argue that it has been much under-rated by Meinong's logician expositors."


"Russell's criticisms force Meinong to adopt a distinction between two types of negation. Logical expositions of Meinong's theory show the distinction is easily drawn in formal terms, but that alone does not justify the distinction intuitively. I criticise Routley's treatment of the distinction and argue that only Terence Parsons' theory retains and preserves the tight network of conceptual connections between the notions of negation, contradiction and impossibility. Hence, Parsons' approach best expresses the Meinongian perspective."


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"In this paper I argue against the usual interpretation of Meinong's argument for nonexistent objects, an interpretation according to which Meinong imported nonexistent objects like "the golden mountain" to account directly for the truth of statements like the golden mountain is golden'. I claim instead (using evidence from Meinong's "On Assumptions") that his argument really involves an ineliminable appeal to the notion of pretense. This appeal nearly convinced Meinong at one stage that he could do without
nonexistent objects. The reason, I argue, why he nonetheless embraced an ontology of nonexistents has to do with the phenomenology of representation, and not with semantics."


"The paper is structured as follows. In the next section, I describe a problem for Russell's account of the logical form of negative existentials involving descriptions, and suggest a Russellian solution. This solution is one that no one will care to adopt -- it seems to turn negative existentials into self-contradictions -- but I later argue that, properly interpreted, it constitutes a promising way of reconciling some of Meinong's views about negative existentials with the kind of "robust sense of reality" that informed Russell's own analysis. In section 3 I begin the task of articulating this reading of Meinong by describing Meinong's Assumption View as articulated in the second edition of his On Assumptions (Meinong 1910). Because this view presupposes Meinong's infamous commitment to non-existent objects, it would still offend Russell's "robust sense of reality", and so section 4 considers a weakened version of the view, one that retains the appeal to assumptions while giving up the appeal to non-existent objects. (Meinong defends a similar view in the 1902 edition of On Assumptions, which predates his discovery of non-existents.) Section 5 offers the finale: it shows how Meinong had himself tried to apply such a weakened Assumption View to the case of negative existentials, that Russell had known about the attempt (this arguably solves the first, hermeneutic puzzle), and that, properly interpreted, this way of understanding negative existentials provides Russell with a solution to the problem facing his theory of negative existentials." (pp. 82-83)


"Starting from examples of genuine perception and naive hallucination, Different theories concerning the relation between the intentional and the real object are being discussed. It is shown that Meinong's theory is the most natural one, But it is argued against Meinong that the notion of "converse intentional property" should play a greater role."


"The first half of the paper reflects on a couple of folk-psychological notions. "Belief" and "judgement" are selected for special attention. They cover two varieties of thinking, a mental state and a mental act. Both lay claim to truth, and thereby stand in marked contrast to their nowadays sadly neglected non-committal counterparts. Meinong, of course, did not neglect them, and his notions of "Annehmen (merely entertaining a thought)" and "Denken (entertaining a thought)" play a decisive role in the paper. The Lingua Mentis Hypothesis is a bold contribution to cognitive subpersonal psychology. The second half of the paper tries to show that careful reflection on the conceptual resources of folk psychology makes certain arguments for this Hypothesis as well as certain philosophical arguments against it look rather feeble. The paper culminates in a discussion of Jerry Fodor's Systematicity Argument for the Language of Thought Hypothesis. In this discussion critical use is made of certain Meinongian insights."


"This paper deals with the Meinong-Russell controversy on non-subsistent objects. The first part notes the similarity of certain contemporary semantical developments to Meinong's theory of non-subsistent objects. Then it lays out the major features of Meinong's famous theory, considers Russell's objections to same and Meinong's counter-objections to Russell, and argues that Russell's well-known argument fails. However, It is possible to augment Russell's argument against Meinong with sound Russelian principles in such a way that it presents at least a strong inclining reason against Meinong's theory of impossible objects."


This is a reply to Richard Routley's critique of my original essay, "Impossible objects."


"Meinong's principle that being is independent from being so, Borrowed from his disciple Mally, is reconstructed as a claim that a certain traditional informal pattern is invalid. The place of the principle thus reconstructed in Meinong's world picture is outlined."


"According to K. Perszyk, (*) Meinong's description of homeless objects is a novelty: it does not trace back to any traditional ontological assumption, neither avicennian nor scolastic. While discussing this claim, one focuses on two key-notions in ancient and medieval ontology: subsistence and existence, which seem to be akin to the meinongian bestehen, Sosein vs. Sein and existieren. In this respect, one comments on Porphyry's, Proclus', Abaelard's, Aquinas' and Bacon's theory of general objects, fictitious entities and non-existing particulars."


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