

REVIEWS OF BOOKS.

Die Phänomenologie des Ich in ihren Grundproblemen: Erster Band.
Von KONSTANTIN OESTERREICH, Leipzig, J. A. Barth, 1910.—Pp.
532.

The problem of this book is the nature of the I, or self. This, as Oesterreich rightly declares, is a question of fact and must be decided by introspection. In Part I of the book he considers different theories of the self with a thoroughness which involves him in a complete discussion of different forms of consciousness. This division of the book is virtually, therefore, a treatise on general psychology. But of the detailed discussions, interesting as they are of theories of feeling, *Denkpsychologie*, and the like—this review will take no account, confining itself instead to the central problem, the nature of the self. The summary exposition which follows does scant justice to Oesterreich's wealth of citation and to his wide acquaintance with current psychological theory. It may be added that, except in the field of abnormal psychology, his references to English and American sources are less adequate than those to the German and French literature of the subject.

I. Oesterreich's own position is clearly stated. He holds as 'immediate fact (p. 7)' or 'immediate experience (p. 13)' that all consciousness is the consciousness of an *I*. To deny this is as absurd "as if one were to say that a motion exists which is not the motion of something (p. 7)." This *I* is a reality of 'distinctive character'; radically different from the physical reality (p. 5 *et al.*) so that it is absurd to speak of a "Physik des Seelenlebens." By I, or self,¹ is meant "that . . . whose states are feelings and which . . . always remains identical with itself" ("jenes Moment . . . dessen Zustände die Gefühle sind und das . . . stets mit sich identisch bleibt," p. 8). The whole book explains and limits and modifies this definition. The *I*, Oesterreich teaches is the subject of perceiving, thinking, and willing no less than of feeling (p. 225). "It is the *I* which perceives (p. 236)"; "there is no judging which is not the judging of an *I* (p. 157)"; "every willing is that of an *I* (p. 208)." Accordingly the *I*, or self, is not co-

¹ This review does not follow Oesterreich in his avowedly arbitrary distinction between the I on the one hand and the self, conceived as sum of the contents of the I at a given moment. Cf. p. 323.

ordinate with feeling, image, or will; it is "outside the series of all the other psychic contents," "*Ausserhalb der Reihe . . . allen übrigen Inhalten.*" (P. 12. Cf. p. 225.) And yet the *I* is no empty reality, or substance, independent of conscious contents, beyond or behind them (p. 230); rather it is within them and constitutes the 'central nature' of them. ("Es ist nicht ein für sich stehendes Etwas das noch jenseits der Gefühle noch neben ihnen stände, sondern es liegt in den Gefühlen.")

II. For this conception Oesterreich argues negatively by attempting the refutation of opposing views. The summary which follows of his arguments does not hold to his order. The opposing doctrines of which he takes account really reduce to two: (1) the aggregate theory, according to which the *I* is a 'simple aggregate' or 'sum of contents and functions' (pp. 233 and 122); and, second (2) the relation-theory which makes of the *I* a mere relation (*Zusammenhang*) of functions with each other (p. 239). The fundamental disproof of the second of these theories is, in Oesterreich's opinion, the following: so far from true is it that the *I* can be reduced to a relation that, rather, the relation presupposes the *I*. Indeed the only relation invariably occurring between conscious contents (or functions) consists in their all belonging to a self. "There is no other universal and complete relation." For example, "the concept of number which I happen now to have and the visual content of the green of the plant before my eyes" are simultaneous processes; "but there is no relation between them excepting in so far as both proceed as functions from the same *I* (p. 241)." The aggregate theory is opposed by a direct appeal to introspection. "The *I* which we mean is not identical with the bundle of phenomena (*jenem Bündel von Erlebnissen*). These phenomena are rather states and functions of the *I* (p. 237)." Thus, in the end, as Oesterreich never fails to insist, the existence of an *I* fundamental to its perceptions, feelings, and the like is a matter of immediate experience and, therefore, not demonstrable. The *I* is "a kind of thing which one can merely indicate (*auf das man nur hinweisen kann*) but which one can as little demonstrate to the *I*-blind as one can demonstrate color to the color-blind. . . . He who sees it not, or who seeks to deceive himself about it with empty words, can not be helped. Such immediate experiences can be apprehended (*ergriffen*) only in the immediate experiential judgment (*Erfahrungsurteil*), but can not be demonstrated (p. 13)." To Husserl, who objects (p. 235) that in absorbed consciousness—in reading, mathematical study and the like—this consciousness of self disappears, Oesterreich

replies that we are, in these cases, not unconscious but inattentively conscious of self. "Of course," he adds, "when we are absorbed in an act we are not expressly conscious of the *I* as centre of the act. But this does not mean that the *I* is not present. . . . It is the *I* which is absorbed in the reading or occupied with the mathematical demonstration. Perception, reading, reflection are only thinkable as the perception, reading, and thinking of a subject (pp. 235-236)."

One widely-held form of the aggregate theory¹ Oesterreich, for a reason which will presently appear, considers in great detail (chapter II). This is the sensationalistic conception which reduces the *I* to a complex of sensations. In the form of the theory which has its origin with Condillac (pp. 27 ff.) the self is identified with the sum of all sensations; but this view, as Oesterreich points out, leaves no room for any distinction between self-consciousness and consciousness of the external object. But, as held by most psychologists, the sensationalistic theory identifies the self with the complex of 'bodily sensations' and, in particular, of organic sensations. In opposition to this doctrine, Oesterreich urges several considerations: (1) The organic sensations, in the first place, are often confused with the feelings, pleasantness and unpleasantness (pp. 18, 66 f.). A supposedly sensational theory may really therefore be an affective theory masquerading under another name. (2) There occur, moreover, well-known cases of depersonalization, in which *cœnæsthesia* remains (p. 49). If the organic sensations constituted the consciousness of personality this would be impossible. (3) The well known pathological cases in which the patient externalizes his own body, regarding legs, arms, or head as foreign to him and part of the external world (p. 52) offer an argument complementary to the last. For these cases show not only that organic sensations are unessential to self-consciousness but that they may be referred to outside objects. (4) As final argument, Oesterreich adduces the observation embodied in the *Einfühlungstheorie* of modern æsthetics (pp. 94 ff.). According to this view, the æsthetic subject attributes to external objects sensational experiences similar to his own. Such a theory could not have arisen, Oesterreich suggests, if one distinctive consciousness of self centered in precisely these experiences.

III. The important error in Oesterreich's account of the *I* is, in the opinion of the writer, his constant identification of self-consciousness with feeling. He has described the *I* as 'that whose states are feelings,' and he formally substitutes an affective theory (*Gefühlstheorie*) for the

¹Oesterreich does not explicitly classify the sensationalistic as a form of the aggregate-theory, but he treats it as such.

rejected sensationalistic conception of the self. He argues for this affective theory somewhat as follows:

Sensational predicates are applied to external objects, not to myself: I describe myself as sad or happy, not as red or salt (p. 35). And this holds of all sense qualities. More than this: cases in which—as in the recovery, through operation, from congenital blindness—the sense-consciousness is suddenly widened give no indication of any corresponding widening of the feeling of personality (p. 41). Finally, pathological disturbances of the affective consciousness usually involve confusion of the sense of personality (p. 37). But each of these arguments, and all of them together, fail to carry conviction. It is true that external things are red, soft, sweet (and related), but so are they pleasant and unpleasant. And though objects do not joy or grieve neither do they see, hear, nor smell. On the other hand, the I feels but it also perceives and thinks. In a word, the distinction between 'subjective' and 'objective' is to be sought not, as by Oesterreich, in the contrast between affection and sensation, but rather in the distinction, on which he lays proper stress, between 'function' (or 'process') and 'content.' Contents of all kinds, affective as well as sensational and intellectual, are distinguished from functions, perceptual and conceptual, as well as emotional and volitional, precisely in the sense in which Oesterreich distinguishes the psychologically objective from the psychologically subjective.¹ He is unquestionably right in holding that one is more vividly conscious of self in emotion than in perception; but, as he has himself suggested in his criticism of Husserl, perception *includes* a consciousness, however inattentive, of self. In truth, Oesterreich may repeatedly be quoted against himself in his conception of self-consciousness as essentially affective. "All psychic processes," he says, "are states or functions of a subject, belong to an *I* . . . and are impossible without it. In all such occurrences as perception, . . . imagination, judging, doubting, feeling, and willing, the question, 'who perceives,' imagines, etc., is unavoidable. And always, the answer can be only, "An *I* perceives, etc."²

¹ Cf. the writer's *A First Book in Psychology*, pp. 3 ff., for the use of the term 'impersonal, private object' in place of 'psychic content.'

² A rigorous criticism of the theories which identify self-consciousness exclusively with sensation, or with feeling, or with will may be found in Gustav Kafka's scholarly *Versuch einer kritischen Darstellung der neueren Anschauungen über das Ich problem* (*Archiv für die gesamte Psychologie*, 1910). Kafka's general conclusion is that it is epistemologically, not psychologically, necessary to assume the existence of an *I* which is a mere subject, not an object, of consciousness—which is, in other words, devoid of specific content, a formal and empty 'point of relation.' The inconsistency of asserting the existence of an *I* which, by hypothesis, can never

IV. This review has so far concerned itself with the first, and longer, division of this phenomenology of the self. To many readers, however, Part II on "The Apparent Splitting (*die Scheinbare Spaltung*) of the *I*" will seem to be more important. The problem of these later chapters is to determine in how far the phenomena of so-called alternating and multiple personality tell against the alleged identity of self.

Oesterreich's arguments and conclusions are based on observations of his own subjects and on a wide study of the literature, technical and untechnical. He quotes Amiel, Maine de Biran and Goethe, Plotinus and Pascal, St. Augustine and St. Theresa, as well as Janet, Flournoy, Sollier and Prince. He distinguishes between depersonalization, or loss of personality, and dissociation, or multiplication, of personality. Within the latter, he contrasts successive with simultaneous dissociation—alternating with coincident personality. He also lays stress on the difficulty of distinguishing between relatively normal changes in the consciousness of personality (as in religious ecstasy, in artistic creation, in neurasthenia) and abnormal disturbances. He concludes that, in each of the typical cases which he carefully examines, the alleged loss or change of the personality-consciousness is a change in specific content—a disturbance of feeling (pp. 322 ff.) or of memory (p. 356) but not a loss or complete change of personality. It has been so described simply because the 'aggregate theory' of the self as mere complex of contents is "dominant in French and American psychology to-day," so that change in the specific content of the self has been wrongly identified with loss of personality.

Oesterreich finds strong confirmation of this view in the records of the introspection of the very persons who figure as instances of lost or changed personality. The following are examples of these unintended testimonies: "It seems to me that I am not myself"; "I am no longer conscious of . . . who I am, what my name is"; "I longed to become my old self again"; "Can I ever find the poor *I* which seems to have vanished?" "I was not I."¹ It is clear that if the old self were lost there would be no *I* which could mourn, in this fashion, over its own change. The situation is that which Azam described in discussing his well-known subject, Félicité: "She realizes . . . that her character undergoes a change. . . . She does not believe he experienced seems to the writer to be shown by the whole trend of Oesterreich's argument. The two works, issued at almost the same time, admirably supplement each other. For a more extended comparison of the two, cf. a brief paper by the writer of this review in the *Psychological Bulletin*, for January 1912.

¹ These quotations are made, p. 323, from Janet, Wernicke, Taine, and Pick.

herself to be another person. She is fully aware that she is always like herself (*sich selbst ähnlich*)."¹ In Oesterreich's words: "there is no absolutely selfless condition, even in depersonalization. . . . Selflessness appears only when there is no longer any psychic life (p. 323)." "In no case," Oesterreich concludes (p. 500), "which we have met has the unity of consciousness suffered at all." The fluctuations and dissociations affect only the content of the *I*.

MARY WHITON CALKINS.

WELLESLEY COLLEGE.

Individualism. By WARNER FITE. New York and London, Longmans, Green, and Company, 1911.—pp. xix, 301.

In the four lectures which compose this book we have an interesting study of the relation of the individual to society. The motive of the book is a protest against the tendency of modern thought to regard the individual as a product of the social order and to identify morality with altruism and self-sacrifice. In opposition to this tendency the author seeks to show that the individual as conscious agent "is the original source and constituent of all value," and that therefore there can be no higher standard of obligation for him than that derived from his "personal ends and ideals" (p. 5). He maintains, however, that in the degree in which individuals are conscious their personal interests "are strictly coördinate" (p. 5).

The exposition of the theory begins with the conception of individuality. There are two ways of regarding the human being—in his external and in his internal aspect. In the external aspect he is a mechanical object among other mechanical objects, and his movements are determined by mechanical forces. In his internal aspect he is the conscious being, who acts knowingly and whose choices cannot therefore be "the blind outcome of mechanical forces" (p. 11). If men were simply mechanical individuals, there would be no possibility of their adjusting themselves to one another: a billiard ball cannot change its course in order to avoid striking another ball. But because men are conscious they are capable of an indefinite amount of adjustment to one another: a purpose which I have formed without in the least taking you into account will inevitably be changed, in some respect, as soon as I understand that it is in conflict with some purpose of yours. And this merely as a matter of my intelligent self-interest. For the intelligent being sees that he cannot realize his ends without taking into account the fact that all about him are other conscious beings, possessed of ends which *they* are trying to realize.

¹Quoted, pp. 355-356, from *Hypnotisme*, pp. 85, 105, 110.