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# General Remarks on the Theory of Disposition

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## 1 Introduction[1]

All education [*Erziehen*], in the broadest sense of the word, is directed towards the future. The aim is always to endow the future life of the person to be educated with values, which he would probably lack without the help of education. Of course, not just any values come into question. The parsimonious housefather, who strives to leave his children an adequate inheritance, does not act as an educator in this endeavour. Rather, education aims at values, or more precisely at objects of value [*Wertobjekte*], which are to form part of the future life of the person to be educated, and normally not at a single moment in this life, but during shorter or longer, possibly very long periods of it. Such success can, of course, be achieved only if the educational activity produces results which are not merely temporary but relatively permanent. However, it will not be easy to pass over this permanence even in those cases, in which, for once, education exceptionally aims at a single experience, e.g. at dignified behaviour in facing the danger of death or, even more to the point, vis à vis the actual arriv-

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al of death. Such an experience[2] is important, despite its being singular, and is separated from the educational intervention by a period of time, and moreover, at the time of this [educational] intervention the time of its occurrence is usually still undetermined. Thus, in the end, all educational influence seems to have to amount to equipping the educated with relatively lasting qualities [*Eigenschaften*], which promise to make his position more favourable in the more or less reliably foreseeable future. Therefore, if all education remains eventually directed towards experiences, which are temporary like all experiences, the more immediate goal of such an activity will surely always lie in creating the aptitude for certain experiences: one cannot instill experiences in anybody, but rather the ability to have experiences, to make them one's own, to form them in an appropriate way, etc.

In this sense, the concept of capacity [*Fähigkeit*], ability [*Vermögen*] or, as one is accustomed to say with as little prejudice as possible, 'disposition' [*Disposition*] proves one of, if not *the,* fundamental concept of all pedagogy,[3] and those who try to clarify it and consider some of its simplest applications may hope to make a contribution to pedagogical theory. In view of this purpose, here are a few thoughts, most of which were conceived some time ago,[4] which may be particularly legitimized by the fact that they have already served as a theoretical basis[5] for E. Martinak's widely acknowledged inquiries into *Über Prüfen und Klassifizieren* [On Examination and Classification].[6]

2 Translators' note: we consequently translate *Erlebnis* as 'experience' throughout although the semantic of the German expression is broader. Sometimes *Erlebnis* also refers to the objective circumstances of the 'event' that can make an experience possible.

3 See Meister, R. "Unterrichtsfächer als Dispositionssysteme". *Festschrift* [*Beiträge zur Pädagogik und Dispositionstheorie: Eduard Martinak zur Feier seines 60. Geburtstages*], 55 ff.

4 See Höfler, A. in this *Festschrift*, 24 (see fn). Translators' note: If Meinong mentions "this Festschrift" he is referring to the context of the original publication of his article in: *Beiträge zur Pädagogik und Dispositionstheorie. EduardMartinak zur Feier seines 60. Geburtstages*. Hrsg. von A. Meinong. Prag-Wien-Leipzig: A. Haase, 1919, 33-54

5 See the first of the mentioned contributions [Meister, "Unterrichtsfächer als Dispositionssysteme"], 7 of the *Festschrift* as well as St. Witasek, "Beiträge zur speziellen Dispositionspsychologie". *Archive f. systemat. Philosophie*, vol. III, 274 fn. 1, and, "Grundlinien der Psychologie" (Leipzig 1908), 86 (see fn). The following essay of this *Festschrift*, 55, fn. 2, provides more information on literature. See also in this *Festschrift*, 75 ff.

6 Martinak, E. "Psychologische Untersuchungen über Prüfen und Klassifizieren". Talk delivered at the first general assembly of the seventh German-Austrian Middle School Conference (Vienna 1900), *Österreichische Mittelschule* XIV/ 2 and 3, and "Über Prüfen und Klassifizieren vom Standpunkte der Praxis", final talk at the third general assembly of the ninth German-Austrian Middle School Conference, Vienna, A. Hölder 1906.


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## 2 The idea of disposition

Like any other theory, the theory of dispositions must also be elevated by the determination of its basic concept. For reasons which I had occasion to point out long ago,[7] this determination aims to preserve the ideas [*Gedanke*] resulting from the theoretical work as much as possible, while making use as sparingly as possible of more arbitrary definitions.[8] In this sense, one can assume that one can attribute a certain disposition to someone, e.g. artistic taste [*künstlerischer Geschmack*], not if he has a certain experience at the time in question, and also not without any reference to an experience. Instead, under favourable circumstances, which are not easily tied to a specific moment in time, it is possible to ascribe the same disposition to people who have the same experience under similar circumstances. We will consider ourselves entitled to ascribe the same disposition to those others, who have it [the same experience] under similar circumstances, as well as to those who do not have it. The disposition will then be more greatly attributed to those who have the experience in question more often, more strongly, more perfectly, etc. It is obvious to attribute to the subject in question a relatively lasting quality under the name of artistic taste, by which he finds out what is artistically valuable in and outside of art, tries to surround himself or herself with it, etc., whereby the relationship of this quality to the experiences in question naturally appears to be that of the partial cause of the effect [*Teilursache zur Wirkung*]. The disposition to an experience or a class of experience, respectively, would thus have to be determined as a property that constitutes a partial cause to the experience in question as an effect: the concept of disposition thus presents itself as one of those concepts,[9] which I have long ago[10] called "derived causal concepts" [*abgeleitete Kausalbegriffe*].

Indeed, under the given circumstances, there can be no doubt in attributing to the subject a quality that enables him or her to behave in the manner indicated. But that which enables me [*mich befähigt*], i.e. gives me a capacity [*Fähigkeit*], I am not easily able to refer to as

7 In the treatise on "Phantasievorstellung und Phantasie". *Zeitschrift für Philosophie und philosophische Kritik* XCV (1889), 161 f. Cf. *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, vol. 1. Leipzig, 1914, 195 f.

8 On another occasion, I hope I will be able to address the fundamental concerns of M. Frischeisen-Koehler, *Kant-Studien* XXII (1918), 470 f. [Translators' note: Meinong uses the expression "Prinzip der Definitionsfreiheit", which refers to a rather nominalist understanding of the philosophical freedom to use and redefine concepts. His "sparing" use of such language implies a commitment to stay closer to common language].

9 "Phantasievorstellung und Phantasie". *Zeitschrift für Philosophie und philosophische Kritik*, XCV, 1889, 218. Cf. *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, vol. 1. Leipzig, 1914, 247.

10 *Hume-Studien* II (1882), 133. Meinong, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, 2: 126.

a capacity [*Fähigkeit*]. And it becomes even clearer that the property in question is not itself the disposition, to the point where the property is not only postulated, as it were, from the behavior of the subject, but is directly known from its nature [*Beschaffenheit*]. The one who is short-sighted behaves in a quite characteristic way when looking near and far, which admittedly means a loss for him far more often than an advantage, but which in any case entitles him to speak of short-sightedness as a clearly characterized disposition. Now, myopia often (as "axenmyopia") is due to an anomaly in the shape of the eyeball; this abnormal shape can thus be regarded as the characteristic [*Eigenschaft*] on which the disposition called myopia is based. But will anyone be inclined to say that this shape [*Gestalt*] is the disposition? If in the case of myopia we cannot use this expression without some violence, then it is even less appropriate when in other cases the underlying property is unknown [*zu Grunde liegende Eigenschaft*]. This deficiency can easily be remedied when one doesn't see a disposition as the characteristic in question, but instead only as the characteristic of having that characteristic. In principle, there is no objection to this: if A is in relation to B, then A can always be ascribed the property of being in relation to B. So it is really not inconsistent to say that the short-sightedness of a human being consists in the fact that he has eyes that have a certain deficiency. However, the usual idea regarding disposition or capacity [*Dispositions- oder Fähigkeitsgedanke*] does not display such complexity, and I have to recognize that even if the idea of cause appears in a way that is congenial to the situation at hand, it is nevertheless alien to the idea of disposition.[11] Hopefully, the common use of the German language can reveal another, more viable route.

Of someone who is able to use a foreign language correctly in speech and writing, it is said that he "can" speak or write this language. Someone who knows how to use a calculating machine is said to "be able" to use it. The word "can", however, undoubtedly points to possibility:[12] nothing is therefore more obvious than to see in the element of disposition the very fact [*Tatbestand*] of possibility. But here too a doubt immediately arises. Does not anyone who interprets disposition in this way expose himself to the old reproach of weakening the *potentia* to the "empty" *possibilitas*? Also, it is remarkable that the just mentioned usage in German is contrasted with the French usage with its distinction between "pouvoir" and "savoir". While it is true that all knowledge is a skill, and that by no means are all skills knowledge, this distinction is also somewhat of an intellectual exaggeration. However, this use of language shows us that the concept of

11 See my explanations in "Über Möglichkeit und Wahrscheinlichkeit". Leipzig, 1915, 54 f.

12 "Über Möglichkeit und Wahrscheinlichkeit". Leipzig, 1915.


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'possibility' [*Möglichkeit*] needs a determination in order to become the concept of 'disposition'.

The need for such a determination would also arise if one were allowed to consider disposition from the point of view of the derived concept of causality. If, out of a group of armed men passing through an inhabited area, one of them accidentally or carelessly fired a shot which fatally hits an inhabitant, then this inhabitant will certainly not be said to have a disposition to be shot, although by virtue of his physical condition and by virtue of the place where he was at the time of the shot he will certainly have had partial causes for the accident. Obviously, what is more important is a closer correlation between the partial cause and the effect which is supposed to be characteristic of the disposition in question, a correlation of the kind I once described relative to some of its configurations in more detail under the name of spontaneity, inclination and initiative.[13] These examples have the purpose of making it clear once again how much their understanding involves actual causal concepts which lead away from [the idea of] dispositions. On the other hand, there are nevertheless relations [*Verhältnisse*] present in the aforementioned examples which are akin to those relations working inside dispositions. Of course, therein lies the danger that even if one tries to come back to a greater complication it may be more than the natural thought of disposition is able to bear. The danger can be faced, however, if one is allowed to use the relation of the means to the end as a *differentia*.

A brief consideration shows that one is, in fact, allowed to do that. The person who learns a certain skill [*Fertigkeit*], such as the handling of a musical instrument, undoubtedly acquires a certain quality [*Beschaffenheit*] as a means through which he hopes to achieve his end, namely, of playing the instrument. Here, then, the character of the subject which the disposition is based upon is quite explicitly the means, while, however, that towards which the disposition is disposed is very explicitly the end. Now, of course, it is not at all essential for a disposition to be acquired, or to be acquired in a completely intentional way. If it is not, then of course it is not a means to a concretely [*wirklich*] given end, but functionality [*Zweckmässigkeit*] undoubtedly plays a role even then; and the idea of the end [*Zweckgedanke*], in spite of the fact that its use in this context may be somehow fictitious, is very much in keeping with the manner in which teleological observation [*Betrachtung*] is so often used.

The idea of an end or of functionality [*Zweck-, resp. Zweckmäßigkseitsgedanken*] as something not overly complicated may be questionable. This is the case so long as the idea of an end is regarded as a

13 "Phantasievorstellung und Phantasie". *Zeitschrift für Philosophie und philosophische Kritik*, XCV, 1889, 218 ff. *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, vol. 1. Leipzig, 1914, 246 ff.

form of the idea of causality, i.e., when the concept of an end is also regarded as a derivation of the concept of causality. In contrast to this view, I have tried to show[14] that the end, as a desired object in its own right, is closely related [to the desire] for what ought to be [*Sollen*]. There is no need to go into the details of this matter, which is still very much in need of closer examination: it only needs to be referred to because, if I am correct, the presentation of the end and functionality through a certain desire offers a relatively uncomplicated comprehension [of the issue at stake].

If this is correct, then there is no problem with defining the disposition as the possibility of an experience (whether physical or psychological), which is then assigned to the subject as a quality which can work as a means and also stands in relation to functionality.

This determination could of course be countered by the question over whether the quality of the subject, which is hereby included as obligatory, really has such a predominant position in the idea of disposition. It would appear, after all, as if this idea could be applied most easily in precisely those places where the quality in question is unknown, whereas, if it is known, this quality seems to distract attention or interest from the disposition, as it were. Now one can easily convince oneself that analogies are quite often found where a thing is understood from the point of view of the means. The watch is a means of determining time, the automobile a means of moving people or loads, the telephone a means of communicating at a distance, and everyone understands these things as means to these ends. But it is far from most people's minds to be able, or even to want, to single out from the many characteristics of the things in question the very ones on which their function as means is based. Here the idea of the end is connected to the whole thing as a means, and that's exactly what we find with the idea of disposition every time we encounter it under similar conditions.

Hence, nothing can prevent us from considering disposition with the perspective of an end and to express this succinctly, for example, by saying: "Disposition is the possibility of an end [*Zweckmöglichkeit*]". Now, however, the examples of functionality [*Zweckmässigkeit*] given in the preceding pages lead to a determination [*Bestimmung*] that can be grasped from both the standpoint of the idea of purpose as well as from that of the idea of possibility. The correlation [*Zuordnung*] of the means to the end can depend on the nature of the means, or [it can] be considered in relation to the goal, and therefore permanently be inherent to these means; or it can be transitory, in that it is based on a merely accidental constellation.

**14** In the essay "Über emotionale Präsentation". *Sitzungsberichte der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Philos.-histor. Klasse*, vol. 183, 1917, 39 ff., 111.

For example, by virtue of its facilities, a sanatorium is designed once and for all to serve the healing of the sick, whereas a burned match may only be used temporarily and exceptionally in the absence of a pencil or pen, for lack of a better option. Our examples have clearly shown correlations [*Zuordnungen*] of the first kind, i.e. relatively permanent ones. The same can also be said of relatively permanent as opposed to relatively temporary possibilities: if a ship is called mobile, a drinking glass fragile, then of course we are dealing with possibilities [*Möglichkeitsbestimmungen*] which have a much more permanent character than, for example, the danger of Tell's arrow had for his son, which only existed as long as the time in which the apple was to be shot. At this point, the introduction of another fact will lead to a better understanding of the opposition at hand [between permanent and temporary possibilities] and may prove to be of fundamental importance for the whole theory of possibility [*Möglichkeitstheorie*].

Suppose that there is a sufficiently accurate dice so that the possibility of throwing a three amounts to 1/6: may the existence of this possibility then be asserted without any reservation? Suppose the dice were to be hidden in an inaccessible place for all eternity: would there even be the possibility of a result? Obviously, in order to exist, this possibility requires that someone be found who is able to make throwing movements, that there be a surface on which the dice can be thrown, that the dice really be thrown now and then, etc. There is a complex of conditions, of which it can be said that, if only one of them is not fulfilled, then the possibility of the result of the dice's roll is also excluded. One could appropriately call this complex the complex of supplementary possibilities [*Komplex der Möglichkeits-Supplemente*]. It has the property, which seems to be somewhat paradoxical for the time being, that it not only does not allow the possibility to arise if it [the complex] is not present, but also does not allow for it if it is given: because although in this case it has a certain factuality, nevertheless it excludes possibility (except for the so-called "also-possibility" [*Auchmöglichkeit*][15] derived from the factuality in question). Here, therefore, possibility refers to the complex of supplementary possibilities as a precondition, but neither to what is and what is not, but rather to what is indeterminate owing to its being [*Sein*], as an incomplete object is.[16]

For the sake of this peculiar precondition, which is especially important for the theory of possibility cumulation [*Möglichkeitskumulation*],[17]

15 On this term, see "Über Möglichkeit und Wahrscheinlichkeit", 99.

16 See "Über Möglichkeit und Wahrscheinlichkeit", 178 f.

17 This is just one application. My argument at p. 53 of the essay "Zum Erweise des allgemeinen Kausalgesetzes". *Sitzungsberichte der philosophischen Klasse der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien*, vol. 189, 1918, has been countered by an acute objec-

I would like to call possibilities of this kind "supplementary possibilities" [*suppletorische Möglichkeiten*]. The above examples of mobility and frailty are in clear contrast to this third kind of possibility, as long as there is no need to speak of supplements, completely undetermined by being, in any way. It would not be inappropriate to speak of "insuppletorial possibility" [*insuppletorischer Möglichkeit*] here, if language did not provide a perhaps even clearer expression.

Possibility, as I have pointed out elsewhere,[18] is by nature an attribute of objectivities [*Objektiven*] and is attached to them in a particularly close way, so that I feel justified in speaking of a special "inhesiveness" [*Inhäsivität*] of the possibility to its objectivity and to see in this almost a constitutive moment of all possibility.[19] This inhesiveness is now transferred, as it were, from the objectivity in question to its subject,[20] which I will call, albeit in an incompletely determined way,[21] the 'carrier' [*Träger*], whereas if it is fully determined it should be called the 'representant' [*Repräsentant*][22] of the possibility in question. If there is the possibility that A is or that A is B, then this possibility is not only inherent in the objectivity of being in the former case [A is], and the objectivity of its specific being in the latter case [A is B], but each time is also inhesive to the subject A. In this sense it is perhaps not unambiguous but no means in violation of language to find "synthetic a priori judgments" possible, but the circular square impossible; on the other hand, the use of language that is quite readily presented in the case of objects of being does not seem to easily demonstrate an analogy in the case of specific being [*Sosein*]. The above examples of the ship and the glass prove that here too there is no objection to the subject's adhesiveness. For "mobile" and "fragile" cannot concern anything else but the possibility of moving or breaking; but a phrase such as "it is possible to break the glass" or the like certainly does not apply; one must be satisfied with a detour such as "the glass has the possibility of breaking". In the meantime, however, lan-

tion. From the fact that something has the possibility to occur at a certain time, I should have argued that at present time it is not possible since there is no way of knowing what else is meant by the possibility in question apart from the effective occurrence of the concerned event. I reply as follows: The occurrence that I deal with presupposes, of course, the possibility of the event but nothing more than that, in particular no supplements which would constitute a corresponding accumulation of possibility (cf. "Über Möglichkeit und Wahrscheinlichkeit", § 44). However, the negation of the complex of supplements, as shown above, removes possibility. It is different with 'logical', that is, a priori possibilities, which, at least by positive objectivities, are only formal possibilities [*Bestandmöglichkeiten*], while causality exclusively concerns existence.

18 "Über Möglichkeit und Wahrscheinlichkeit", § 14.

19 "Über Möglichkeit und Wahrscheinlichkeit", 143 ff., 147.

20 "Über Möglichkeit und Wahrscheinlichkeit", 221.

21 "Über Möglichkeit und Wahrscheinlichkeit", 218.

22 "Über Möglichkeit und Wahrscheinlichkeit", 228 f.

guage does not lack the appropriate means for a more direct expression. It is given in the above mentioned word "can" [*können*] which is applicable to 'specific' being [*Sosein*] as such in the same natural way, at least in relation to the subject of the possible objective: synthetic judgements a priori "can" exist, the ship "can" move, the glass "can" break. One may presume[23] that the meaning of the word "can" [*können*], although it certainly relates to possibility, nonetheless introduces a specific turn relative to the idea of possibility, as it were, according to the subject of the possible objectivity, which has reason to place the ability [*Können*], for instance as "transferred" possibility, alongside the possibility, perhaps in a somewhat narrower sense of the word. It is easily understandable that, at the same time, the opposition between the *potentia* and *possibilitas* is taken into account (where, at least when considering *possibilitias*, it is the logical or [if not that] at least the growth-incapable possibility[24] that comes to the fore.

How close this comparison comes to that of the supplementary and insupplementary [*Suppletorischen und Insuppletorischen*] and the insuppletorical is easily seen in the above examples. Only the fact that the dice "could'' result in the three when thrown disrupts the classification to some extent. This much, however, can be said without reservation: all actual possibilities of existence are supplementary and all insupplementary possibilities are carried over, that is to say, they are proficiencies [*Können*]. At the same time, it is now also clear without further ado that all dispositions fall under the perspective of the insupplementary proficiency—while this reveals a more suitable characteristic of the disposition than the one above concerning permanence. For this is generally given by the independence of supplements; however, a short duration of the disposition can be brought about in principle by a change in the property on which the dispositional proficiency is based. All disposition is therefore insupplementary proficiency, and one now only needs to include the teleological moment shown above in order to hopefully obtain a suitable, definitive idea of disposition. If we agree that the tentatively introduced the phrase "end-possibility" [*Zweckmöglichkeit*] is suitable, then perhaps now we can employ the analogous expression "end-capacity" [*Zweckkönnen*]. Therefore, the results of the investigation carried out in the preceding pages may provide a definition: "Disposition is insupplementary end-capacity". Using this concept of "end-capacity" makes it possible to distinguish explicitly whether the property [*Eigenschaft*] on which the proficiency is based actually occurs as a means (perhaps acquired directly for the sake of the end) or not.

**23** This is something that I still neglected when I wrote my explanations at p. 53 ff of the book *Über Möglichkeit und Wahrscheinlichkeit.*

**24** See *Über Möglichkeit und Wahrscheinlichkeit*, §21.


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As far as the term "disposition" is concerned, the question may arise as to whether there are grounds for preferring it to more or less competing terms such as "capacity" [*Fähigkeit*], "ability" [*Vermögen*] "force" [*Kraft*], "predisposition" [*Veranlagung*], "giftedness" [*Begabung*], terms which, in the German context, have at least one advantage, namely that they are German words. Meanwhile, "force" apparently has a much wider field of application, insofar as, for example, one speaks of forces also in physics, which is by no means limited to subjects, i.e., living beings, while one ascribes dispositions only to subjects. On the other hand, one could, of course, only speak of "faculties" in the case of subjects, but could easily mean possibility without closer specification. A researcher of the third or fourth rank owes a brilliant discovery perhaps once in his life to a happy coincidence: he proves with it that he was capable [*fähig*] of such a discovery [in the same way as] as a man who once steals out of need proves by it that he is capable of stealing. However, a disposition to great discoveries in the former case is just as inappropriate an attribution as a disposition to steal is in the latter case. The word "ability" [*Vermögen*] takes on a certain value for what it refers to in the sense of the means or quasi-means [*Quasi-Mittel*]. Whoever is predisposed to catarrhs is not easily said to have an "ability" for catarrhal diseases. "Giftedness", "predisposition" [*Veranlagung*], "constitution" [*Anlage*] (for example also "talent" [*Talent*]) undoubtedly point to dispositions, but especially to innate dispositions, whereas acquired dispositions cannot be excluded. Thus, the theoretical use, which has quite unanimously decided in favour of the word "disposition", deserves to be preserved. However, with regard to what has just been said about "force", it may be advisable to still explicitly define disposition as an end-capacity [*Zweckkönnen*] in subjects.

Here what is more important than the justification of the word is, as is the case everywhere, the idea of disposition, so that the question cannot remain unanswered as to whether the nature of the idea of disposition legitimizes making it the starting point for a theoretical investigation. For this, however, even pre-scientific language bears sufficiently clear testimony through its wealth of words with dispositional significance, and this is evident, especially insofar as psychological dispositions are taken into account. The need to fix them in words is not ultimately based on the fact that, where it is necessary to attribute psychological traits [*psychologische Eigenschaften*] to a subject, one is always confronted with dispositions. For if, by their very nature, psychic experiences resist treatment as traits (even if they were only temporary),[25] they fail completely in the face of the ef-

**25** See my explanations in *Über die Erfahrungsgrundlagen unseres Wissens*. Berlin 1906, 29.

fort to arrive at reasonably permanent determinations, whereas dispositions are unquestionably fitting for this end. The permanent is more important than the temporary: so it can easily happen that, especially where value facts [*Werttatbestände*] are concerned, the interest in the disposition for an experience suppresses the interest in the experience itself, although it can only arise from this former interest. It can then happen that language has a series of words which characterize not the disposition for the experience, but the experience for the disposition: Expressions like "brilliant idea", "astute distinction", "bold decision", "malicious insinuation" are examples of this.[26] The ethical approach, to which the last two examples just mentioned already belong, offers a great deal of evidence. The fundamental contradiction between ethically good and evil resolutions is not so much characterized by the experiences that actually result from them as it is by the intentions [*Gesinnungen*] which are activated by them:[27] Intentions [*Gesinnungen*], however, are not experiences but dispositions. Even if a behaviour is described as virtuous or vicious, when the peculiarity of the virtues or vices in question is examined in more detail, one sees one is of course dealing with dispositions.

Perhaps there is no better way to illustrate the importance of the idea of disposition than to point out the analogy of its function to that of the idea of an external world, if one considers it merely as a hypothesis. The justification of this hypothesis is only determined by what it has provided, namely experiences, especially intellectual ones, that enable us to form theoretical interpretations. I do not think that this is the only legitimation for the belief in the existence of an external world:[28] but for the sake of simplicity, let us suppose that there is no other. Then our hypothesis has the task of making possible the discovery of regularities [*Gesetzmäßigkeiten*] in the seemingly random tangle of what is directly given or remembered. This can be done in such a way so that temporary but repetitive sensations are brought into relation with permanent causes, which then offer the possibility of establishing regularities to which the sensations are apparently not subject in themselves. Similarly, the most diverse intellectual and emotional experiences of a subject, insofar as they repeatedly occur, are connected with each other by the precondition of a relatively permanent disposition built on a no less permanent basis. At the same time, however, with the help of the continuous foundation of the disposition, connections can be made between temporally separate experiences of the same subject, which in turn helps us to understand how past experiences influence future ones, so that this relation no longer presents

**26** See my *Psychologisch-ethischen Untersuchungen zur Werttheorie*. Graz, 1894, 41 f.

**27** See *Psychologisch-ethischen Untersuchungen zur Werttheorie*, 140 ff.

**28** See *Über die Erfahrungsgrundlagen unseres Wissens*, 91.


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itself as a unsolvable mystery. The analogy naturally also applies to our practical behaviour: just as we adjust to external reality, we are also able to accommodate our inner reality and influence it according to our wishes and needs once we have adopted a point of view under which external and internal processes can be grasped as conforming to laws and contingently understood in those terms. Such is the extent of the alignment [of the external and internal realities] that one may feel urged to ask why it does not prove to be more conspicuous. The answer is probably that the outside world is allowed the moment of phenomenality [*Phänomenalität*] which is naturally lacking in disposition. The outside world, however imperfect, is presented through our sensible representations [*Wahrnehmungsverstellungen*] and is always most easily grasped through these representations. On the other hand, dispositions cannot be perceived as mere possibilities, and even if their foundational elements [*Grundlagen*][29] can be perceived as such, they do not easily come to light and, in the long term, remain unknown. In this respect, dispositions can only be grasped in relation to the experiences they give rise to, and therefore the similarity of this example to that of the outside world should be withdrawn.

## 3 The Moments of Disposition

Dispositions, as we have found, are end-capacity [*Zweckkönnen*]. There are two particular ways in which such a capacity is distinguished from possibility without further determination. This capacity does not directly approach the subject to which it belongs, as it were, but only comes to it through the mediation of a more or less permanent quality, upon which the disposition is based. Moreover, this quality is oriented towards an experience, like the means towards its end. Both are meant in the succinct sense of the word "capacity" in contrast to its usual meaning. It's the same way in which one says of a newborn child that it is possible for him or her to become a great artist, while the disposition to outstanding artistic achievement will only be attributed to the one who is adult enough to have somehow already revealed their disposition to be an artist. Moreover, the disposition, which does not apply to every possibility, is improvable [*steigerungsfähig*], and in practice it will not be easy to establish a disposition if the present possibility is too small.

As we can see, there are determinations in the quality on which the disposition is based and the experience to which it is, as it were,

29 Translators' note: we would like to point out that the German term *Grundlagen* contains both the sense of 'foundations' and 'basis' in English and that therefore we have alternated between these two words as appropriate.

directed. Although these are not actually determinations of the disposition, they characterize it quite substantially and also entail a certain variability of dispositions. They are accompanied by determinations of a similar character, which are not explicitly included in the concept of disposition, but are given implicitly and forced upon us as soon as we take into consideration the circumstances under which the disposition emerges and, if we may say so, also becomes visible. I shall refer to these determinations as "moments" of disposition and dedicate some brief considerations to them here.

As we have seen, the starting point of all consideration of disposition is an experience, this word understood in such a way that it includes not only the inner or psychological experiences but also the outer or physical experiences. It is a matter of what a disposition gives rise to, that is, what naturally characterizes the disposition in question and thus distinguishes it from other dispositions. If one says that a person can do gymnastics, play the piano, take shorthand notes, do mental arithmetic, compare, combine, etc., then the dispositions in question appear to be most conspicuously determined by such experiences; no less so if, for example, the dispositions in question are concerned with the formation of concepts[30] or with what appears to be associated with certain feelings and desires under the name "interest".[31] I have compared such experiences with the respective dispositions in terms of their correlates; St. Witasek[32] and especially E. Martinak[33] used the more colourful word "achievement" [*Leistung*] for this purpose, which will really be preferable in many cases but is inferior to the word "correlate" [*Korrelat*] with respect to the breadth of the field of application; the word "achievement" is not used in connection with experiences which do not have the character of activity. On the other hand, there can of course also be dispositions for such experiences; thus, the term "correlate" is much more suitable due to its generality.[34]

It is obvious to say that every disposition is a disposition *to* something as well as *from* something, that is to say, that it is close to a subject that "has" it, and which also "has" its correlate, so long as this has been realized. Now, however, disposition is possibility, and when every possibility is, as I have shown,[35] a "capacity" that is in-

**30** See Mally, E. "Über Begriffsbildung", in this *Festschrift*, 94 ff.

**31** See Tumlitz, O. "Die Disposition des theoretischen Interesses und ihre aktuellen Korrelate", in this *Festschrift*, 79 ff.

**32** "Grundlinien der Psychologie", 86.

**33** "Psychologische Untersuchungen über Prüfen und Klassifizieren", 8.

**34** See also Meister, R., "Unterrichtsfächer als Dispositionssysteme", in this *Festschrift*, 59 fn. 12.

**35** See this *Festschrift*, 39.

herent in an object, then this is what I meant by naming it the bearer [*Träger*] of this possibility. It exists as an incomplete object, if it has existence at all, only as "implexive" in a complete object, which is the "representative" [*Repräsentanten*] of possibility. When speaking of disposition, this representative coincides with its subject, so that one can speak of the representative of disposition.

As is becoming clear, those determinations of the representative unite to form the bearer of a possibility, which are essential to the possibility in question and determine its existence, which is to say, they are not merely supplementary preconditions [*suppletorische Voraussetzungen*]. Needless to say, this is also the case with disposition. Through this, certain determinations of the subject of disposition enter into a kind of exceptional position: they are those things from the subject upon which the disposition is actually based, that which constitutes it, and can therefore be appropriately called the "basis of disposition" [*Dispositionsgrundlage*]. This has already been repeatedly mentioned as the quality or condition of the subject that establishes the disposition. The relationship between the basis and the correlate of the same disposition is given by the fact that the existence of the basis implies the possibility of the existence of the correlate.[36] This is obviously a causal implication in the sense that the basis and the correlate are related to the effect [*Wirkung*] as partial causes [*Teilursache*]. In this respect, my earlier statement that the concept of disposition is a derived causal concept should not, at least not to the extent of its applicability, imply anything incorrect.

If, as we have seen, one of the main values of the consideration of disposition consists in the fact that the relatively temporary experiences of the correlate are contrasted with relatively permanent experiences of the same, which is what the basis of disposition now turns out to be, then it becomes clear that among the partial causes belonging to the correlate as effect, this basis cannot easily take the position of the "final cause" [*letzten Ursache*]. Of course, there can be no lack of such a final cause, where the correlate passes from the potentiality that is situated in the mere possibility of existence into the state of actuality constituted by existential factuality. In this state, as it is often briefly said, the disposition is actualized. I have called this last cause the "stimulant" [*Erreger*] of disposition. The definition of a special term is legitimized by the role that this final cause plays in many regularities [*Gesetzmässigkeiten*] of the dispositional field. But while subject, correlate and basis are naturally always present in the disposition of the final cause, the disposition can just

**36** This is the case of what I called "possibility implication" [*Möglichkeitsimplikation*] in the writing "Zum Erweise des allgemeinen Kausalgesetzes". *Sitzungen der Wiener Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 1918, *Philos.-hist. Kl.*, vol. 189, 43.


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as obviously exist even if it is not stimulated. Indeed, there seems to be a tendency to speak of a dispositional fact only in the case of lack of actualization, that is, in the case of lack of stimulation of a dispositional fact which, in the case of actualization, seems to make way for a more perfect one.

If the basis normally represents what is actually constant in the disposition one can, in view of the experience, properly speak of the emergence and changes of the basis and can include them. Where the dispositional basis does not come into existence at the same time as the subject's [basis], there are of course no causes for the occurrence and the nature of basis of the disposition and one can appropriately call such statements the "founder" [*Begründer*] of the dispositions in question. The founder is, however, much further away from the stimulant in relation to that which presents itself as the direct aspect of the objective fact of the disposition (so to speak); but again, there are characteristic laws of disposition which make it indispensable to formulate the concept of the founder.

Thus, I would like to give the subject, the correlate, the basis, the stimulant, and the founder of disposition a preferential position in the theory of disposition under the name of the "moments" of disposition. To the last four of these [1. the correlate, 2. the basis, 3. the stimulant, and 4. the founder] I shall make a few brief remarks in the following.

**1.** If the correlate [*Korrelat*] could be described as the natural starting point of all considerations of disposition, it is nothing but self-evident that dispositions should first be characterized and distinguished according to their correlates. But this does not exclude the possibility that dispositions might be specified from time to time according to something else: where a person is purported to have experience, whereas his nature is thought of as authenticity [*Ursprünglichkeit*] (or as being down-to-earth [*Urwüchsigkeit*]), there are examples of this. A disposition can be characterized not only by what it achieves but also by its provenance. Moreover, in such cases, the exclusion of the correlate is only an external one, because it is only present in the meaning of the word that is used: someone is not called experienced primarily to indicate that he has had experiences, but rather to refer to behaviours that result from what has been experienced.

The assumption of the preceding passages, namely that all correlates of the disposition must be experiences, contradicts the fact that there seem to be dispositions grounding other dispositions in addition to dispositions regarding the present concern. Formability [*Bildsamkeit*] is a proof of this; even when a student is praised as diligent this is not so much directed towards individual achievements as towards the acquisition of dispositions to such achievements. And indeed, insofar as the disposition has turned out to be a possibility, disposition grounding other dispositions therefore means as much

as possibility grounding other possibilities, and there is nothing theoretically wrong with this. However, it doesn't really seem to correspond to the natural idea of disposition, and if one looks more closely at examples such as those given above, one finds that dispositions are not so much about other dispositions as about the acquisition of dispositions. However, dispositions are acquired by acquiring the foundations [*Grundlagen*] of them, and therefore, if one only adds "mediate" [*mittelbaren*] dispositions to the "immediate" [*unmittelbare*] ones,[37] one can stick to the statement: "all correlates of the disposition are experiences" without the danger of being considerably wrong; and provided that all experiences, at least all sufficiently elementary ones, are either external or internal, physical or psychic [*psychische*], the basic division of all dispositions into physical and psychic dispositions, or, and this is the same thing, into physical and psychic dispositions, is given.

Furthermore, if, as shown above, the basis of the disposition is opposed to the correlate, such as the partial cause of the effect [*Teilursache der Wirkung*], it is clear without further ado that only when this correlate C itself is again the partial cause of another effect does this effect at the same time also assume the position of a second correlate C', so to speak, with respect to our disposition. The disposition to C is then at the same time also a disposition to C', which is, as it were, under mediation of C, so that one can now also speak of an immediate disposition to C, and of a mediated disposition to C'. If, for example, the technical fidelity of an orchestra's performance is not in the least due to the precision with which the conductor distinguishes between the individual orchestral parts, then the capacity [*Fähigkeit*] to do this also signifies a disposition to good conducting. In a similar way, and in cases such as those under consideration, which often cannot be strictly distinguished from one another, the disposition for the part [*den Teil*] is at the same time the disposition for the whole [*das Ganze*], and it can also be a matter of parts of objects that appear as less complete objects along with more complete ones.[38] The disposition for the more universal, e.g., good memory in general, is also a disposition for the specific, e.g., remembering dates.[39] In general one can say: a disposition for the logically previous always leads to a disposition for the logically subsequent. However, the fact that the inversion of this proposition does not have to be true at all deserves to be emphasized, especially because at least under certain circumstances the right to such an inversion does exist. For exam-

37 With Höfler, A. *Psychologie*. Vienna, 1897, 257.

38 On incomplete objects cf. "Über Möglichkeit und Wahrscheinlichkeit", 170 ff.

39 On the distinction of general dispositions from specific ones, cf. Meister, R. "Unterrichtsfächer als Dispositionssysteme", 55 in this *Festschrift*, esp. fn. 4.


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ple, through practice the aspiring pianist learns to play the piano in a short time. This can hardly be done by referring to the "disposition of higher order" [*Disposition höher Ordnung*]; but undoubtedly the important regularity [*Gesetzmäßigkeit*] is involved, according to which the disposition for a correlate C implies even more surely one for K' in relation to the level of similarity C' has to C. Often one is forced to combine not only absolutely identical objects under C, but also, within certain limits, objects that are similar.

Particular attention should be paid to those variabilities of the correlate that are in any way related to the quantitative aspect, where then the increase in the correlate *ceteris paribus* also means the increase of the disposition. The law of *potius*,[40] which has been proven in the theory of possibilities, applies to this insight and it legitimizes the conclusion we can make from the increased disposition to the lesser one (*a potiori ad deterius*).[41] In this context, the term "increase of the correlate" is usually already used in a teleologically broadened sense, according to which the "better ability" [*besser Können*] takes its place alongside the "less good ability" [*minder gut Können*]. For example, the fact that one can play the violin better is manifested not only in the greater force of the tone. The 'broadening' I mentioned earlier becomes even more obvious when E. Martinak[42] places an "extensive" achievement [*Leistung*] alongside an "intensive" achievement where, for example, the enrichment of the vocabulary of a foreign language means an increase in knowledge of language in general.

**2.** If we now turn to the stimulant of disposition [*Erreger der Disposition*], which of course could be described more precisely as the stimulant of the correlate, we find that two of the aspects just used for the correlate are particularly applicable to it. As a naturally real partial cause, it too is subject to the dichotomy of physical and psychological. But it's determination in this respect is not transferred to the disposition itself in the same way as we found it with the correlate; rather, a disposition that is actualized by a physical stimulant can, depending on the correlate, be equally physical or psychic as one that is actualized by a psychical stimulant. Thus, when both the nutritional and sensory dispositions are updated by a physical stimulant, and when both external and internal experiences are arbitrarily influenced by a psychic stimulant, the disposition is actualized by a psychic stimulant. The second thing that must be mentioned in relation to the stimulant as well as in the correlate is the possibility of

**40** Cf. "Über Möglichkeit und Wahrscheinlichkeit", 97 f. [As he points out in his text, Meinong has already introduced what he here calls the "law of Potius" (from Latin for "more") in his book *Über Möglichkeit und Wahrscheinlichkeit* (Chap. 1, § 16, 97)].

**41** On the term "deterius", cf. "Zum Erweise des allgemeinen Kausalgesetzes", 56 f.

**42** "Über Prüfen und Klassifizieren vom Standpunkte der Praxis", 18 ff.


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increase, in order to establish that the nature of the increase in disposition must not be sought in the increase of the correlate, as might appear to be the case above. For even with constant performance [*Leistung*] one can speak of different strengths of disposition, which can be stated most simply using the stimulant and difference thresholds: the lower the threshold, the greater the sensitivity. However, at the same time, when seen from the opposite direction (in which the strength of the disposition and the strength of the stimulant changes), it can be said that the increase in disposition certainly does not coincide with the increase in the strength of the stimulant.

**3.** As far as the basis of the disposition [*Dispositionsgrundlage*] is concerned, the contrast between physical and psychic is, of course, schematically applicable without further additions, but also here it is by no means the case that a disposition with a physical basis must therefore be physical and a disposition with a psychic basis must therefore be psychic. If, however, the basis [*Grundlage*], like the disposition itself, may be said to be something relatively constant, then it is worth noting that direct empirical observation [*Empirie*] hardly provides inner experiences that have sufficient constancy. This suggests that the basis of psychic dispositions has to be physical, unless one finds reasons to hypothetically refer to psychic constants which our direct experience fails to provide. Disposition theory will presumably not have to deal with the difficulties of psychic or psychophysical causality when discussing the basis, just as in the case of [our consideration of] the stimulant.

As mentioned above, the basis (especially in the case of psychic dispositions) may be regarded as something that usually escapes direct knowledge. Therefore, the question of whether dispositions with universal or complex correlates, i.e. universal and complex dispositions (even disposition complexes [*Dispositionskomplexen*]) have universal or complex bases is all the more important. In principle, there can certainly be no objection to this, and especially the presumption of the greatest possible analogy between the construction of the correlates and that of the basis will not lack heuristic value. What the experimental psychology of dispositions is now investigating under the name of "correlation"[43] has its roots, without a doubt, in the bases with which it is compatible [*Verträglichkeit*] and on which it depends. But also that object of a much higher order, which E. Martinak has pointed out under the name of the "system of disposition",[44] con-

43 The terminological agreement with what I have been calling the "correlate" of disposition for a far longer time is, of course, only a coincidence.

44 Cf. "Über Prüfen und Klassifizieren vom Standpunkte der Praxis", 22, and now especially Meister, R. "Unterrichtsfächer als Dispositionssysteme", 38 ff. in this *Festschrift*.


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fronts the disposition theory of the future with the already quite difficult task of giving an account of the relationship in which the bases of the disposition can be related to such a system.

Attributing the increase of the correlate to an increase of the basis corresponds to the analogy I have just mentioned. The need for this [analogical assumption] is all the more urgent since we have been able to convince ourselves that the increase in disposition cannot be an increase in the correlate, since increases in disposition also occur with unchanged correlates when the stimulant exhibits gradual changes. However, the fact that changes in the strength of the stimulant do not also constitute changes in the strength of the disposition itself is already illuminated by the inverse situation. By contrast, it is easy to acknowledge that the increases in disposition occurring with the stimulant and the increases in disposition occurring with the correlates follow the same regularity [*Gesetzmäßigkeiten*] as soon as one takes into account the basis for cases of increase occurring for the stimulant. If, *ceteris paribus*, i.e. especially with the same stimulant, the larger basis also belongs to the larger correlate, so that the relation C<C' in the correlates is accompanied by the relation B<B' in the associated basis of the dispositions D<D', then it will—if there are no external obstacles, so to speak—always be possible to place a stimulant E at the side of the stimulant S', which, smaller than S, nevertheless produces the same correlate C in the subject S', which with the larger basis B' also has the stronger disposition D', as with the stimulant S in the subject X. For if the stimulant S' were to be increased to the level of S, it would produce the correlate C' in the subject X' by virtue of its own basis B'. What at first glance would like to present itself as a special law of an increasing disposition that applies exclusively to the stimulant, loses its apparent peculiarity as soon as one takes into account the part of the basis that is already recognizable in the increased correlates.

Now, however, in the present context, we must consider another way in which the increase in disposition can manifest. It is said of someone that he is prone to catarrhs if he gets them under circumstances in which others are still free from them, when they happen to him more often than to others and when under the same circumstances the possibility of his becoming ill is greater. As you can see, this example contains, directly, a higher degree of possibility, which in itself is not strange, since we have found possibilities in all dispositions. But while otherwise the size of this possibility doesn't come into question, so that even when the dispositions are increased it seems that possibilities cannot be increased, in cases of the kind just mentioned, it is precisely the possibility that is increased.[45] Nevertheless, such cases

**45** Cf. "Über Möglichkeit und Wahrscheinlichkeit", 136 ff.


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of increase are relevant to the present context in so far as here, too, a return to the basis and its increases seems a plausible step. In fact, nothing could be more natural than to base an increase of a possibility on an increase of the first decisive partial cause, namely the basis, especially since the proportion of the other partial causes, especially the last one, tends to turn out to be relatively accidental because it is relatively less dependent on the nature of these partial causes. In the case of psychic correlates, when they are actualized, one speaks of spontaneous activity [*Betätigungen der Spontaneität*][46] in order to emphasize the predominance of internal influences over external ones.

In summary, one can arguably say: all increase in dispositions is due to increase in the bases. But it cannot be said that the increase of dispositions simply consists in the increase of the bases, that the idea of increase is only externally transferred from the bases to the disposition, at least not in the cases where the increase of dispositions manifests itself as an increase of probability. Here, at least, the idea of increase is directly tied to the disposition itself, as surely as—according to its nature [*ihrem Wesen nach*]—it is a possibility.

**4.** I have already mentioned above that the founder [*Begründer*] is not inherent in every disposition with the same cogency [*Ausnahmelosigkeit*] as the correlate, basis and (*cum grano salis*) stimulant are. Incidentally, this becomes totally clear if one considers the possibility of the founder of the disposition [*Dispositionsbegründung*] merely within the living boundaries [*Lebensgrenzen*] of the subject carrying the disposition. For it is more difficult to doubt the actual and indeed quite frequent occurrence of innate disposition today than to believe in the occurrence of what was once called innate experiences (namely, representations and convictions), by which terms one will, anyway, all along have meant dispositional facts in most cases, only they were not yet clearly enough recognized as such. In my opinion, this misrecognition happened so long as the difference between what is dispositional and what is actual was not yet sufficiently theoretically understood. After all, today one does not content oneself with the mere statement of innateness, but rather considers the origin of such dispositions, in which instead of innateness one deals immediately with the heritability [*Erblichkeit*] of the dispositions.[47] From the point of view of the founder of the disposition, they [innate dispositions] cannot be spoken of here.

In the present context, acquired dispositions increasingly come into question, and although there are many kinds of them, two types—

**46** Cf. "Über Phantasievorstellung und Phantasie". *Zeitschr. f. Philos. und philos. Kritik*, 218 ff. (see also Meinong, *Gessamelte Abhandlung*, 1: 46 ff.).

**47** Cf. Martinak, E. *Einige neuere Ansichten über Vererbung moralischer Eigenschaften und die pädagogische Praxis*. Vienna, 1893.


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and this without claiming to be exhaustive—should be singled out for emphasis; their characteristics emerge in quite a conspicuous manner when their foundations are brought together with their correlates. The two resulting classes of dispositions can best be described by the words "habituation dispositions" [*Gewöhnungsdispositionen*] and "suggestion dispositions" [*Suggestionsdispositionen*].

That "habituation" [*Gewöhnung*] is first of all a disposition formation [*Dispositionsbildung*], even when it is used in vulgar speech, is made clear by the fact that the effect of habituation is always something relatively permanent. By contrast, the nature of this effect seems to fluctuate between two opposites, which even the language of everyday life attempts to capture using terms with contrasting meanings, such as "accustoming" [*angewöhnen*] and "giving up" [*abgewöhnen*]. What should become clear with these examples is undoubtedly the fact that habituation is sometimes beneficial and sometimes detrimental to the dispositions in question. But this then begs the question: what is the common ground between examples of such different bearings [*Verhalten*] so that one can always speak of habituation? The answer is given by the fact that all dispositions of habituation are founded on experiences that are similar to the correlates of the dispositions that come about in this way.

How does it happen, for example, that one becomes "accustomed" [*gewöhnt*] to a smell, be it a good one or a bad one? Obviously, in the following manner: that the organ is exposed to an olfactory stimulus, but the effect of the stimulus, even if it remains unchanged, decreases, possibly reaching zero. It can also happen that the sensation, as far as it can be remembered, remains quite unchanged, but the comfort or discomfort, i.e. the accompanying feeling, decreases and disappears. Since the stimulus [*der Reiz*] remains unchanged, the change can only be due to the subject, who apparently changes under the influence of the stimulus. The stimulus initially encountered a certain dispositional nature of the subject, it updated this disposition and in that way has functioned as a stimulant [*der Erreger*]: the correlate was the sensation or feeling in its original strength. Under the influence of the stimulus, the given disposition changes into a weaker one, which becomes apparent in a weaker correlate. Habituation is thus presented here as a reduction of the disposition, in which it can be particularly seen that what reduces the disposition is the experience of the correlate. If, therefore, one lets the change of a given disposition be regarded as the foundation of a new one—this is unobjectionable—then one can simply say that we are dealing here with a founder that is of the same nature as the correlate, and this founder has a cause that coincides with the stimulant of the given disposition. Habituation of this kind is called fatigue [*Ermüdung*]; it is immediately clear that the given dispositional characteristic fits to all fatigue, although the term habituation cannot be applied to it

casually, but only in the sense of an extension of its usual meaning. But the regularity that comes to light in this term is a general one; there seems to be no inner or outer experience that is not fatigued.[48]

Now one also speaks of habituation in a completely different sense, for example, by saying that the typist "gets used" to a typewriter of a system unknown to him by writing on it for a while. If, in the previous example, the low constancy [*geringe Konstanz*] of the dispositions in question could, to a certain extent, obscure their dispositional character at first glance, this obstacle does not apply in the latter example at all, for there it is clearly a matter of the disposition to write on a new machine. However, it should be tangentially said that with this latter example it is again a matter of changing this disposition, only this time in the opposite sense, namely by an increase in comparison with the reduction in the previous example. However, the reduction we can see in the previous example is, just like the increase of the latter example, brought about by experience, particularly through the repeated experience of the correlate. Moreover, the agreements between the correlate and the founder of the transformed disposition, or between the stimulant and the cause of the founder, as stated above, also exist here. Hence, one tends to characterize through this agreement [*Übereinstimmungsverhältnis*] everything that is called habituation, without disagreeing with the opposing meaning, according to which this agreement brings about changes in disposition. Examples of the increase in disposition I have just described are called training [*Übung*][49] and, similar to fatigue, the term can be extended to many examples where one is no longer used to speak of habituation. However, while all physical and psychic events are subject to fatigue, the field of training is not equally wide: to define it definitely is a task yet to be solved by experimental research, which is not dealt with here in more detail for lack of the room to do so. I am therefore content to make a conjecture [*Vermutung*] for the psychic field, which can be verified many times in an immediately obvious manner, but which is suitable for use as a heuristic principle until it is completely confirmed. If one adheres to the dichotomy of active and passive, which is already familiar in everyday life,[50] then it can be asserted, as far as I can see, that only active experiences are trained [*sich üben*], whereas passive experiences (such as feeling and experiencing ideas, excluding the active expe-

**48** A first overview of relevant facts can be found in my essay "Über Sinnesermüdung im Bereiche des Weberschen Gesetzes". *Vierteljahrschrift für wissenschaftl. Philos.*, vol. 12, 1888, 1-5 (Meinong, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, 1: 79-83).

**49** Cf. "Psychologisch-ethische Untersuchungen zur Werttheorie", 172 f.

**50** For an attempt at a more detailed description (which I presently consider still not quite correct), see St. Witasek, *Psychologie*, 84 f.


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riences processed by them) are subject to a different law of disposition, to which we will have to refer immediately.

To begin with, the relationship between fatigue [*Ermüdung*] and training [*Übung*] must be clarified. Because of the contradictory nature of the meaning of the change of disposition, which is essential [*wesentlich*] each time, this relationship presents itself at first glance as a clear antagonism that threatens to lead to incompatibility, since one of the two laws, that of fatigue, appears with the demand of validity without exceptions, so that at least everywhere where the law of training is also in force there must be a conflict [between the two meanings of disposition]. Meanwhile, there is no opportunity for conflict provided that there is a period of time between fatigue and training, which now requires us to include yet another fact of regularities determining change [*gesetzmäßiger*] in the disposition in the field of our consideration. Through the example of everyday life we can see that when some time has passed after fatigue, rest, which is understood as a change of disposition contrary to fatigue, will assert itself, and, at least in its psychological aspect, rest cannot be faced today with some understanding. If, therefore, rest essentially means a *restitutio in integrum*, it is very likely from the outset that the integrity to be achieved in this way will not represent the attainment resulting from fatigue. To look at it more closely, experience shows two types, in that in some cases the *restitutio in integrum* does not reach that starting point [*Ausgangspunkt*], while in other cases, as much as this may seem strange at first sight, it exceeds the starting point.

This second phase is training, which only occurs when [*wenn*], not to say whilst [*indem*], the fatigue is overcome by recovery. On the other hand, however, as has already been mentioned, there is the example of where the recovery, even if it is given as much time as desired, is no longer able to lead to the restoration of the previous dispositional state, and fatigue, despite recovery, only leads to a further decrease in the dispositional strength. An equally popular and unmistakable term such as "training" is not available here: But I thought I could use the term "dullness" [*Abstumpfung*] with sufficient clarity.

Can one now also say when fatigue with rest leads to training and when it leads to dullness? The answer is contained in what has been said above about the relationship between activity and training. If it is in the nature of experiences, which can be called activities, that they are accessible to training, then one can expect everything that can be called suffering to be subject to dulling. The limits within which this occurs are a matter for the training or dullness curve, the shape of which can be addressed here just as little as the fatigue or recovery curve can be. The fact that, to sum up, one so often starts out slowly at first, then rapidly and then again slowly ascends or descends, can only lend greater weight to the idea of the close connection between these different regularities.

Incidentally, there is another related fact [*Tatbestand*] of a change of disposition, which is mainly known in the field of sensations [*Empfindungen*] under the name of resonance, and which can undoubtedly also be found in other fields of inner events [*inneren Geschehens*] and very possibly in every case of such events. It is the fact of an increase in disposition under the influence of a sensory stimulus [*Empfindungsreizes*] which leads to that maximum at which fatigue sets in. On the other hand, decay [*Abklingen*] corresponds to fatigue with respect to the direction, and it corresponds to recovery with respect to the absence of a stimulant. Whether this is still a law of disposition at all could appear questionable, if one were not to believe that during the decay there is greater sensitivity towards a sensory stimulus than after the decay.

To apply the term "habituation" to all of these very diverse facts, despite the aforementioned contradiction regarding the realization of what is customarily called habituation, requires an explicitly conventional use [of the term]. Habituation seems to me, however, to be the most natural terminological means of designation vis à vis the second group of dispositional foundations [*Dispositionsbegründungen*], which I have described above using the term suggestive facts [*Suggestionstatbestände*], and the same is true for a conventional extension of the predominant use of words. Particularly paradigmatic for this seem to me to be the facts, which are often summarized as cases of the law of imitation [*Gesetzes der Nachahmung*],[51] which simply comes to light, for example, in the case of perceived movements, which need not necessarily be arbitrary movements, but can also be, for example, involuntary movements of expression. If, of course, a child cries or laughs because it sees or hears another crying or laughing, one may doubt whether such things have anything at all to do with dispositions and do not take place exclusively within the current situation. If, however, someone adopts the dialect of his environment in his speech, he does so even if no one else is speaking; here, then, a disposition has been actualized, and this is a correlate that is characterized by its similarity with what the subject has heard, or more generally, what he has perceived. But that this disposition has been imposed on him by his environment can be said in a rather informal way; except, apparently, that perception is not essential; for analogies are made where the judgment of perception is excluded for whatever reason and replaced by another judgment. If X realizes that Y has a certain conviction, X will be inclined to share it, and the inclination will increase if Z is of the same opinion. What Y likes or values, X will also approach with a

51 See "Psychol.-eth. Unters. Zur Werttheorie", 173; Groethuysen, B. "Das Mitgefühl". *Zeitschrift für Psychologie*, vol. 34, 1904, 179 ff., as well as von Hoetzlin, J.K. "Das Gesetz der spontanen Nachahmung". *Archiv für die ges. Psychologie*, vol. 38, 1918, 1 ff.

certain willingness to like or value. And what Y wants to want is also very much suggested to X; whether this then takes the form of subordination to the will of Y or, on the contrary, brings about a conflict of interests and therefore an opposition against the will of Y, i.e. whether it turns out in favour of or against Y, is a matter of astonishingly indifference to the facts of the disposition.

On the other hand, the examples that have been cited still affirm that the founder of the disposition is a judgment; but even this seems to be dispensable. As is well known, the tendency to realize a fact often enough results from the mere thinking of this fact, even if it is done exclusively by assumption without faith, that is, by mere assumption or, in the end, by mere imagination, so that one may well say in general terms that the comprehension [*erfassen*] of an object establishes the disposition to realize it,[52] if it lies within the sphere of the realizable. Whether this comprehension is then at the same time a judgement will not be indifferent to the strength of the resulting disposition any more than the other condition of the subject is indifferent in this regard. In its most general form, however, our law of disposition formation [*Dispositionsbildungsgesetz*] can dispense with this, just as it does not need to take into account whether what appears to be a "suggestion" here follows the type of foreign suggestion [*Fremdsuggestion*] or that of autosuggestion [*Autosuggestion*]. The only thing that seems to be essential here is that the comprehension of an object establishes the disposition to this or a similar object as a correlate, whereas in our broader sense the object, which as an experience is not dependent on being comprehended in a special way, influences, so to speak, the disposition to itself [*zu sich selbst*] (or, of course, in the case of the occurrence of something similar).

It goes without saying that only observation and especially experimentation [*Experiment*] have the first and last word to say about the value of what is outlined here; this is not the place to go further into the matter. At this point, it is also not possible to go into the form and significance of the regularities [*Gesetzmäßigkeiten*] that are hardly touched upon here, and thus to explain in detail the correction of the disposition-theoretical approach that has often been attacked in the past. However, perhaps I may nevertheless express the hope that what has proved its stimulating power more than once over the years, on the basis of oral communication, will also be able, in its present, particularly fragmentary form, to benefit the progress of research in the psychological and educational fields.

52 See Bain, A. quoted by Groethuysen, B. "Das Mitgefühl", 171.