Chapter Five

The Demarcation of Natural and Cultural Science

Nicht die "sachlichen" Zusammenhänge der"Dinge", sondern die gedanklichen Zusammenhänge der Probleme liegen den Arbeitsgebieten der Wissenschaften zugrunde.
Max Weber[1]

The Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns

Rickert, we have seen recurrently, makes it a crucial point to reserve a special place for general philosophy as a science alongside to the empirical (natural and cultural) sciences. Philosophy, he once emphasized, is still the queen of the sciences but the days of her absolutist reign are over. She has been forced to reign in accordance with the parliament of the sciences – as a *prima inter pares*, we may add. There are, of course, the various philosophies of the different scientific disciplines, as so many logical and methodological investigations of their respective disciplinary foundations, but it still has to be determined what it then is that render these investigations 'philosophical'. As we have seen in the former chapters Rickert answers this question by laying out the basic structures of transcendental epistemology and the general philosophy of values and meanings.

However, as to the empirical sciences, Rickert holds to the idea that the natural sciences, reigned by mathematics, are historically, ever since Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler and all the others, the model sciences. He was in fact quite positivistic about it. Yet, he also believes that these natural sciences run into serious logical problems of concept formation the moment values and meanings are to be taken into account. Natural scientists, he thinks, should not pretend to be the custodians of the only and exclusively correct approach to reality. This is *scientism* and Rickert rejects it as an inadequate, metaphysical ideology. In particular the study of the past, history as a scientific discipline, cannot be exercised adequately in exclusively natural-scientific terms. Obviously, the methodology and logic of history differs from that of physics, or chemistry, or astronomy. This is the issue of the demarcation of Natural Science and Cultural Science as two (heterologically) related, yet different approaches to reality.

[1] 'Not the "real" connections of "things', but the cognitive connections of problems, lie at the foundation of the working domains of the sciences.' Max Weber, 'Die "Objektivität" sozialwissenschaftlicher und sozialpolitischer Erkenntnis', 1904, in: *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, ('Collected Papers on the Logic of Science'), (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1968, p. 166.

This is, of course, an old issue which began in the so-called 'quarrel of the ancients and the moderns' in the 18th century, continued in Germany in the debate on *Naturwissenschaft* versus *Geisteswissenschaft* and is, according to Rickert, solved in his heterological vision of a logical continuum between two constructed extremes, *Naturwissenschaft* (Natural Science) and *Kulturwissenschaft* (Cultural Science). They are to be seen as two correlated and mutually amplifying scientific methods. The conceptual limits of the former open the doors for the latter. Let us briefly look in a few broad outlines at the history of this debate first before we discuss Rickert's quite original, yet often misinterpreted contribution to it.

The Reformation and the Renaissance shared one fundamental objective: both searched for a renewal and transformation of post-medieval culture which allegedly had grown stale and abstract in scholasticism and ecclesiastic rituals. A return to the original texts of the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament, and a close reading of Greek and Roman literature and philosophy in their original languages had to reinvigorate Christian faith and morals, as well as the arts, philosophy and the sciences. The art of printing made it possible for the laymen to read the Bible, printed sermons and theological treatises, and the emergence of urban, secular institutions of primary, middle and higher education improved the level of literacy, and thus the decline of intellectual dependence on the clerics on the part of the people. Meanwhile, the rapid growth of the capitalist economy in the trading cities, first in Italy, later in Northern Europe, carried and broadened the Renaissance revitalization of post-medieval society economically. Educational institutions, formerly exclusively in the hands of the Roman Catholic clergy, Latin schools and universities, emerged and flourished in this capitalist, civic, and early-modern culture of the urban bourgeoisie which steadily grew in wealth and power.[2]

In this civic bourgeois culture it became a mark of distinction to be acquainted with the literature of the Ancients. One yearned for this distinction in view of the pretences and (gradually dwindling) power of the clergy and the nobility. The intellectual synthesis of this cultural consolidation through the Ancients was inaptly called *philology*. This was not the rather technical discipline which it has been since roughly the 19th century, but rather a general philosophy and ethos which put heavy emphasis upon the education of the young in letters and in rhetorical virtuosity. More an art and moral worldview than a science. To use an anachronistic expression, the aim of Renaissance philology was *Bildung*, i.e. the intellectual formation of a balanced personality.

> There was in this post-medieval, early-modern culture another force at work which gradually superseded this Renaissance focus on literary revitalization of culture. It was the spectacular emergence of the natural sciences and their successful applications in technology.[3] It began

[2] Cf. my monograph *A Theory of Urbanity. The Economic and Civic Culture of Cities*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1998), in particular pp. 17-31: 'Urbanity: Origins and Ramifications'.

[3] It has become customary to speak of a 'scientific revolution', but it is historically questionable whether this is correct. The historian of science Steven Shapin, for instance, opens his book *The Scientific Revolution*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996) with this clarion-call: 'There was no such thing as the Scientific Revolution, and this is a book about it.' He then defines the alleged revolution as 'a coherent, cataclysmic, and climactic event that fundamentally and irrevocably changed what people knew about the natural world and how they secured proper knowledge of that world. It was the moment at which the world was made modern, it was a Good Thing, and it happened sometime during the period from the late sixteenth to the early eighteenth century.' *Ibid.*, p. 1. With fellow historians Shapin doubts 'that there was any single coherent cultural entity called "science" in the

roughly in the 16th century with the theory of solar centrism by Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543), and its further elaboration by astronomers like Tycho Brahe (1546-1601), Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) and Johannes Kepler (1571-1630). An early philosophical foundation was laid by Francis Bacon (1561-1626) who intended to open a new era of thought and research with his treatise *Novum Organum* (the new tools). It is in fact a methodological treatise, claiming that human progress will be served only, if man learns to master nature inductively through knowledge acquired by observations and experiments, and not by philosophical deductions in the train of medieval scholastic philosophers and theologians. Human knowledge has to be cleaned from prejudices which he called *idola*, mental fallacies.

Science developed rapidly into a truly modern worldview and ethos which were no longer ruled by tradition and theology, but by mathematics and geometry, as is, for instance, testified by Benedict de Spinoza (1632-1677) in his *Ethica more geometrico demonstranda* (1677) and Isaac Newton (1642-1727) in his epoch-making book *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, first published in 1687. The *literati* of the Renaissance were called 'Ancients', the representatives of the rapidly growing natural sciences and their theorists were labeled 'Moderns'. The growingly fierce debate between them was seen as a true *querelle*, a Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns.

Two philosophers were the leading spokesmen in this quarrel which Isaiah Berlin in a somewhat exaggerated fashion once called a battle.[4] René Descartes (1596-1650) represented the Moderns, Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) the Ancients. Yet, this is too simple an opposition, because Vico held the French philosopher whom he in his writings endearingly addressed as 'Renato', in high esteem.[5] He certainly did not reject science and the scientific method Descartes outlined in his celebrated *Discours de la méthode* (1637).[6] He also sympathized with the Cartesian idea of the unity of sciences. He was in fact rather critical of Cartesianism, in particular where it became radicalized by Cartesians like Malebranche, Lamy, Arnauld and others.[7] Vico saw in Cartesianism a new dogmatism and in that sense a return to the Middle Ages. In his estimation the Cartesian Moderns were not really modern.

Vico was, according to many, mistaken in defending Euclidian, 'synthetic' geometry as being superior to Cartesian 'analytic' geometry. However, in view of the discussions of the intuitionist mathematics in the first half of the former century, he might, according to others, have had a point there.[8] In any case, he was correct in rejecting Descartes' and the Cartesians' *scientism*, i.e. their belief that the Cartesian scientific method, based upon mathematics and geometry, could cover all of reality, not only nature but history and human beings as well. Nature can be objectified in this manner, Vico counters, but it is highly questionable, if not

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seventeenth century to undergo revolutionary change. There was, rather, a diverse array of cultural practices aimed at understanding, explaining, and controlling the natural world, each with different characteristics and each experiencing different modes of change. (….) The continuity of seventeenth-century natural philosophy with its medieval past is now routinely asserted.' *Ibid.*, p. 3f.

[4] Isaiah Berlin, 'Giambattista Vico and Cultural History", in: Isaiah Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*, 1959, (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), p. 66: 'the famous Battle of the Ancients and Moderns'.

[5] See Elio Gianturco's Introduction to his translation of *De nostri temporis studiorum ratione*, 1709, *On the Study Methods of Our Time*, (New York: The Library of Liberal Arts; The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1965), p. XIII. Wilhelm Windelband called Vico 'the lonely brooding Neapolitan', in whom we should see the first Romanic opponent of the mathematical natural sciences and of the rationalistic metaphysics of the era of Enlightenment. Wilhelm Windelband, *Geschichtsphilosophie. Eine Kriegsvorlesung*, ('Philosophy of History. A War-Time Lecture'), in: *Kantstudien*, Ergänzungsheft, No. 38, 1916, p. 17.

[6] '(Vico) did not impugn the validity of mathematical knowledge, but he did impugn the Cartesian theory of knowledge with its implication that no other kind of knowledge was possible.' R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, 1946, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 64. For Collingwood's discussion of Vico see *ibid.*, pp. 63-71.

[7] Gianturco, *ibid.*, p. XXXii. He quotes a colleague, Maria Goretti, who concluded correctly: 'Thus, Vico, the opponent of the geometric spirit, who is not, however, deaf to the powerful voices of the modern achievements of science and technique, appears to us, not so much the adversary of the Cartesian spirit, as, rather, the enemy of the intellectualistic schema: a schema which forces tumultuous, contradictory human nature into the straightjacket of an absolute truth, of a truth excogitated, dreamt of, but never to be actually met with in reality.' *Idem*.

[8] Gianturco, *ibid.*, p. XXVIf.

simply fallacious, to believe that history and the socio-cultural world of man can thus be adequately investigated and understood. Nature is created by God and lies open for man's labor and research, but history and the socio-cultural world is constructed by human beings and must be approached by a different method than the mathematically and geometrically founded method of Descartes and the Cartesians.[9] Because the human socio-cultural world now and in the past is made up of and constructed by fellow human beings we are able to *understand* it adequately, unlike the sun, the rocks, the animals, in short 'nature', of which we can acquire knowledge but which we cannot really intuitively understand. This is what he meant by the often misinterpreted formula *verum factum*: 'man can understand correctly only what he himself has made'. This understanding (Berlin calls it *Verstehen* which he opposed to Cartesian *Wissen*)[10], Vico argues in his *Scienza Nuova* (1744), is a special epistemological gift - the *phantasia puerilis*, the youthful fantasy and curiosity which has been lost completely in Descartes' rationalistic *intellectus purus*.[11] The latter led to a disdain for the study of history and letters, to an anti-humanistic rejection of what later was going to be called humaniora, or moral sciences, or in Germany *Geisteswissenschaften*.

With this emphasis upon youthful and imaginative fantasy Vico introduces in his historical epistemology an aesthetic, early romantic dimension which, of course, was totally alien to the adherents of the Enlightenment, whose view of man was thoroughly secularized and 'naturalized' – i.e. God's role as a *deus ex machina* in history was finished and man was an inalienable part of nature, sharing the uniformity which natural science imposed on nature.[12] In Germany Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), without probably possessing any detailed knowledge of Vico's work, elaborated on this aesthetic approach.[13] In his view it is the possession of language which enables us to understand other human beings and their social and cultural creations. By means of an emotional empathy (*Hineinfühlen*) into folksongs, folklore and literary traditions which in the end are creations of language, the historian can arrive at an understanding of historical individuals. Such individuals can be individual human beings, but also, and preferably from a scientific point of view, collectivities of individuals such as nations or *Völker*. Relying exclusively on observations the natural scientist can only conjecture about external causal processes, whereas the historian can get access to inner causes, such as motives, attitudes and cherished ends through empathic introspection. It is only through such a psychological introspection that the historian can 'enter into' the spirit of the time – the *Zeitgeist* – within which particular events occur. There is 'objective' historical material, but that has to be ordered by 'subjective' interventions which enable the historian to produce a coherent narrative.[14] Herder was not only a protestant minister and a philosopher, but also an in his days well known and respected poet, friend and colleague of Goethe and Schiller. His aesthetic view of narrative history came close to an identification of historical studies and historical novels, including the concomitant, typically

[9] Berlin, *l.c.*, p. 63.
[10] Berlin, *l.c.*, p. 62.
[11] Gianturco, l.c., p. XXIX. Giambattista Vico, *The New Science*, transl. by T. G. Bergin, M. H. Fisch, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1948).
[12] Cf. Clifford Geertz, 'The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man', in: Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp. 33-54: 'The Enlightenment view of man was, of course, that he was wholly of a piece with nature and shared in the general uniformity of composition which natural science, under Bacon's urging and Newton' guidance, had discovered there.' *Ibid.*, p. 34.
[13] Cf. Isaiah Berlin, *Vico and Herder*, (London: Hogarth Press, 1976). In this section I relied heavily on F. M. Barnard, 'Humanity and History: Causation and Continuity", in: F. M. Barnard, *Herder on Nationality, Humanity and History*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), pp. 105-131. Barnard, it seems to me, underexposes Herder's theological belief that the continuity in history is due to God's providence, whereas within this grand metaphysical framework particular histories of men and nations are divergent and characterized by contingency and discontinuity. Unlike and also against Voltaire and the Enlightenment *philosophes*, Herder thus maintained the traditional idea of God's hand in history. See the *Nachwort* (Postscript) of Hans Dietrich Irmscher in his edition of Johan Gottfried Herder, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit*, ('Also a Philosophy of History for the Education of Humanity'), 1771, (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1990), pp. 140-159.
[14] Barnard, *l.c.*, p. 108.

romantic yearning for the past as a time with a value of its own, in many respects allegedly better than the civilization of the present.[15]

In this quarrel of the ancients and the moderns one issue stood out in particular as of special interest, i.e. the logical difference between the natural sciences as generalizing disciplines in search of objective knowledge of causal laws, and the *humaniora* or *moral sciences* as particularizing disciplines, focusing upon individuals (either humans or collectivities like nations) and in search of a subjective understanding of such 'particulars' which are not based upon causality but on contingency. Most of the philosophers adhering to the humanistic approach were in favor of a balance between these two methods and worldviews (because that is what they in the end really were: worldviews with a specific ethos). But none of them came to a really satisfying solution of this old dilemma. Benedetto Croce (1866-1952) though came up with a radical answer: he severed the two, claiming that the individualizing focus upon the particular was the essential feature of art, whereas the generalizing approach on species of phenomena was typical of science.[16] History to him was not a science but an art form. It has the task to narrate facts, he stated in an early paper, entitled 'History subsumed under the Concept of Art'(1919). Science cannot be descriptive, it tries to understand facts as instances of general laws. History, on the contrary, is essentially descriptive, aims at understanding historical facts but this understanding is not cognitive but rather empathic and emotional as in art. There is, however, a difference between history and art. The historian aims at narrating what really has happened and in that sense is true, whereas the artist narrates or represents what might have happened, focuses on the possible and the imaginary rather than on the real and the true. Needless to add that Croce was heavily influenced by Vico's approach, and came close methodologically to Dilthey's conception of *Verstehen* and Bergson's theory of *intuition*.[17] However, his radical separation of history as an art form from science as the generalizing search for causal laws put him at a distance from the neo-Kantian approach to the quarrel of the ancients and the moderns. Windelband rejected Croce's aesthetic definition of history emphatically, while Rickert radicalized Windelband's approach and came, as we shall see presently, close to a satisfactory solution of the quarrel which resembled Vico's position but was the opposite of Croce's. As we shall see, Rickert viewed Natural Science and Cultural

[15] Cf. Collingwood, *o. c.*, p. 87. Needless to add that there is today a resurgence in the interest in narrative history. The social psychologist and philosopher George Herbert Mead (1863-1931) added an interesting dimension to this romantic looking back to the past: the romantic historian or the historical novelist identifies with a distinct period of time in the past, identifying oneself with the heroes and heroines of the past and looking back from there at himself in the present in order to receive a better understanding of himself. It is a 'journey of the self into the past'. Mead gives the novels of Sir Walter Scott and the interest of people in Gothic architecture as examples. George Herbert Mead, *Movements of Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, 1934, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 62.
[16] Cf. Collingwood's extensive discussion of Croce's philosophy of history in his *The Idea of History*, *o.c.*, pp. 190-204. See also H. Wilson Carr, *The Philosophy of Benedetto Croce. The Problem of Art and History*, 1917, (New York: Russell & Russell, 1969). This is probably the first English reproduction of Croce's aesthetic philosophy, consisting of mostly very long, literal quotations.
[17] Cf. Henri Bergson, 'L'intuition philosophique', 1911, in: Henri Bergson, *La pensée et le mouvant. Essais et conférences*, ('Thought and the Moving. Essays and Speeches'), (Paris: Presses Universitaire de France, 1966, 63rd ed.), pp. 117-143. In the essay 'Introduction à la métaphysique' Bergson defines intuition as 'la sympathie par laquelle on se transporte à l'intérieur d'un objet pour coincider avec ce qu'il a d'unique et par conséquent d'inexprimable.' ('The sympathy by which one transfers oneself to the interior of an object in order to coincide with what it has that is unique and consequently inexpressible.') *Ibid.*, p. 181.

Science in terms of a heterological dynamics within a continuum, of which both are the extreme ends and between which the various scientific disciplines 'move', sometimes close to the pole of generalizing Natural Science, then again closer to the pole of individualizing Cultural Science.

The continuum of sciences

For the so-called social sciences, such as psychology, sociology, history, economics, political science, etc., Rickert's ideas and theories about the methodological dynamics of the natural and the cultural sciences are of special relevance. If one sets out to model them one-sidedly and exclusively after the traditional natural sciences, such as physics, chemistry, geology, astronomy, biology, etc. in order to render their research results 'exact', 'calculable' and thus 'predictable' – a methodological position which is usually called *neo-positivism*, but Rickert labels *naturalism* – one will find Rickert in opposition. If one claims, on the other hand, that these social sciences differ from the natural sciences 'essentially', since they after all deal with human beings and their conscious actions and interactions, and thus not with mindless atoms and aimless, in the sense of mindless, processes which allegedly would need an approach different from that of the natural sciences – a methodological position which is usually called *anti-positivism* – one will also find Rickert as an opponent.

Rickert prefers the concept of *Kulturwissenschaft* (cultural science) above *Geisteswissenschaft* for methodological reasons. In his days, *Geist* was primarily viewed as 'mind' and 'psyche' which would put psychology in the center or even at the very foundations of the alleged humaniora, as was actually the case in Dilthey's conception of *Geisteswissenschaft*. Yet, Rickert, as we have repeatedly seen, views the psychological discipline, certainly when operating as an experimental psychology, as a (generalizing) science rather than an (individualizing) humanity. This will be explained in more detail later. In any case, we shall see how Rickert views Natural Science and Cultural Science as two heterologically related methods and as two abstract, logically constructed extremes on a continuum. In what follows I shall, therefore, employ the concepts of *Natural Science* and *Cultural Science* as equivalents of Rickert's concepts *Naturwissenschaft* and *Kulturwissenschaft*. They must be seen as constructed types in the sense of Max Weber's *reine Typen* (ideal types, 'ideal' meaning logically constructed and in that sense unreal, or non-empirical). When I use the capitals I refer to Cultural Science and Natural Science as such ideal typical extremes on a continuum. Without capitals I refer to the empirical and specialized natural and social sciences, like physics or chemistry, and history or cultural (historical) sociology.

Epistemologically and methodologically the empirical sciences, whether natural or social, operate somewhere between these extremes, sometimes moving closely towards the pole of Natural Science, as in the case of most natural sciences, like chemistry, physics, or astronomy, sometimes operating very close to the opposite pole, that of Cultural Science, as in the case of history or cultural (historical) sociology or (institutional) economics. In reality, i.e. empirically, most sciences operate epistemologically and methodologically between these extremes. In an address delivered in 1899, the contents of which lay at the foundation of his *Kulturwissenschaft und Naturwissenschaft* (1926), Rickert phrases this continuum and its two extreme poles as follows: 'In this lecture I want to restrict myself to the exposition of both *extremes, in the middle of which in a sense almost all empirical*

sciences are located. And in order to make the distinctions (of Natural Science, Cultural Science and their respective methodologies, ACZ) clear, I have to *separate* what is mutually closely *connected* in reality.'[18] He also adds: 'Between the extremes lie a wealth of *connecting* transitions. One can detect a series of *stages* which gradually lead from the most or absolute general to the most or absolute individual.'[19]

The result of this logical approach to the methodologies of the various natural and cultural sciences is the intriguing fact that the so-called first *Methodenstreit*, the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns, usually phrased in terms of 'science versus humanity (or humaniora, or moral science)', is meaningless. Once again, there are in Rickert's view two abstract, pure and constructed (i.e. 'ideal') extremes on a continuum between which the empirical natural and social sciences operate. As long as one does not 'ontologize' Natural Science and Cultural Science, but view and treat them strictly epistemologically and methodologically as correlated points of view and as correlated approaches to reality, there will not be any logical and methodological quarrel between them. They are mutually, heterologically complementary. This, of course, has to be explained in more detail and is the main focus of the present chapter.

However, there has been a second *Methodenstreit* still which led to heated debates in the 1960's and 1970's, in particular in the social sciences.[20] It was claimed that the social sciences could not operate in a value-free manner as the natural sciences generally do, because unlike atoms and molecules human beings live, think, feel, and act in a historical context of values and meanings. These values were then defined in political and ideological terms, which were often akin to so-called historical materialism, and in many cases additionally embellished with a touch of psychoanalysis. The unity of (scientific) theory and (political) practice was proclaimed, as in the Critical Theory of the so-called 'Frankfurt School' (*Frankfurter Schule*).[21] In this second methodological quarrel Max Weber's alleged position of a 'value-free sociology' functioned as the main target. However, Weber was in this issue strongly influenced by Rickert who distinguishes logically between theoretical value-relatedness (*Wertverbundenheit*), practical evaluation (*praktische Wertung)*, and

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[18] 'Ich will mich in meinem Vortrag auf die Darlegung der beiden *Extreme* beschränken, *zwischen denen in gewisser Hinsicht fast alle empirische Wissenschaft in der Mitte liegt*, und ich muss zur Klarlegung der Unterscheide begrifflich *trennen*, was in Wirklichkeit eng miteinander *verknüpft* ist.' Italics by HR. Quoted by Rickert in 'Nachwort 1928', ('Postscript 1928'), at the end of his opus magnum *Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung*, ('The Limits of Natural-Scientific Concept Formation'), 1902, (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1929, 5th ed.), p. 764f. Due to the many additions and improvements one should only use the fifth edition of *Die Grenzen*. For a contemporary extensive critique of Windelband's and Rickert's demarcations of the natural and cultural sciences see: Erich Becher, *Geisteswissenschaften und Naturwissenschaften. Untersuchungen zur Theorie und Einteilung der Realwissenchaften*, ('Spiritual Sciences and Natural Sciences. Investigations about the Theory and Grouping of the Empirical Sciences'), (München: Duncker & Humblot, 1921). By maintaining the concept of 'Geisteswissenschaft' instead of 'Kulturwissenschaft' Becher demonstrates that he fails to understand a crucial component of Rickert's anti-psychologistic logic and methodology. *Begriffsbildung*, 'concept formation', is a technical-logical concept which plays a crucial role in Rickert's doctoral dissertation *Zur Lehre von der Definition*, ('On the Theory of the Definition'), 1888, (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1929, 3rd improved ed.), p. 21, 46.

[19] 'Zwischen den Extremen liegt eine Fülle von *verbindenden* Übergängen. Es lässt sich eine Reihe von *Stufen* konstatieren, die vom Allgemeinsten oder absolut Allgemeinen bis zum Besondersten oder absolut Individuellen allmählich hinüberführen.' Italics by HR. *Ibid.*, p. 765.

[20] Cf. Th. W. Adorno et al., *Der Positivismusstreit in der deutschen Soziologie*, ('The Positivism Conflict in German Sociology'), 1969, (Neuwied-Berlin: Luchterhand, 1972).

[21] Cf. In particular Jürgen Habermas, *Erkenntnis und Interesse*, ('Knowledge and Interest'), 1968, (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1973) and his *Zur Logik der Sozialwissenschaften. Materialien*, ('On the Logic of the Social Sciences. Materials.'), (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1970).

theoretical abstaining from evaluations (*theoretische Wertungsfreiheit*). It needs a thorough understanding of the nature of values and considerable subtlety in logical thinking in order to distinguish between these three concepts. Without it, one gets lost in a quagmire of ideological, political and usually thoroughly metaphysical sentiments, as the debates of the 1960's and 1970's in the social sciences have demonstrated. They may have warmed the hearts and souls of many students in the social sciences, but they rarely enlightened their minds, let alone rendered their actions rational. In this respect, it is worthwhile to pay closer attention to Rickert's ideas and theories regarding the intricate relationships between values, meanings, judgments, theoretical thinking and practical acting. They render the second *Methodenstreit* superfluous.

It is essential to realize from the start that Rickert's concepts of nature and culture, and in particular those of Natural Science and Cultural Science, are meant logically and formally, not ontologically and metaphysically. As a neo-Kantian he persists in distinguishing heterologically between form and content, between concept and reality, between theory and practice. Reality is to him, just as the phenomenologists always claim, first and foremost the experienced reality of everyday life – the *Lebenswelt*, as Husserl, or *the world-taken-for-granted* as a *paramount reality* as Schutz phrased it.[22] Yet, if one sets out to acquire rational knowledge of this life-world, as one does in philosophy and the various specialized (natural and cultural) sciences, one distances oneself from this experienced reality by means of concepts which are in a sense artificial constructs. Concepts are forms which mold the matter of reality, putting it into a rational order which is not a representation or reproduction (*Abbild*) of this overwhelmingly complex and always changing reality but, on the contrary, a conscious distortion of it. Not 'representation' (*Abbildung*) of reality and its irrational complexity but, on the contrary, 'transformation' (*Umformung*) of reality and reduction of its complexity by means of concepts, theories and models is the proper aim of the sciences. Philosophical and scientific attempts to grasp irrational reality rationally should not and actually cannot be vitalistic (*lebendig*), as is professed by philosophers within the so-called *Lebensphilosophie*, because one would in the end get lost in scores of irrationalities which could perhaps gratify the emotions, but would certainly not contribute to any sound empirical knowledge. This was discussed in the foregoing chapters, in particular in Chapter Two, but must once more be dealt with presently.

One should bear in mind – and it cannot be repeated often enough – that the concepts of Natural Science and Cultural Science are epistemological and methodological *forms* which do not refer to the actual, empirical sciences as they operate inside and outside universities and laboratories. In other words, Rickert's concepts of Natural Science (*Naturwissenschaft*) and Cultural Science (*Kulturwissenschaft*) as two different approaches to reality are not 'real' in the sense of empirical and ontological, but 'ideal' and logically constructed! In his discussions of the Natural-Scientific logic Rickert refers, of course, to the actual natural sciences as they operated in his days, i.e. to physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy, etc. But they are only used as illustrations of what he means by the 'typically' Natural-Scientific approach which he defines, as we will see, as a generalizing approach aiming at general concepts and laws which on purpose neglect individual differences and distinctions. This approach can also be applied to objects which Dilthey would range exclusively under *Geisteswissenschaft*.

[22] Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers, vol. I, The Problem of Social Reality*, edited by M. Natanson, (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1962).

Obviously, since the days of Rickert the empirical natural sciences have developed and changed significantly, and so have philosophy and logic. Although he kept abreast with these paradigmatic changes and developments up till his death in 1936, he has persistently argued that logically and methodologically, that is, from an abstract and formal point of view, the Natural-Scientific ways of concept formation are and remain the same. General and particular relativity theory, or quantum mechanics, which incidentally he was acquainted with, did of course alter our view of the natural sciences and of the universe, dramatically. Yet, Rickert's main point, namely that the natural sciences predominantly, yet not exclusively tend to generalize, while the cultural, or historical sciences predominantly, yet not exclusively tend to individualize still stands up. Einstein's approach to reality differs from that of Huizinga in that the one searched for general concepts in the logical form of *species* and *laws*, whereas the other tried to grasp persons, institutions and events as individual and unrepeatable phenomena, i.e. as logical *individua*. There is an ontological dimension to it: natural-scientific objects are ahistorical and not related to values, whereas cultural-scientific objects, on the contrary, are always embedded in historical contexts of human values and evaluations. Sciences, whether Natural or Cultural, are always in search of regularities, but here again there is a distinct difference. The laws of nature are ahistorical and generalized regularities which are true as long as further research has not falsified them. But it is hazardous to speak of cultural-scientific laws of development, since these developments are couched in historical contingencies. The alleged 'general laws of history', for example, as presented by the author of *The Decline of the West*, a very popular book in Rickert's days, are according to him not logical-rational but metaphysical-irrational constructions which may satisfy the conservative, if not reactionary sentiments of the day, but do not contribute anything to a sound, scientific understanding of history or society.[23]

Yet, Rickert's arguments are more subtle and complex than that. He claims, for instance, that individualization does occur in natural sciences, particularly in evolutionary, phylogenetic biology,[24] while the social sciences, in particular psychology and sociology, could never function satisfactorily without generalizations. This will be discussed presently. At this point, however, it is essential to bear in mind from the start that Natural Science and Cultural Science are artificial, formal, logical constructs, not ontological reproductions of actually existing natural and cultural or social sciences!

His methodological and logical application of the individualizing, historical approach to evolutionary biology, and his steadfast refusal to apply the generalizing, Natural-Scientific approach to the historical discipline remain, in my view, not very convincing. In his essay 'On the Tasks of a Logic of History', quoted a moment ago, he starts by opposing the generalizing and individualizing methods radically by comparing the description of the development of a chicken in a fertilized egg by the biologist Karl Ernst von Baer (1792-1876) with the description of the popes in Rome of the 16th and

[23] Oswald Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes. Umrisse einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte*, ('The Decline of the West. Outline of a Morphology of World History), 1922, (München: Oskar Beck, 1923; 33rd-47th ed.).

[24] Cf. Rickert, *Die Grenzen*, pp. 462ff. Rickert, referring to Ernst Haeckel, calls phylogenetic biology an *historical biology*. Elsewhere, however, he acknowledges that the interest of biologists turns away from the phylogenetic approach in favor of a more natural-scientific 'ontogenetic' evolutionary theory. Cf. Rickert, 'Über die Aufgaben einer Logik der Geschichte', ('On the Tasks of a Logic of History'), in: *Archiv für Philosophie, II. Abteilung: Archiv für systematische Philosophie*, Neue Folge, VIII. Band, 2. Heft, ('Archive for Philosophy, Section II: Archive for Systematic Philosophy. New Series, Vol. VIII, Book 2), 1902, p. 149f.

17th centuries by the historian Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886). The embryologist ranges a species of objects under a system of concepts (i.e. 'natural laws') which intends to be valid for each arbitrary specimen. The historian, on the other hand, presents a certain range of realities in such a manner that the particularity and individuality of each reality is being highlighted. These are not just two different methods, but also different aims of knowledge are at work here. Baer wants to gather up what different objects have in common, in order to arrive at general species-concepts (*Gattungsbegriffe*), whereas Ranke intends to range each single object under a particular concept, forming concepts with an individual content.[25]

So far so good, but Rickert then argues that phylogenetic, evolutionary biology is an example of an individualizing approach within an otherwise generalizing (natural-scientific) discipline. As long as the theory of descendence demonstrates how each species has emerged and as long as it presents the transition of one species into the next, evolutionary biology is still a solidly generalizing natural science. However, Rickert claims, the moment the biologist tries to relate which living creature emerged first, which followed next and how eventually in a particular development gradually man came into being (about which, Rickert adds, the theory of descendence remains tacit), his presentation is, looked at from a logical point of view, historical – and value-related to boot, because Man is the final aim of an evolution which is normatively viewed as not just development but *progress*.[26] This chain of thought is, in my view, scientifically and normatively quite hazardous. Its anthropocentrism is metaphysical and it is hard to understand why these various stages in the process of evolution would present history as a process which can only be grasped cognitively in an individualizing manner.

We must also question Rickert's conviction that the historical discipline could logically never apply the generalizing, Natural-Scientific method. It is not only logically possible, as in a kind of thought experiment, but has also been realized in actual fact, namely in so-called *cliometrics*. We shall discuss that presently.

One will not encounter in Rickert's logic and methodology any anti-natural scientific animus, as was exhibited often by the contemporary proponents of so-called *Geisteswissenschaft*. He rather searches for the logical limitations of the Natural-Scientific formation of concepts which to him become apparent, if one focuses one's scientific investigations on meanings, values and norms.[27] In view of meanings, values and norms the generalizing approach of Natural Science fails significantly. In fact, if one adhered mono-methodologically to the natural-scientific approach, which Rickert, as we saw before, calls 'naturalism', one would have to disregard meanings, values and norms which, of course, is nonsensical. Language is more than and quite different from movements of the larynx: 'Each word that we observe by the senses, possesses if we understand it, simultaneously a non-sensorial meaning. (….) A scientific sentence which we hear or read and then understand as being true or perhaps also false, possesses a meaning which must be fundamentally different from the words to which it is attached, because the words as real configurations can be neither true nor false. They become true or false always exclusively as bearers of a meaningful configuration.'[28] Or, to phrase it differently, the performance of a violin or cello concerto is more than the scratching of cat entrails (the strings) by the hairs of

[25] Rickert, *ibid.*, p. 141f.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 149.
[27] This is the gist of the title of Rickert's voluminous study on the methodology of the cultural sciences: *Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung*, ("The Limits of the Natural-Scientific Concept Formation'), *o.c.*
[28] 'Jedes Wort, das wir sinnlich wahrnehmen, besitzt, falls wir es verstehen zugleich eine unsinnliche Bedeutung. (…) Ein wissenschaftlicher Satz, den wir hören oder lesen und dabei als wahr oder eventuell auch als falsch verstehen, hat einen Sinn, der sich grundsätzlich von den Worten, an denen er haftet, unterscheiden muss, da die Worte als reale Gebilde weder wahr noch falsch sein können. Sie werden das eine oder das andere immer erst als Träger eines Sinngebildes.' Heinrich Rickert, *Die Probleme der Geschichtsphilosophie*, (Heidelberg: Carl Winters Universitätstbuchhandlung, 1924, 3rd, renewed edition), p. 20 – from now on quoted as *Problems.*

a horsetail (the bow). All these sound waves carry meanings, even values and norms which cannot be 'covered' adequately by natural-scientific concepts.

In 1872 the German physiologist Emil du Bois-Reymond read a paper to an audience of natural scientists. The lecture was entitled *On the Limits of the Knowledge of Nature*.[29] In it he criticized the philosophical materialism, quite popular in his day among natural scientists, by discussing two riddles which, according to him, could not be solved philosophically in a satisfactory manner. The first riddle concerns the universal changes in nature due to a relation between material atoms and force or energy like gravitational attraction. It would, he argued, need a super scientist with a 'universal spirit' to combine all the laws of force into one single universal formula. This is inconceivable and thus it remains unexplained how and why changes do occur in the material world. The second riddle concerns the relationship between the human body and brain on the one hand and the phenomenon of human consciousness on the other. He refers to a 'saucy expression' (*der kecke Ausspruch)* of a physiologist which caused 'a kind of contest about the soul' (*eine Art von Turnier um die Seele*). The physiologist in question claimed ' that all those capabilities which we understand as activities of the so-called soul, are but functions of the brain, or, to phrase it somewhat grossly, that the thoughts entertain approximately the same relationship to the brain as bile to the liver or urine to the kidneys.'[30] These two riddles, Du Bois-Reymond concludes, are mutually closely connected and will never be solved. The last word of his address is *Ignorabimus!*[31]

Rickert's reaction to this resignation would be that Du Bois-Reymond remained caught in *naturalism* and thus failed to locate consciousness in a transcendent 'space', where it is confronted with unreal but valid (or invalid) values. One of the consequences of this *naturalism* or *neo-positivism* is the relapse to psychology, as was testified, for instance, by Carl G. Hempel (1905-1997) who in an essay on the limits of science referred favorably to Du Bois-Reymond.[32] W. V. Quine (1908-2000) is even more radical than Hempel. In contrast to the Vienna School of logical positivism (Carnap, Neurath, etc.) which intended to do away with metaphysics first and epistemology next, Quine believes there is still room for epistemology, but 'in a new setting and a clarified status. Epistemology, or something like it (sic!, ACZ), simply falls into place as a chapter of psychology and hence of natural science. It studies a natural phenomenon, viz., a physical human subject. This human subject is accorded a certain experimentally controlled input – certain patterns of irradiation in assorted frequencies, for instance – and in the fullness of time the subject delivers as output a description of the three-dimensional external world and its history.'[33]

It is interesting to notice that Quine, without calling it such, also introduces sociology as an inherent component of epistemology. Speaking about 'observation sentences', or what the Vienna School called *Protokollsätze*, i.e. simple statements about the external world, such as 'A red cube is standing on the table', Quine claims that their truth, contained in the meanings of the constituting words, depends on a community-wide, social acceptance: 'a sentence that is true by mere meanings of words should be expected, at least if it is simple, to be subscribed to by all fluent speakers in the community.'[34] He even calls it a 'straightforward attribute of community-wide acceptance', and distinguishes sociologically different communities: 'What count as observation sentences for a community of specialists would not always so count for a larger community.'[35] This is, of course, not epistemology but empirical sociology of knowledge. However, psychologism and sociologism and their inherent scientism are based upon a rather ideological *petitio principii*. It is, in fact, the end of epistemology (if not of philosophy altogether). Quine calls this psychologistic and sociologistic epistemology 'new', contrasting it to an allegedly 'old' epistemology as it was traditionally exercised in philosophy. However, in view of Brentano, Dilthey, or Meinong, epistemological psychologism is in

[29] Emil du Bois-Reymond, *Über die Grenzen des Naturerkennens*, (Leipzig: Verlag von Veit, 1872).
[30] 'dass alle jene Fähigkeiten, die wir unter dem Namen Seelenthätigkeiten begreifen, nur Functionen des Gehirns sind, oder, um es einigermassen grob auszudrücken, dass die Gedanken etwas in demselben Verhältnisse zum Gehirn stehen, wie die Galle zu der Leber oder der Urin zu den Nieren.' Du Bois-Reymond, *o.c.*, p. 31.
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 33.
[32] Carl G. Hempel, 'Science Unlimited?', in: James H. Feitzer (ed.), *The Philosophy of Carl G. Hempel. Studies in Science, Explanation, and Rationality*, (Oxford: The Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 276-297.
[33] Willard Van Orman Quine, 'Epistemology Naturalized', in: W. V. Quine, *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 69-90, quotation: p. 82f.
[34] Quine, *l.c.*, p. 86.
[35] *Ibid.*, p. 86 and 87.

fact quite old and traditionally stale, whereas a sociologistic theory of knowledge occurred in the sociology of knowledge, particularly in the sociologically focused epistemology of Karl Mannheim.[36]

This protracted debate on the demarcations of history and natural science and on the role of psychology, or sociology in the theory of knowledge demonstrates the importance and originality of Rickert's approach as laid down in his *Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlischen Begriffsbildung* and in *Kulturwissenschaft und Naturwissenschaft.* It needs more than one close reading to fully understand the weight of his ideas concerned.

Analytical matrix

Empirical reality, i.e. reality as it is experienced in daily life, Rickert argues, is in and of itself extremely complex and in that sense 'irrational'.[37] He coined the ontological concept of a *heterogeneous continuum* for this irrational reality[38]: there is this continuous flow of changes and developments, but there is, at the same time, also this overwhelming heterogeneity (pluriformity) of facts and events. If one focuses on a particular fact or event, one discovers soon that there are no sharp and absolute limits but only gradual transitions between it and another fact or event. This is the continuity of empirical reality – reality as a continuum. However, there is not one thing or event in the world that resembles another thing or event completely. Each thing or event has in this sense its own identity and particularity. That is, empirical reality is in this sense particularistic and individualistic. Things and events are only more or less alike. And within each thing or event there are again parts which differ from each other, as close as they may appear to be in space or time. In fact, one will never bump into two things or events which are absolutely homogeneous. Not only does everything flow and change continuously, everything is also intrinsically different. This Rickert calls the *heterogeneity of all of reality*.[39] The combination of heterogeneity and continuity renders empirical reality highly complex.

In everyday life human beings reduce this complexity through language by giving names to processes, facts and events – proper names and generic names. These common-sense concepts are not forged in any logical and systematic manner, but they develop, as it were organically, within various cultural contexts which harbor their own languages and dialects. Rickert calls it a pre-scientific concept formation (*vorwissenschaftliche Begriffsbildung*), which each scientist runs into, when he starts his scientific investigation. Unlike the common-sense concept formation of everyday

[36] Cf. e.g. Karl Mannheim, 'Das Problem einer Soziologie des Wissens', (The Problem of a Sociology of Knowledge')', in: Karl Mannheim, *Wissenssoziologie. Auswahl aus dem Werk*, (Sociology of Knowledge. Selection from the Oeuvre), (Berlin, Neuwied: Hermann Luchterhand, 1964), pp. 308-388. For a sociological critique of Mannheim's epistemological definition of knowledge see Peter L. Berger, Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality.A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), pp. 8-11, 183f.

[37] Rickert, like Weber, uses the concept 'irrational' when referring to the transcendent reality of everyday experience – or, for that matter, to Kant's *Ding-an-sich*. It seems to me that 'non-rational' would have been more appropriate, since it refers to 'absence of rationality', whereas 'irrationality' refers to 'anti-rationality'. But I shall for clarity's sake not constantly substitute 'non-rational' for 'irrational'.

[38] The concept 'heterogeneous continuum' is equivalent to the phenomenological concept *Lebenswelt*. Naturally, Rickert would reject the latter as it contains strong vitalistic and ontological connotations. His concept is also ontological but clearly forged from an epistemological and logical point of view.

[39] *Kulturwissenschaft und Naturwissenschaftt*, 1898, (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1986), p. 51.

life, however, scientific conceptualization is strictly rational, i.e. systematic and ruled by logic.[40]

Philosophical and scientific approaches of reality employ words and names as well, but they are logical and methodological concepts which try to be as adequate as possible, if it comes to an understanding of reality. However, as we have seen time and again before, Rickert rejects the popular notion that such scientific concepts are only exact and true, if they represent or depict, as faithfully as possible, the facts and events in reality. It is the so-called *Abbildlogik*, the logic of reproduction, which, as we saw in the second chapter, lies at the foundation of the *Lebensphilosophie* and its belief in the adequacy of emotional and psychological empathy. Rickert is decisively critical of this approach and repeats his emphatic rejection of it repeatedly. To him, it is a simple and evident fact that our mind is far too limited to encompass, store up and grasp the intensive and extensive complexity of the heterogeneous continuum in its totality. The mind must reduce complexity through the formation of concepts and theories.

But even if we were able to do so – for instance by means of a computer, we could add today – we would not get what we in science and philosophy try to acquire, namely rational knowledge of an irrational reality. The irrationality of reality – its endemic heterogeneity and continuity – would be duplicated in our mind or in the computer, and thus not yield any true knowledge, since this duplication would in its turn beg for a rational explanation. There is an unbridgeable gap between our scientific, rational, abstract and steadfast concepts on the one hand, and the continuous stream of intrinsically heterogeneous reality on the other. Rickert compares metaphorically our scientific concepts with the piers of a bridge which overarches a river. We may try to build these piers as close to each other as possible, yet the ongoing stream with its continuous and therefore inexhaustibly different qualities will still flow between them without being grasped or understood. 'Therefore, with our concepts we can only construct bridges over the stream of reality, as close to each other as the various arches of these bridges may be. That will not be changed by any science of empirical reality.'[41] In this respect, one could speak of the powerlessness, if not impotence of scientific concepts.

This stands, of course, in strong contrast to the neo-positivistic belief in *prediction and control* as in the case of traditional behaviorism. The founder of this natural-scientific brand of psychology, John B. Watson (1878-1958), boasted: 'Give me a dozen healthy infants, well-formed, and my own specified world to bring them up in and I'll guarantee to take any one at random and train him to become any type of specialist I might select – doctor, lawyer, artist, merchant-chief, and, yes, even beggar-man and thief, regardless of his talents, penchants, tendencies, abilities, vocations, and race of his ancestors.'[42] It is the idea of an applied social science for the betterment of man and society: 'To answer any of the "whys" adequately about human activity we need to study man as the chemist needs to study some new organic compound. Psychologically, man is still a reacting piece of unanalyzed protoplasm.'[43] Incidentally, Watson added the need for genetic experiments: '(…) only systematic long-sustained, genetic studies upon the human species begun in infancy and continued until past

[40] Heinrich Rickert, *Probleme*, p. 31. Cf. also his distinction of words and concepts (*Worte* and *Begriffe*), and the role he adjudicates to language and concepts in definitions in *Zur Lehre von der Definition*, *o.c.*, pp. 16-22.
[41] 'Wir können also mit den Begriffen nur Brücken über den Strom der Realität schlagen, mögen die einzelnen Brückenbogen auch noch so klein sein. Daran wird *keine* Wissenschaft vom realen Sein etwas ändern.' *Kulturwissenschaft und Naturwissenschaft*, p. 53.
[42] John B. Watson, *Psychology. From the Standpoint of a Behaviorist*, 1919, (London, 1924), p. 9.
[43] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

adolescence will ever give us the experimental control over human conduct so badly needed both for general social control and growth and for individual happiness.'[44]

Burrhus F. Skinner (1904-1990) designed a special ontology in order to be able to realize his behavioristic program of prediction and control. It is the precise opposite of Rickert's 'heterogeneous continuum', while its normative and metaphysical content is obvious: 'Science is more than a mere description of events as they occur. It is an attempt to discover order, to show that certain events stand in lawful relations to other events. No practical technology can be based upon science until such relations have been discovered. But order is not only a possible end product; it is a working assumption which must be adopted at the very start. We cannot apply the methods of science to a subject matter which is assumed to move about capriciously. (…) If we are to use the methods of science in the field of human affairs, we must assume that behavior is lawful and determined.'[45] As is well known, Skinner, following the experiments on conditioned reflexes by Iwan Pawlow (1849-1936),[46] rejected notions about 'inner states' like consciousness and mind, since they could allegedly not be analyzed scientifically and thus not be made socially functional: 'The objection to inner states is not that they do not exist, but that they are not relevant in a functional analysis.[47] He focused on bodily functions, in particular those he named 'reinforcements', i.e. feed-back processes within the chain of stimulus and response. Like Watson, Skinner believed that his brand of behaviorism, particularly its technique of behavioral engineering through 'operant conditioning', could contribute to the improvement of man and society, because it would enable individuals to adjust to societal demands and thereby reduce various social conflicts.[48] In this respect, Skinner's behaviorism carried rather heavy ideological and even metaphysical presuppositions.[49]

Needless to add that Rickert's neo-Kantianism stands in radical opposition to the ontology and metaphysics of this kind of behaviorism which, of course, has been criticized from the beginning also by psychologists and sociologists.[50]

Yet, Rickert's standpoint does not entail intellectual passivity, nor false modesty. On the contrary, philosophy and science will not duplicate or depict reality,

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[44] Watson, *o.c.*, p. 8.

[45] Burrhus F. Skinner, *Science and Human Behavior*, (New York: Macmillan, 1953), p. 6.

[46] Cf. Iwan P. Pawlow, 'Vorlesungen über die Arbeit der Grosshirnhemisphären', ('Lectures on the Function of the Cerebral Cortex'), in: *Augewählte Werke*, ('Selected Works'), (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1955), pp. 129-154. His famous experiment with the ticking metronome and the salivating dog: *l.c.*, p. 149f.

[47] Skinner, *o.c.*, p. 35.

[48] Cf. his controversial *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1972). Skinner's sociological colleague George A. Lundberg (1895-1966) formulated the behavioristic program of social science as follows: 'Broadly speaking, it is the business of social scientists to be able to predict with high probability the social weather, just as meteorologists predict sunshine and storm.' George A. Lundberg, *Foundations of Sociology*, (New York: David McKay, 1964), p. 32. In a behaviorist pamphlet *Can Science Save Us?*, (New York, 1947) Lundberg refers to a friend and colleague who proposed to erect a 'Barometer of International Security', manned by sociologists. As a kind of social-weather-station this 'barometer' should detect in an early stage international tensions that could cause the eruption of wars. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

[49] As Rickert would probably comment, such presuppositions are scientifically inadequate, if not simply false, but he would appreciate Skinner's literary excursion in his novel *Walden Two*, 1948, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co.; London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1976). The novel is a piece of social-science-fiction and describes a community of thousand people whose behavior is engineered by Skinnerite 'operant conditioning'. It presents a utopian society which avoids the grave ills of urban life, in particular crime and pollution. Skinner enunciates his environmentalistic social philosophy in a preface to the reprint of the novel: 'Walden Two Revisited', January 1976, *l.c.*pp. V-VXI.

[50] Cf. the satirical critique on Pawlow by Bernard Shaw, *The Adventures of the Black Girl in her Search for God*, 1932, in: Bernard Shaw, *The Black Girl in Search of God and Some Lesser Tales*, (London: Penguin Books, 1986), pp. 27-85. For an early psychological critique see L. Berman, *The Religion Called Behaviorism*, (New York, 1927). For a sociological analysis of American pragmatism and behaviorism see Ralph Dahrendorf, *Die angewandte Aufklärung. Gesellschaft und Soziologie in Amerika*, ('The Applied Enlightenment. Sociology and Society in America'), (München: Piper Verlag, 1963).

but in a sense they rather *distort* it by imposing on reality concepts and theories which have been constructed logically in terms of specific *interests and perspectives*. The natural scientist, for example, looks at the complexity of reality and subjects it to research in terms of the concept of 'nature', whereas an historian approaches reality in terms of the concept of 'culture'. The various sciences are next divided in specific specialisms and sub-specialisms which again is a further reduction of the complexity of reality. It is then, of course, essential that these reductions are systematized logically and methodologically. And that is precisely what Rickert sets out to do in his *Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung* and in his *Kulturwissenschaft und Naturwissenschaft.*[51]

He works with a matrix which, it should be emphasized from the start, is not meant as a classification of the various scientific disciplines.[52] He is rather interested in an exposition of the logic of the sciences and in the methodological consequences of this logic. There is then a basic logical distinction, he claims in a typically neo-Kantian manner, between a *material* (ontological) distinction of the concepts of 'nature' and 'culture'; and a *formal* (methodological) distinction between the generalizing approach of Natural Science and the individualizing approach of Cultural Science. This leads to four basic scientific disciplines: 1. the generalizing approach to 'nature'; 2. the individualizing approach to 'nature'; 3. the generalizing approach to 'culture'; 4. the invidualizing approach to 'culture'. Although he did not phrase it this way, we could see in this matrix a continuum of the various sciences between the two extremes of (1) and (4): the generalizing approach to 'nature' as exemplified by the conventional natural sciences such as physics, chemistry, astronomy, etc. on the one extreme of the continuum, and the individualizing approach to 'culture' as exemplified by history on the other end of the continuum. And then there are the disciplines in the middle, such as sociology and psychology which predominantly, Rickert argues, approach 'culture' in a generalizing manner, and evolutionary biology which, according to Rickert, approaches 'nature' in an individualizing manner.[53]

It becomes apparent once more that Rickert rejects the simple classification of the sciences in terms of *Naturwissenschaft* and *Geisteswissenschaft* and the inherent inimical opposition between the two. If one defines *Geist* in metaphysical terms as something like 'transcendent spirit', as was done in German Idealism, it is, Rickert argues, worthless in terms of empirical science. If one defines the concept in terms of 'mind', 'soul', or 'psyche', one locates it within the specialized discipline of psychology and it is not at all clear why something like the 'soul' could not be dealt with in a generalizing (Natural-Scientific) manner in conjunction with the body. In fact, Rickert is convinced that psychology is methodologically a representative of generalizing Natural Science rather than of individualizing Cultural Science, although in terms of the analytical matrix it could as well operate methodologically in an individualizing manner. This also holds true of sociology. We return to this point later.

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[51] Rickert, I believe, would have sympathized with both Rudolf Carnap, *The Logical Structure of the World*, translated from the German edition of 1928, (California, 1967) and Alfred Schutz, *Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt. Eine Einleitung in die verstehenden Soziologie*, ('The Meaningful Construction of the Social World. Introduction to an Understanding Sociology'), 1932, (Vienna: Julius Springer, 1960). Yet, he would reject the scientism of the first and the phenomenological ontologism of the second.

[52] For Rickert's ideas about the classification of sciences see his *Grenzen*, chapter 4.X, pp. 611-622.

[53] Cf. 'Die Mittelgebiete' ('The Middlegrounds'), in: *Kulturwissenschaft und Naturwissenschaft, o.c.*, pp. 129-142.

We will now first investigate Rickert's ideas with regard to the material (ontological) distinction of 'nature' and 'culture', and next focus on his formal (methodological) distinction of Natural Science operating with a generalizing approach to reality and Cultural Science applying an individualizing methodology.

Nature and culture distinguished ontologically

Rickert thinks and writes in terms of so-called *heterology*, i.e. he defined opposed concepts in terms of correlations between them.[54] This often comes close to circular definitions as is quite obvious in the case of Rickert's definition of the concepts of nature and culture. As we shall see, it is a rather problematic distinction.

Nature is defined in terms borrowed from Kant, as the reality which is left to its own design and development without interference of human beings. But nature is then defined more specifically in a heterological distinction to culture: 'The words *nature* and *culture* are not unambiguous, and in particular the concept of nature is always determined more precisely only through the concept to which one opposes it.(…) Natural products grow freely from the earth. Cultural products are produced by the field, when man has tilled the soil and sown the seeds.'[55] Rickert refers here to the original Latin connotation of culture as *cultura agri,* i.e. agriculture. Wild strawberries, to give an obvious example (not Rickert's though), are natural products, growing without any interference of men, and as such not invested with value or meaning. Potatoes, on the other hand, are sown, cultivated and harvested, and are as such products of agri*culture.* In other words, culture is what man produces according to interests and valued goals, or, if it exists already, what is carefully attended to because of its inherent value and interest. Nature then is reality as far as it is value-free, i.e. not related to values and interests.

This material (ontological) definition of nature is rather problematic. Rickert is obviously aware of this, since he acknowledges, as we just saw, that nature can only be determined more precisely through the concept to which one opposes it – i.e. culture. Nature is then non-culture which, of course, is redundant. But even then it remains a problematic material (ontological) concept, because in the end it appears to be formal (epistemological). Ontologically, there is very little nature because the moment humans approach nature it changes into a valued reality and thus into culture. In agriculture nature is in the end always 'culturized', as it is in ecology. Wild strawberries are natural products, but the moment children pick them and gather them in their buckets, take them home, wash and consume them they are valued and thus cultural goods. The atoms, molecules and genes of the natural scientist are as such not related to values, but the moment the physicist, chemist or geneticist starts to investigate them scientifically, they become objects of scientific interest and are then related to values – the values of the cultural good Science. Strictly speaking, nature exists ontologically only, when it cannot be observed, as in the case of particles or objects and phenomena in outer space. But even that shrinks increasingly due to the discoveries of nanotechnology and the detecting techniques of astrophysics. The conclusion is that material ontology is in the end always formal epistemology – as, incidentally, the second half of the concept ontology, referring to the Greek *logos,* indicates.

Rickert sticks usually to the Kantian primacy of epistemology over ontology. Yet, his definition of nature is ontological. Rickert's rejoinder would probably be that the ontological concept of a value-free nature is possible and meaningful, when one strips reality conceptually (as in a thought

[54] Mannheim called Rickert's idea of conceptual *heterothesis*, as for instance in form-content, a conceptual *correlation*. Cf. Karl Mannheim, 'Die Strukturanalyse der Erkenntnistheorie', ('The Structural Analysis of the Theory of Knowledge'), in: Karl Mannheim, *o.c.*, pp. 166-246. On heterothesis and conceptual correlation: p.170 and 177.

[55] 'Die Worte *Natur* und *Kultur* sind nicht eindeutig, und insbesondere wird der Begriff der Natur immer erst durch den Begriff näher bestimmt, zu dem man ihn in einen Gegensatz bringt. (…) Naturprodukte sind es, die frei aus der Erde wachsen. Kulturprodukte bringt das Feld hervor, wenn der Mensch geackert und gesät hat.' *Kulturwissenschaft und Naturwissenschaft, o.c.*, p. 35.

experiment) of meanings and values, when one 'thinks away' meanings and values. The concepts 'wild' and 'strawberries' carry meanings and values in our minds, but we are able to strip them away as in a thought experiment: after all, strawberries without any interest, meaning and value are conceivable, so are the value-free atoms, molecules, particles in the laboratories of natural scientists. But this rejoinder would not be convincing, because the thought experiment of 'thinking away' is, of course, an epistemological technique applied to empirical reality. Formal epistemology still precedes and overshadows (material) ontology.

We may, therefore, hold on to the idea that the material distinction of nature and culture is epistemologically a weak one. In fact, in view of the formal distinction of Natural Science and Cultural Science as two different, yet correlated, mutually amplifying approaches or methods, the ontological distinction is superfluous. But before we discuss this, we must first look at Rickert's material definition of culture in more detail.

Culture then is ontologically speaking reality invested with values which are acknowledged not just by a single human being, but by the majority of people within a community. As we saw before, culture becomes empirically concrete and scientifically researchable in cultural goods (*Güter*). A simple example (which is not Rickert's) can clarify this. If I value my dog as my pet and companion, contributing to the quality of my personal existence, this particular dog cannot be considered to be a cultural good. But if a majority of people in society value dogs as pets and companions which contribute to human happiness and feelings of well-being and safety, it is possible to call 'the dog' a component of the culture of this community of dog loving people, i.e. a cultural good. Values do not float in abstract air but adhere to the cultural goods of a society. Such cultural goods are, for instance, physical objects like houses, boats, books, musical instruments, tools, etc., or institutions (institutional sectors) like the church, the law, the state, language, literature, art, etc., or living 'things' like domestic pets, cattle, artists, scientists, etc. The various cultural sciences deal with and investigate these different cultural goods. The focus is in particular on their institutional settings, such as laboratories, churches, schools and universities, hospitals, hostels, court-houses, etc. Such institutions or the broader institutional sectors to which they belong, can and are subjected to scientific research in specialized manners, such as comparative religion, legal studies, political science, veterinary science, linguistics, literary history, art history, etc. Values are, as we saw in the former chapter, unreal and non-empirical. They belong to the Second Realm. But the objects to which they are attributed and to which they adhere, rendering them into cultural goods, are real in the sense of empirical. They constitute the First Realm. Moreover, as we have also seen, values do not exist in terms of being, but are or are not valid to a multitude of people, i.e. a community that feels obligated to these valid values. This sense of obligation towards certain values and valued objects (goods) is not a matter of drive or instinct, nor instigated by individual moods, but the result of a normative commitment to values and goods which are defined as being valid and thus worthy of compliance and care.

Observable and understandable reality

Thus, the primary, material (ontological) distinction Rickert imposes on 'irrational' reality is the heterological opposition of value-free and meaningless *nature* on the one hand, and value-related and meaningful *culture* on the other. But there is also still another dimension and distinction conceivable. Nature, Rickert argues, consists, ontologically speaking, of objects which are in and of themselves devoid of meanings and therefore, epistemologically speaking, only observable (*wahrnehmbar*) and not understandable (v*erstehbar*), whereas culture consists, ontologically speaking,

of objects which are meaningful and valuable, and thus, epistemologically speaking, not just observable but also understandable. Rickert realizes that the concept of *Verstehen* is a rather ambiguous one and in need of a precise circumscription. We return to his theory of understanding later, but must briefly deal with it here, as it is crucial for his material (ontological) distinction of the concepts of nature and culture.

Rickert thus juxtaposes the understanding (*Verstehen*) of reality and the observing (*Wahrnehmen*) of it. Empirical reality, i.e. reality as it is experienced through the senses (*Sinnenwelt*), consists of all the physical and psychic processes and objects which we observe. For instance, we hear the spoken words, register linguistic sounds and observe the movements of the lips. They can be isolated as objects and measured quantitatively. But we also understand the meaning (*Sinn*) and significance (*Bedeutung*) of these words. Words are more than observable and quantifiable sounds, they are also understandable meaning complexes (*Sinngebilde*) which do not merely exist in reality as the observable and quantifiable objects do. Meanings and meaning complexes are non-sensual and in that sense unreal, yet they are not metaphysical as they do occur in concurrence with observable objects. The meaning of words is, of course, nothing without the observable spoken or written words. Significance and meaning cannot be observed, but they are (or are not) understood. This pertains to the distinction of nature and culture: the former is the *observable reality*, the latter the correlated, yet very different *understandable reality*.

This distinction has consequences for the methodological distinction of Natural Science and Cultural Science: 'For science there are objects, which, as in the case of culture, have a significance or a meaning, and which we understand due to this significance and meaning. On the other hand, there are objects which, like nature, are to us completely devoid of significance and meaning, and which therefore remain incomprehensible . (…) Nature then would be all that is meaningless, only observable, but incomprehensible. Culture, on the other hand, would be the significant and therefore understandable reality.'[56] Rickert adds that value-relatedness (or value-relevance) is the crucial moment in the determination of objects as significant, meaningful and thus understandable objects of Cultural Science. It is always in the first place values which determine what is and what is not significant and meaningful. Or in other words, understanding (*Verstehen*) of meaning and significance remains scientifically vague without a consideration of values.[57] We will see later how important this relating to values is for the methodology of Cultural Science.

We encounter here the same problem as before: the distinction is strictly speaking not material (ontological) but formal (epistemological). This is even expressedly acknowledged by Rickert when he warns: 'Logical division is not real separation.'[58] Empirical reality, for example the speaking and writing of words, is ontologically one and undivided. But we can focus analytically on different dimensions and set these dimensions apart artificially through our conceptualizations: on the one hand the observable reality of meaningless facts, events and objects, say the sound waves of our speaking, and on the other hand the understandable reality of meaningful facts and events, such as the spoken or written words as expressions of meaningful configurations (*Sinngebilde*). As is obvious, these are two analytical interventions leading to the formal (epistemological) and not material (ontological) distinction of an observable reality vis-à-vis an understandable reality.

[56] 'Es gibt für die Wissenschaft einerseits Objekte, die wie die Kultur eine Bedeutung oder einen Sinn haben, und die wir um dieser Bedeutung und dieses Sinnes willen verstehen, und es gibt andererseits Objekte, die wie die Natur uns als völlig sinn- und bedeutungsfrei gelten und daher unverständlich bleiben. (…) Natur wäre danach das bedeutungsfreie, nur wahrnehmbare, unverständliche, Kultur dagegen das bedeutungsvolle, verstehbare Sein.' *Ibid.*, p. 37f.
[57] *Ibid.*, p. 38.
[58] Rickert, *Probleme*, p. 42.

The generalizing and individualizing methods

The problematic nature of Rickert's material (ontological) distinctions demonstrates once more that not material ontology but formal epistemology ought to be the primary philosophical approach to empirical reality. In the end, ontology is epistemology. What then is more precisely the formal, epistemological approach, and more precisely the formal, epistemological distinction of Natural Science and Cultural Science? Ad medias res: *generalization* is, according to Rickert, the typical feature of the conceptualization of Natural Science and the conventional natural sciences such as chemistry, physics, astronomy, etc., whereas the conceptualization of Cultural Science and the cultural disciplines, such as history, historical sociology, historical (institutional) economics, etc., is rather characterized by *individualization*. Rickert prefers, as we have seen, these concepts over Windelband's well-known distinction of the 'nomothetic' approach of *Naturwissenschaft* versus the 'idiographic' approach of history,[59] since 'idiography' as description comes rather close to depiction (*Abbildung*) which Rickert rejects. However, if one reads Windelband's exposition carefully, it becomes apparent that Rickert leans heavily on it, without actually acknowledging this explicitly, but also has some grave reservations about it.

Wilhelm Windelband (1848-1915) acquired fame in particular through his phenomenal knowledge of the history of philosophy.[60] But his *Rektoratsrede* of 1894 was one of the most quoted and debated publications in the history of 20th century philosophy. In particular his distinction between 'idiographic' and 'nomothetic' sciences acquired almost the status of a philosophical cliché. In view of Rickert's similar distinction between individualizing *Kulturwissenschaft* and generalizing *Naturwissenschaft* we must briefly discuss Windelband's theory of the 'idiographic' and 'nomothetic' sciences.

In this lecture Windelband admits right from the start that he is not happy with the opposition of *Naturwissenschaft* and *Geisteswissenschaft*, based on the opposition of *Natur* and *Geist*, which was already very popular in his day. The distinction of *Natur* and *Geist*, Windelband argues, is a survival of an ancient, material (ontological) opposition which became prominent at the end of Antiquity and at the beginning of medieval philosophical and theological thought. It was then prolonged with all of its coarseness in the newer metaphysics from Descartes and Spinoza till Schelling and Hegel. The opposition, however, is, Windelband continues, epistemologically very questionable, as is demonstrated by psychology as a scientific discipline. According to its object of investigation psychology would be a *Geisteswissenschaft* but according to its actual execution, i.e. methodologically, appears to be a *Naturwissenschaft*. What then is it that renders psychology methodologically a natural science? Obviously, psychology collects and processes facts, and tries to grasp the general, lawful regularities to which these facts are subjected. But that is precisely what the natural sciences are doing. However, the methodology of the sciences we call *Geisteswissenchaften*, history first and foremost, does not focus on such general regularities, but is, on the contrary, oriented towards

[59] Wilhelm Windelband, *Geschichte und Naturwissenschaft. Strassburger Rektoratsrede, 1894*, ('History and Natural Science. Inaugural adress as President of the University of Strassburg'), in: *Präludien. Aufsätze und Reden zur Philosophie und ihrer Geschichte*, ('Preludes. Essays and Speeches on Philosophy and its History'), Vol. 2, (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1915, 5th enlarged ed.), pp.136-160.
[60] Cf. Wilhelm Windelband, *Lehrbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie*, ('Textbook of the History of Philosophy'), 1891, (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1957; 15th ed. by Heinz Heimsoeth).

what is particular, unique (*einmalig*), and limited in time. In other words, there is a logical and methodological difference at work here: some sciences, like the traditional natural sciences, such as chemistry, physics, astronomy, etc. search for and analyze general and timeless laws of development. They are in that sense *nomothetic*. Others, like history, focus on and describe unique and particular events in time and are in that sense *idiographic*. The former are, Windelband adds, *Gesetzeswissenschaften* (law-oriented sciences), the latter *Ereigniswissenschaften* (eventful sciences).

This is a formal, not a material distinction. One and the same object, Windelband warns, can be subjected to either a nomothetic or an idiographic investigation. A particular language, for example, can remain stable and alter minimally over a very long period of time. It thus lies open for a nomothetic analysis. Yet, this particular language is also a historical, transitory phenomenon within the linguistic life of humanity in its totality. It can thus be approached and described also idiographically. 'The same applies to the physiology of the body, or for geology, and in a certain sense even to astronomy: and thereby the historical principle is transferred to the area of the natural sciences.'[61] Yet, there are, Windelband notices, immense methodological differences between history and the natural sciences. Both depend on experiences, on facts of observation, but the natural scientist searches for general laws (*Gesetze*), the historian for individual figures (*Gestalten*), the one leans strongly on cognitive abstraction, the other on concrete graphicalness (*Anschaulichkeit*). The historian – and this reminds one of Croce's aestheticism – paints a picture of the past in such a way that it begins to live in the present time in all of its individuality. 'Therein roots the affinity of the historical creation with the aesthetic creation and the affinity of the historical disciplines with the *belles lettres*.'[62] The historian paints pictures of people and of human life.

Windelband emphasizes that all human interests and judgments, i.e. all human evaluations, are linked to the individual and the unique (*das Einzelne und das Einmalige*), because all our feelings of value are solidly rooted in uniqueness and incomparability.[63] Value-relatedness is therefore the essence of the idiographic approach to reality. However, both methods, the nomothetic and the idiographic approach, should not be held in strict separation. Windelband gives an example. Nomothetically, the cause of an explosion is the composition of the explosive material whose chemical-physical laws can be reconstructed, but idiographically the cause is a particular move, a single spark, a shock or something similar. 'Only the two together cause and explain the event, but neither one of the two is the result of the other.'[64]

Dilthey distinguishes within the psychological discipline a natural-scientific, explanatory approach which focuses on causal processes, on the one hand, and what he called *descriptive psychology* aiming at an understanding of inner, experienced processes, on the other. The latter was in his view constitutive for the so-called *Geisteswissenschaften*, the former for the so-called *Naturwissenschaften*. Initially, Dilthey views them as two separate realms – the 'realm of nature' ruled by 'the empty and deserted repetition of the course of nature' in contrast to the 'realm of history' dominated by the 'sovereignty of the will' and by the 'capability to subject everything

[61] 'Ähnliches gilt für die Physiologie des Leibes, für die Geologie, in gewissem Sinne sogar für die Astronomie: und damit wird das historische Prinzip auf das Gebiet der Naturwissenschaften hinübergetrieben.' Windelband, *l.c.*, p. 146.
[62] 'Darin wurzelt die Verwandtschaft des historischen Schaffens mit dem ästhetischen und die der historischen Disziplinen mit den *belles lettres.*' Windelband, *l.c.*, p. 150.
[63] *Ibid.*, p. 155.
[64] 'Erst beides zusammen verursacht und erklärt das Ereignis, aber keines von beiden ist eine Folge des anderen.' *Ibid.,* p. 158.

to thought'. The proper object of the latter was the 'historical-societal reality', albeit founded upon descriptive psychology.[65] However, this was just an initial, preparatory distinction which he mitigates considerably in the further course of his argument. In fact, he sees the humaniora (*Geisteswissenschaften*), history in the first place, and the natural sciences (*Naturwissenschaften*) metaphorically as the two halves of the *globus intellectualis*, but he does not radically separate them, nor does he demarcate the two exclusively in methodological and epistemological terms.[66] The former focus on human beings who are viewed by Dilthey expressedly as psycho-physiological unities, that are anchored in historicity, yet also physiological by nature. They are thus objects of natural-scientific research, but also of historical investigation. Yet, there is an essential difference. Like Vico, Dilthey stipulates that human beings are both subject and object of the *Geisteswissenschaften*, being capable of understanding (*Verstehen*) themselves, the others, events, institutions, etc. subjectively. This is, of course, impossible in the natural sciences which aim at a causal explanation of their objects of research but are unable to understand them intuitively: 'I understand the life of society. The individual is, on the one hand, an element in the interplays of the society, a crossing point of the different systems of these interplays, reacting consciously, willfully and actively to their effects. But the individual is, at the same time, the intelligence which observes and investigates all this.'[67] Thus, the crucial difference between the natural sciences and the humaniora is, according to Dilthey, the fact that the latter are able to understand their objects of investigation. This understanding (*Verstehen*) was viewed by him as the process by which the objects of 'outer experience' are being linked to the intuitive 'inner experience'.[68] (We return to this later.)

Rickert follows Windelband's arguments closely, but tacitly rejects his theory on mainly two points. First, he cannot accept the idea that the historical disciplines remain 'graphic' and 'aesthetic'. Cultural Science does differ from Natural Science in that it is, as Windelband also says, value-related and focused on the individual, the unique and particular, but it may not, as Windelband like Croce suggests, evaporate in 'idiographic' aestheticism. The historian engages in historical research and reports his findings scientifically. He is not supposed to tell nice stories. Cultural Science should remain scientific, should construct concepts, and not aspire to be some sort of art form. Second, Rickert also rejects Windelband's distinction of natural-scientific abstraction vis-à-vis historical ('idiographic') *Anschaulichkeit* which were allegedly 'concrete' because it would produce 'pictures of men and human life' (*Bilder von Menschen und Menschenleben*). This smacks, of course, too much of *Lebensphilosophie* which, Rickert would argue, does not befit a true student of Kant.

He directs the same criticism to Dilthey and adds that his focus on 'inner experience' and the related processes of intuition and understanding end up in what

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[65] WilhelmDilthey, *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften. Erster Band*, ('Introduction to the Humaniora. Volume One'), 1883, B. Groethuysen ed., *Gesammelte Schriften*, Bd. I ('Collected Publications', vol. I), (Stuttgart: Teubner Verlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973) pp. 4-7.
[66] Dilthey, *o.c.*, pp. 14-21. See also Jos de Mul, *De tragedie van de eindigheid. Diltheys hermeneutiek van het leven*, ('The Tragedy of Finiteness. Dilthey's Hermeneutics of Life'), (Kampen: Kok Agora, 1993), p. 172.
[67] 'Ich verstehe das Leben der Gesellschaft. Das Individuum ist einerseits ein Element in den Wechselwirkungen der Gesellschaft, ein Kreuzungspunkt der verschiedenen Systeme dieser Wechselwirkungen, in bewusster Willensrichtung und Handlung auf die Einwirkungen derselben reagierend, und es ist zugleich die dieses alles anschauende und erforschende Intelligenz.' Dilthey, *o.c.*, p. 37.
[68] Cf. de Mul, *o.c.*, p.171, also pp. 319-331.

Dilthey called 'descriptive psychology' and thus in a psychologistic methodology. Despite some remarks to the contrary, Dilthey's abundantly used concepts *Geist* and *Seele* (soul, or psyche) carry the very same psychological meaning. There is indeed a lot of soul in his *Geist*. That may warm the hearts of vitalists, but will not much enlighten their minds.

It is for these reasons that Rickert shies away from the concepts 'nomothetic' and 'idiographic', and exchanges them for 'generalizing' and 'individualizing', when he characterizes the distinct methodological and logical differences between *Naturwissenschaft* and *Kulturwissenschaft*.[69] In order to avoid any suggestion of embracing vitalism and putting psychology on a methodological and philosophical pedestal, he replaces *Geisteswissenschaft* by *Kulturwissenschaft*. Moreover, it is a misconception to reserve so-called *Geisteswissenschaft* for the investigation of humans and human affairs exclusively and to exclude the natural-scientific approach from this domain. As we shall see shortly, it is possible to apply a historical approach to a natural science, as for instance happens in biology, whereas a discipline like sociology can legitimately be studied in a generalizing, natural-scientific way. In fact, that has been done and still is being done. In other words, Rickert would not have been in favor of the idea of 'two cultures' as was pictured in the famous, often quoted (and wrongly applied) essay by C. P. Snow.[70] Dilthey, and maybe also Windelband, would in all probability have less problems with this dichotomy.

Natural Science then is first and foremost characterized by Rickert formally and methodologically by the fact that its concept formation (*Begriffsbildung*) sets out to construct *general* concepts which as *genus* concepts, or generic concepts (*Gattungsbegriffe*), cover various singular phenomena as *specimens* (*Exemplare*) of the related *genus*. What is relevant or essential in the objects and events under natural-scientific scrutiny is only and exclusively what they have in common. These common elements are then grouped together into a genus concept, whereas everything that is *individual* and *particular* in these objects remains irrelevant and is therefore not conceptualized. Rickert acknowledges that this kind of cognitive generalization occurs already prior to any scientific scrutiny, since we employ in our daily language scores of general concepts. If they are not proper names which always refer to

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[69] See Heinrich Rickert, *Wilhelm Windelband* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1915), an *In Memoriam* of 43 pages. Rickert does not only discuss Windelband's contribution to the philosophy of values, but uses the opportunity to explain also his own philosophy and methodology. His critique of 'nomothesis' and 'idiography' is on p. 26, where he presents his own individualizing Cultural Science as a valid alternative to the in his eyes fallacious notion of the 'idiographic' historical method. He regrets the fact that Windelband did not revise his theory after Rickert's exposition of generalizing Natural Science and individualizing Cultural Science as two complementary methods had appeared in print. Windelband came, however, close to such a revision, inspired by Rickert, in his *Geschichtsphilosophie*, *o.c.*, pp. 49ff.

[70] C. P. Snow, *The Two Cultures and a Second Look*, 1959, 1964, (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1964). In his Rede Lecture of 1959 Snow did not oppose natural scientists and representatives of the humaniora, as is often asserted, but scientists and literary writers. Speaking from experience (he was scientist and writer), Snow claimed scientists and writers had intellectually, morally and psychologically little in common, and lived in two totally different worlds. *Ibid*., p. 2. However, in 'A Second Look' of 1964 he acknowledged after experiences in American universities that there was a Third Culture somewhere in the middle, consisting of 'intellectual persons in a variety of fields – social history, sociology, demography, political science, economics, government (in the American academic sense), psychology, medicine, and social arts such as architecture. It seems a mixed bag: but there is an inner consistency. All of them are concerned with *how human beings are living or have lived* – and concerned, not in terms of legend, but fact.' *Ibid.*, p. 70. Logically and methodologically neither Snow's 'two cultures' nor his 'three cultures' are relevant or heuristically helpful. His essay is sociological rather than philosophical and logical.

individual and particular objects and events, words do cover usually general objects and events. This was, of course, realized by the Greek philosophers (Plato and Aristotle in the first place) and also by the medieval scholastic philosophers (realism versus nominalism). Rickert elaborates on this further. His intentions can be illustrated by a simple example. The word dog is in a sense a generic concept which covers general features and characteristics common to all dogs. In veterinary science this concept is formalized into an abstract genus concept which not only contains natural-scientific laws but also covers all individual and empirical dogs. After the genus concept and its related laws are formulated and defined scientifically in a systematic manner, there is no need to subject more particular, individual dogs to further scientific research. They are scientifically irrelevant. The particularities and unique character traits of Thomas Mann's famous dog Bauschan, for instance, was and still is of no interest to any veterinarian scientist. However, this particular family dog of the 1920's which is the main character in Mann's novella *Herr und Hund* will be of interest to the literary historian or the biographer who investigates the life and works of the great German novelist.[71] But he then operates conceptually and methodologically within a logically completely different frame of reference, i.e. the individualizing context of Cultural Science to which we will turn shorttly.

Natural-Scientific concept formation is a sort of conscious and logically controlled continuation of the common-sense generalization of daily language. Moreover, Rickert argues, 'it suffices to say that in this case the conceptual content consists of so-called *laws*, i.e. *unconditionally* general judgments about more or less encompassing sectors of reality – a reality which nobody has observed in its totality.'[72] Generalizing natural-scientific concepts cover large quantities of objects and events by focusing quantitatively (e.g. statistically) on their similarities and regularities (laws), while disregarding their qualitative, individual particularities and unique, unrepeatable characteristics. It is, of course, possible to focus on a single object or event, but by means of experiments and comparisons with other objects and events the natural scientist will still search for general characteristics which fit into general statements of law. The single objects and events are then defined and treated as specimens (*Exemplare*) of the genus and forged theoretically in a genus concept (*Gattungsbegriff*). In fact, when one has formulated the genus concepts and their related regularities (laws), one need not investigate more specimens. The genus concepts and their relative laws are 'true' until changes occur which demand a revision of the generic concepts and their laws.

Cultural Science will conceptualize in a different and opposite manner. One will focus on what is individual, particular, unique and unrepeatable. The historian, for instance, whom Rickert views as the prime example of a Cultural Scientist, will investigate individual events, e.g. the Battle of Waterloo, and individual historical actors, e.g. Napoleon, Wellington, Blücher. Of course, he will in a sense generalize also since 'battle' and 'historical actors' are general concepts. We will discuss this point in greater detail later, yet it must be emphasized at this point that cultural-scientific (historical) generalizations are logically very different from natural-scientific generalizations. The latter 'move' from ahistorical *specimina* to ahistorical *genera*, the former from historical *parts* to historical *totalities*. Both, parts and

[71] Thomas Mann, 'Herr und Hund', 1919, (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer Verlag, 1981), in: *Gesammelte Werke. Späte Erzählungen*, ('Collected Works. Late Short Stories'), pp. 7-101.

[72] 'Es genügt zu sagen, dass in diesem Falle der Begriffsinhalt aus sogenannten *Gesetzen* besteht, d.h. *unbedingt* allgemeinen Urteilen über mehr oder minder umfassende Gebiete der Wirklichkeit, die niemand in ihrer Totalität beobachtet hat.' *Ibid.*, p. 58f. Italics by HR.

totalities are individual and time-bound, not general and timeless. Totalities are in their turn always individual, time-bound parts again of larger, encompassing totalities which again are parts of even larger and more abstract totalities, until one arrives at 'humanity' or 'human civilization' *in toto* – which, of course, most historians will preferably not take as their cultural-scientific object of investigation.[73] Moreover, it always remains necessary to investigate individual, particular objects and events since in time points of view may change and throw new light on these particular objects. Unlike the research in Natural Science which comes to rest after the generic concepts and their natural-scientific laws have been formulated. Only when (usually) suddenly irregularities are being discovered – which, incidentally, often happens in terms of serendipity – that cannot be explained by the existing general concepts and laws, will further research and experiments on individual objects and processes be necessary. Here Rickert comes close to the idea of paradigmatic revolution, but he was not yet able to formulate it expressedly and clearly.[74]

A simple example can illustrate the methodological difference of Natural-Scientific generalization and Cultural-Scientific individualization. Rickert would find the example too simple to be useful, but it might be helpful for those who are not well introduced into his brand of neo-Kantian thinking. In everyday life we all know immediately what the word forest refers to. Now let us take as an example a specific forest, located in a specific province or region of a specific country. In this forest there is a hut in which an hermit dwells, prays and meditates. A botanist will be interested in the forest in so far as it may comprise some specimens of a rare genus of plants. He will roam through the forest, pass the hut of the hermit, and search for these specimens which can tell him more about the rare botanic genus. When he has found sufficient specimens which enable him to formulate the generic and regular (law like) features of these individual plants, there will be no need for him to return to the forest or any similar forest elsewhere in order to collect more individual specimens. In other words, there is no need for any further individualization.

A sociologist will look at this very same forest in a completely different manner, certainly if he follows in the methodological footsteps of Weber and his *verstehende Soziologie* which is a *historical and cultural sociology* (interpreted methodologically as a sociology operating as a Cultural Science). This forest is to the cultural sociologist the particular biotopos of this individual hermit, whose lifestyle differs so remarkably from most of his fellow men. The sociologist is not interested in the forest as the biotopos of rare plants, or insects, or birds, he will pass these specimens of various natural-scientific genus concepts (botany, entomology, ornithology) and enter the shack in order to interview this sociologically and psychologically interesting person. But he will also be interested in

[73] An example of such an encompassing, very general approach in history is H. G. Wells, *The Outline of History. Being a Plain History of Life and Mankind*, 1920, (London:, Toronto, Melbourne, Sydney: Cassell and Company, 1932, rev. ed.). Henry T. Buckle's *History of Civilization in England*, 1865, in five volumes, as a prelude to Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, 1934-1961, in twelve volumes. Rickert usually refers to Oswald Spengler's *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (1922), observing that such very general historical studies (a) are unavoidably normative and metaphysical, and (b) claim to establish semi-natural-scientifically certain 'laws of development'. Both points of critique apply also to Wells and Buckle and certainly to Toynbee. Toynbee has been criticized extensively by historians. See for a perceptive and sympathetic survey of his work: Harry Elmer Barnes, 'Arnold Joseph Toynbee: Orosius and Augustine in Modern Dress', in: Harry Elmer Barnes (ed.), *An Introduction to the History of Sociology*, 1948, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, 5th ed.), pp.717-736. Very general historical studies, focusing on large units of research, are still en vogue, albeit much less metaphysical and semi-natural-scientific than the above mentioned histories. See for example Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers. Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*, 1988, (London: Fontana Press, 1989, 4th ed.). Cf. also the perceptive book review by the Dutch historian Jan Romein, 'De graal der geschiedenis. De stand van het vraagstuk der historische wetten', ('The Grale of History. The State of the Issue of Historical Laws'), 1947, in: Jan Romein, *Historische lijnen en patronen*, ('Historical Lines and Patterns'), (Amsterdam: Querido's Uitgeverij, 1976), pp. 327-352.

[74] Cf. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 1962, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970, 2nd and enlarged ed.).

meeting and interviewing other individual hermits since he aspires at some degree of representative objectivity. If he is successful, he may eventually come up with an interpretive theory of hermitdom which is, of course, a form of generalization. But hermitdom is in its turn again an individual part of a larger, historical totality: renunciation of the world which again is an individual, historical phenomenon.

What then is the precise nature of generalization in Cultural Science, and how does it differ from generalization in Natural Science?

Cultural-Scientific generalization

Rickert believes that, unlike psychology and sociology, history as a scientific discipline could in its conceptualization and methodology never employ the generalizing approach of Natural Science. The general concepts of Natural Science emerge systematically by the conceptual unification of the similarities of a massive amount of particular objects and processes. The exercise is value-free since the similarities are not in any way related to values and meanings. The moment these similarities have been conceptualized and the similar processes of development have been 'caught' in law like statements (if-then propositions), further individual objects and occurrences are irrelevant. In history, on the contrary, the focus is rather on the very individuality and particularity of time-bound and value-related objects, persons, and events. In fact, their individuality and particularity originate in their value-related significance. Historical conceptualization is thus, unlike its counterpart in Natural Science, based on actual value-relatedness (*Wertbezogenheit*) on the part of the historical objects as well as on the active, theoretical relating to values (*Wertbeziehung*) on the part of the historian.[75] That is to say, according to Rickert, the historical discipline is methodologically located at the extreme, Cultural-Scientific (individualizing, or particularizing) end of the continuum of Natural Science and Cultural Science.

At this point two critical interjections are called for. (a) When using the word 'history' (*Geschichte)* Rickert (like many historians) never clearly distinguishes between history as the ongoing process in time and history as the scientific study of this process. This is at times confusing. Usually he means the scientific discipline. (b) He was, moreover, determined to fixate history on the extreme pole of (individualizing) Cultural Science. As we have seen, he believes that any attempt to come up with natural-scientific 'laws of history' has to end sooner or later in an unscientific (usually metaphysical) historicism, as was exemplified by so-called historical materialism, and by the earlier mentioned Oswald Spengler. However, it is questionable whether this position is logically and methodologically tenable. For example, there have been so-called *cliometric* studies which tried to design a historical discipline which comes as close as possible to the quantitative, statistical methodology of the natural sciences. In terms of Rickert's continuum this is legitimate, since it presents a methodological approach, not a metaphysical philosophy. [76]

[75] Rickert's ideas about value-freedom (*Wertfreiheit*), freedom-from-value-judgments (*Wertungsfreiheit*), value-relatedness (*Wertbezogenheit*) and the methodological relating of objects to values (*Wertbeziehung)* must, of course, be explained. That will happen in a later section of this chapter.

[76] In *Kulturwissenschaft und Naturwissenschaft* Rickert at one point surmises that there may emerge in the future a Natural-Scientific approach in the historical discipline: *o.c.*, p. 76. This has meanwhile happened . See Robert William Fogel, Stanley L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross. The Economics of American Negro Slavery*, (Boston-Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1974), 'Prologue. Slavery and the Cliometric Revolution', pp. 3-13. In an appendix both authors explain the nature and intentions of *cliometry* in terms Rickert could, and in all probability would approve of: 'Appendix A. Science, Humanism, and Ideology in the Interpretation of Slavery', in: *Time on the Cross: Evidence and Methods – A Supplement*, (Boston-Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1974), pp. 3-20. The authors

Rickert realizes that radical individualization would be impossible and improbable, since all sciences, including the scientific study of history, try to transcend the mere experience of reality in order to gain plausible, if not true knowledge of this reality. Our pre-scientific experiences are indeed radically individual, particular and maybe even unique, but scientific knowledge wants more than that. It wants concepts and theories which are generally valid, plausible, and intersubjectively true. It therefore needs general concepts, and that holds true also for history, if it aspires to be part of the scientific universe. Rickert then seeks to determine what sorts of generalization could be distinguished within the historical discipline – and thus within Cultural Science – and to which extent and how these historical (Cultural-Scientific) generalizations differ from those of Natural Science. In an appendix to the 5th edition of *Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung* he discusses four kinds of generalization in history as a Cultural Science.[77] Since Rickert's idea of 'individualizing' Cultural Science is usually dismissed by the argument that in history and the historical social sciences 'generalization' is unavoidable, it is necessary to discuss these four types of Cultural-Scientific generalization.

To begin with, it is evident that science, whether Natural or Cultural, consists of judgments (*Urteile*), i.e. statements whose basic components must be general not individual because they must be intersubjectively meaningful and understandable. It is comparable to language which employs generally understandable, meaningful words, even if we talk about very individual things and occurrences. Words like 'dog' or 'child' are general and we need them as linguistic elements, if we want to talk about our particular dog or our individual child, both of whom we have given proper names, since proper names express individuality. In other words, generalization here is a means towards an end, and the end is the individual and particular, unique and unrepeatable object, person, event, etc. The same holds true of history: the elements of its statements are concepts like war, revolution, monarch, citizen, state, society, etc. These conceptual elements are indeed general, but they are elements of statements which aim at the understanding of individual or particular phenomena as significant, value-related phenomena, such as the First World War, the French Revolution, King George III, the French citoyen, the Dutch state, American society, etc. This is very different in Natural Science, where the general is not a means but an end. Natural Science treats individual and particular objects as specimens (*Exemplare*) of general, generic concepts (*Gattungsbegriffe*). It may be objected that such concepts are employed for the sake of prediction of an individual event – e.g. an eclipse – but even then the generic concepts concerned constitute a general natural law about the

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acknowledge 'that the writing of history cannot be reduced merely to science.' And add 'that the study of history will be advanced by combining the methods of science with the concerns of humanism'. *L.c.*, p. 3. However, they continue to belittle the 'vicars of humanism' (*l.c.*, p. 10) who are 'bound together by their common emphasis on oral and aesthetic values' and texture their language delicately 'with metaphors and words of multiple connotation.' *L.c.*, p. 7. Within the group of social scientists, they continue somewhat haughtily, there is still 'a group of scholars who work in the humanist tradition. But they are a minority, and have not fully been able to stem the scientific onslaught.' *L.c.*, p. 8. Obviously, these Americans were at the time they were writing not aware of the fact that their brand of positivism was very predominant in Europe at the end of the 19th century and that precisely neo-Kantian epistemology tried to escape its deadly embrace without stepping into the trap of Romantic humanism.

[77] This appendix is a German translation of a French essay with the title 'Les quatres modes de l'Universel en histoire' which appeared in the *Revue de synthèse historique*, Paris, April 1901. Heinrich Rickert, 'Anhang' in: *Grenzen*, pp. 737-766.

occurrence of the eclipse without any values or norms involved. These general, generic concepts come about by the combination or unification of all that is similar in the particular objects of Natural-Scientific research. There is no relating to values and thus no understandable meaning involved here, for the simple reason that the objects under scrutiny are not value-related.

Secondly, the historian can, of course, not conceptually cover all the individual events and persons drawing his scientific curiosity and interest. Reality, past and present, consists of a vast and incalculable multitude of people, things and events. Even if the historian restricted himself to human events and beings, he would still have to deal conceptually with a pluriformity which is so complex and versatile that he could not possibly cover all of them adequately. He is in need of a criterion of selection by which he can determine which situations and events are essential and which are not. Historically essential then is what possesses in society a *general significance* which can only be determined by *general values* – i.e. values that are significant to a majority of people, not just to one or more single individuals. The historian will relate the many events, processes, persons and things which he encounters in reality to such general values and through this value-relation he will determine what is historically significant and what is not. This, Rickert acknowledges, is, of course, not the objectivity and certainty with which the physicist formulates mathematical laws, but it still is far remote from the contingency of the value-relatedness of a particular individual human being. Meanwhile, after the historian has thus determined what is value-wise significant, he is also able to determine what is particular and individual, in the sense of unique and unrepeatable. An example (which is not Rickert's) may clarify this point: writing the biography of John Calvin a historian will focus on those particular details of his life only which relate to general values, like the values of the Reformation and the so-called Puritan Ethics. Petty details of Calvin's life, such as the color of his eyes or the names of his grandchildren (if he had any), may have an entertainment value but are scientifically irrelevant.[78]

Thirdly, science is a systematic enterprise and history as a scientific endeavor will not be satisfied with an enumeration of individual facts and data, adding them all up to a mere bric-a-brac.[79] There are in reality, as we experience it, no absolutely isolated objects and processes. Everything is related somehow – as we have seen, reality is a heterogeneous continuum. Each historical object stands in a coherent context and is particular and individual within this context. This too is something general. However, the nature of its generality is very different from that of Natural Science. As we have seen before, in Natural Science individual and particular objects are specimens (*Exemplare*) of a generic concept (*Gattungsbegriff*), whereas in history (Cultural Science) they are parts of a totality which is more than just a composition of constituent parts, but in its turn a part of a larger totality. Or, in other words, the meaningful context of the historical object is a *Sinngebilde* which itself is a historical *individuum*. Robespierre, for instance (and this is again not Rickert's example), is as a historical individual only understandable in the context of the terrorist phase of the French Revolution.

Incidentally, Rickert emphasizes that the individual conceptualization of history does not automatically mean that, as is often said, single personalities 'make'

[78] *Ibid.*, pp. 741-746.

[79] Historians often fall prey to a neo-positivist drive to be as exact as possible, if it comes to the registration of facts and data. This *historiography* usually ends up in a sort of 'value-free' book-keeping which does not contribute to any scientific understanding of what has actually happened in terms of significance.

history, and that therefore history is essentially the scientific study of 'great personalities'. This is not what the concepts 'individual' and 'individualization' mean. The historian as the representative of Cultural Science *par excellence* focuses on objects, events, collectivities and single persons in so far as they are particular, specific and unique (unrepeatable) due to their relationship to values which are then and now held to be valid and relevant. Individual persons, and great personalities like Caesar or Napoleon are often the objects of historical research, but so are material objects, like the Kohinoor or the papal tiara, and historical events, such as the French Revolution or the Battle of Waterloo. They are in a sense the bearers of important, generally respected or acknowledged values. (Incidentally, these can be morally objectionable values as is the case of individual dictators like Hitler or Stalin.) And, once more, these *individua* do not exist in the past or the present as a chaotic bric-a-brac but belong, due to their value-relatedness, to a general context, the generality of which, needless to say, is very different from the generality Natural Science aspires to.[80]

There is still a fourth sort of generality in the historical discipline as a Cultural Science. Critics of Rickert's methodological distinction of generalizing and individualizing sciences often claim that the historian often focuses on groups or even masses which are conceptualized in terms of similarities, not in terms of value-related significance. The French *citoyens* storming the Bastille, for instance, constitute a class of people which are conceptualized generally according to (sociological) similarities, not according to what each individual citoyen signified in terms of the revolutionary values of those days. This is, of course, true, but Rickert hastens to add that this is being done not on logical principle, as in Natural Science, but for reasons of convenience. Indeed, there are many generalized concepts used by historians, such as Antiquity, Middle Ages, Renaissance, Modernity, or *bourgeoisie*, working class, urban culture, etc. Yet, these are generalizations for convenience's sake, comparable to stenography. They are definitely not Natural-Scientific, logical generalizations on principle. Moreover, they are, unlike the value-free generalizations of Natural Science related and relating to values. In fact, if the historian focuses specifically on one of such general historical phenomena, as for example Jacob Burckhardt did in his celebrated study on *The Culture of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860), it becomes obvious that the methodology is one of Cultural-Scientific individualization, not of Natural-Scientific generalization.[81]

Rickert continues the argument still one step further. Assume a historical study in which only concepts of groups of people occur, and in which these concepts only contain what all the constituent parts of the groups have in common. Take as an example – which, incidentally, was not given by Rickert – a historical-sociological

[80] Rickert, *Grenzen*, pp. 746-749. Rickert states expressedly that this approach is not at all what is usually called 'history of Great Men'. Allegedly 'great' men like Napoleon or Bismarck are logically and methodologically only relevant by their historical relationship to shared (general) values. History is 'moved' neither by individuals, nor by mass movements. Cf. Heinrich Rickert in his response to Ferdinand Toennies in his essay 'Über die Aufgaben einer Logik der Geschichte', ('On the Tasks of a Logic of History'), in: *Archiv für Philosophie,* II. Abteilung*: Archiv für systematische Philosophie,* Neue Folge. VIII. Band, 2.Heft, ("Archive for Philosophy. Section II: Archive for Systematic Philosophy, New Series, Volume VIII, Book 2'), 1902, p. 151f.

[81] Jacob Burckhardt, *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien. Ein Versuch*, 1860, (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 1976). The sub-title 'Ein Versuch' ('An Essay', or 'An Attempt') is interesting. A Natural-Scientific report would never be called 'an attempt', or 'an essay'. Rickert would probably also reject this sub-title, since he always emphasized the need for objectivity and certainty in all sciences, including the Cultural-Scientific sciences.

study of 'peasant culture in medieval France'. Would that be a Natural-Scientific study? Hardly, because the object, although phrased by means of generalized concepts, is circumscribed in terms of time and space, and also quite unique (*einmalig*).[82] 'Peasant culture in medieval France' is logically and methodologically a value-related *individuum*, not a value-free *genus*. The moment the historian sets out to investigate such an alleged peasant culture in medieval France, he must 'descend' to individual, particular, unique components. There are, as it were, stages of generality and individuality, but in Cultural Science each stage of generality is individual compared to the next stage. The final stage is 'humanity' or 'the universe' which is still an *individuum* but, of course, hard to handle empirically and open to metaphysical fantasies which, according to Rickert, have no place in any kind of science.

Empathic understanding[83]

In the opposition of *Naturwissenschaft* and *Geisteswissenschaft* the juxtaposition of explaining (*Erklären*) and understanding (*Verstehen*) plays a predominant, and a logically as well as methodologically rather questionable role. The proponents of *Geisteswissenschaft* usually claim in addition that understanding is only possible through introspection or empathy (*Nacherleben*). As this is allegedly a psychological exercise, it is believed that psychology constitutes the logical and methodological foundation of all sciences outside the natural sciences. Psychology was thus put on a scientific and methodological pedestal. Wilhelm Dilthey was the most outspoken and best known representative of this position.

Dilthey, as is well known, did not succeed in leaving a coherent, systematically organized philosophy. Although he put the systematic structure of the human mind (*Geist*) and soul (*Seele*) in the centre of his 'descriptive psychology', he failed to organize his thoughts and theorems in a coherent and structured system. This certainly added to the liveliness of his thinking and writing, but also hinders a satisfactory grasping of the often fragmentary theorems and theories. His theory of *Verstehen* is for that reason hard to grasp. He kept adding and changing it, without really rendering it more precise and understandable.[84]

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[82] *Ibid.*, p. 751f.

[83] Once more one is confronted here by the problem of translation. I chose for 'explaining' (*Erklären*) and 'understanding' (*Verstehen*) which is admittedly arbitrary. Rickert alternates *Erklären* with *Begreifen* which will be translated with 'to grasp' and 'grasping'. The German verb has the same root as *Begriff* (concept), but like *Erklären*, *Begreifen* is usually reserved by him for the Natural-Scientific mode of conceptualization.

[84] Jos de Mul provides a helpful survey of the various developments and additions of Dilthey's theory of *Verstehen* in his PhD-dissertation *De tragedie van de eindigheid. Diltheys hermeneutiek van het leven*, ('The Tragedy of Finiteness. Dilthey's Hermeneutics of Life'), (Kampen: Kok Agora, 1993), pp. 319-340. This is not the place to discuss all this in detail. For this brief excursus on Dilthey's ideas of *Verstehen* I have, guided by De Mul's dissertation, relied on the posthumously published fragments in the third chapter of Wilhelm Dilthey, *Der Aufbau der geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften*, ('The Construction of the Historical World in the Humaniora'), 1926, B. Groethuysen, ed., *Gesammelte Schriften*, Bd. VII, ('Collected Publications, vol. VII'), 1958, (Stuttgart: Teubner Verlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973, 6th ed.). pp. 191-294; in particular pp. 205-220. Rickert, it should be noted, appreciated and incorporated parts of Dilthey's historical psychology. Discussing, for example, Dilthey's analysis of ancient Roman metaphysics of the will, exhibited in particular in Roman law, he called it 'extraordinarily impressive' (*ungemein eindrucksvoll*). Cf. Heinrich Rickert, *Kant als Philosoph der modernen Kultur. Ein Geschichtsphilosophischer Versuch*, (' Kant as Philosopher of Modern Culture. An Essay in Historical Philosophy'), (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1924), p. 65. But he then went on criticizing Dilthey's alleged psychologism: *ibid.*, p. 68ff.

Understanding (*Verstehen*) as the essential method of acquiring *geisteswissenschaftliche* knowledge is, according to Dilthey, *not*, as is often thought, subjectivist introspection, i.e. it is not an emotional turning into one's own and private feelings which then are projected on objects, events, other human beings outside one's own psyche or consciousness. It is, Dilthey stipulates, the other way around: man can only understand himself and the world outside him (the other human beings to begin with) by the detour of what is being expressed, through observable expressions (*Ausdrücke*). We possess memories of past experiences and can therefore, as in an emotional analogy, identify with what we observe. For instance, if someone stumbles, falls and contorts his face in pain, we can empathize with him which in German is called *Nacherleben*.

Dilthey distinguishes three classes or types of such expressions which he also labeled 'life expressions' (*Lebensäusserungen*). There are, first, the cognitive expressions such as concepts, judgments, theories. De Mul labels this aptly as a 'logical understanding' and adds that it is the simplest type of understanding, since it is not embedded in complex socio-historical and psychic circumstances. The Pythagorean theorem can be understood without knowing the circumstances under which it was invented. The second type of understanding, called 'technical' by De Mul, refers to acts which express clear and obvious aims without verbal expressions of these aims. We understand, as it were immediately, without much reflection, the picking up of a knife and the cutting of a piece of meat. The emotions of the person who cuts the meat are irrelevant for the understanding of the observed action. The third type of expression is infinitely more complex and the actual source of *geisteswissenschaftliche* understanding: the expression of an inner, emotional experience (*Erlebnisausdruck*). It can, Dilthey argues, tell us more about the psychic cohesion of a person than a subjective introspection could ever demonstrate. The facial expression, the look and the blush do not tell us cognitively, as in a judgment, about truth or falsehood, but tell us everything about mendacity and veracity.

Dilthey adds to this theorem of understanding-through-expressions two different forms of understanding: elementary forms and higher, more complex forms. As to the elementary forms, it should be realized that humans need mutual understanding in practical life. Understanding is functional in human communication. Dilthey once spoke of 'the business of understanding'.[85] In practical everyday life we are all accustomed to elementary forms of understanding, since we have learned while growing up certain elementary acts which are components of more complex actions for the sake of certain aims. For example, we understand immediately, without reflection, the picking up of a bucket or the pounding with a hammer, or the back and forth movement of a saw, indicating the collection of water, the driving in of a nail, the cutting of a piece of wood. These acts fit within larger aims again, such as cleaning a floor, hanging up of a picture, wood paneling a wall, constructing a box, etc. Dilthey adds that in this elementary form of understanding the expression is not separated from the expressed – i.e. fear and its facial expression cannot be separated as cause and effect, but are one integrated phenomenon. In addition, elementary understanding always occurs in commonalty, i.e. in an environment of common practices and customs, of organizations and institutions we grew accustomed to. It is, in short, the organized world of the 'objective spirit', or 'culture'.[86]

The elementary forms are, as it were, the building blocks for the higher forms of understanding.[87] The focus in this type of understanding is on the coherence within an object or a person. The person is understood as an individual with a coherent psychic structure, the work of art is understood as a coherent aesthetic structure – even if we have no personal knowledge of the individual and even if we have no knowledge of the artist who created the work of art. As to the latter, Dilthey gives the example of the performance of a play in a theatre. A spectator who is not trained in literature can still immerse in the action on stage without thinking of the playwright, but also the literary expert can live spell-bound during the performance. (Note Dilthey's use of the verb 'live through'!) It is in both cases an understanding *Nacherleben* – a living through subjectively of what happens on the stage. The beholder's understanding focuses on the coherence of the actions on stage, the characters of the roles, the interconnecting of moments which determine the fatal turn of the performed drama. 'Yes, only then will he enjoy the full reality of the exhibited extract from life. Only then will in him fully be realizes a process of understanding and experiencing as the poet intended to generate in him.'[88]

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[85] 'das Geschäft des Verstehens', Dilthey, *o.c.*, p. 213

[86] *Ibid.*, pp. 208-210.

[87] *Ibid.*, pp. 210-213.

[88] 'Ja nur dann wird er die volle Realität des hingestelleten Ausschnittes aus dem Leben geniessen. Nur dann wird sich in ihm voll ein Vorgang des Verstehens und Nacherlebens vollziehen, wie ihn der Dichter in ihm hervorbringen will.' *Ibid.*, p. 212.

Dilthey then comes to the vitalist conclusion that *Erleben*, the life-experience, transcends the cognitive concepts of scientific thought. Life and living first, thought and thinking next. Life – *Leben, Erleben* – is like a fluïdum or aroma, functions, certainly in the case of the *Geisteswissenschaften,* as a sort of background music: '*Erleben* can never be solved in concepts, but its dark, deep tones accompany, if only softly, all the conceptual thinking in the *Geisteswissenchaften.*'[89]

In Rickert's opinion such typically *geisteswissenschaftliche* ideas of understanding and empathy or introspection have caused much confusion – which, we may add, they still do up till this very day. Rickert phrases his critique with mild irony: 'the theories of *Verstehen* are as diverse as the meaning of the word.'[90] We should avoid 'indulging in the abstruseness and the mysteries of the *geisteswissenschaftlichen "Verstehen".*'[91] He then develops his own intriguing theory of understanding (*Verstehen),* explaining (*Erklären*) and empathy or introspection (*Nacherleben*), while he acknowledges that this theory is not definitive but consists only of 'but first attempts to arrive at an understanding of understanding.'[92] And, as we shall see, in the end his own conception of *Verstehen* is not really that different from Dilthey's!

Although Dilthey, as we saw, denied this himself, Rickert maintains that he and others after him saw and applied understanding in psychological terms, namely as empathy (*Nacherleben*) with regard to what other people in the present or the past experienced or felt inwardly. Rickert quotes Dilthey in a footnote, where he defines *Verstehen* as the knowledge of something inside (*ein Inneres*) which comes to us from outside signals – i.e. from expressions. 'What is "something inside"?', Rickert then asks. 'After all, everything depends on that. We know how meaningless the concept "something inside" is.'[93] When it comes to understanding, Rickert is, of course, particularly anxious to avoid metaphysics and psychologism, both of which were rather popular in his days, as we have seen in Chapter Two. He admits nevertheless that Cultural-Scientific understanding (*Verstehen*) does indeed stand in opposition to Natural-Scientific explaining (*Erklären*), and must somehow incorporate empathy (*Nacherleben*). It needs considerable logical and conceptual virtuosity to then avoid the trap of psychologism and to refuse to fall back on metaphysics. Rickert has, I think, not been altogether successful in this. Let us try to reconstruct the main line of his respective arguments.

We must, to begin with, repeat a basic notion which we discussed earlier. Both the body and the psyche (*Seele*) belong to empirical (experienced) reality which is the proper domain of Natural-Science and its generalizing conceptualization. Psychology then is, according to Rickert, predominantly a representative of generalizing Natural-Science. There is, however, still another kind of reality which cannot be experienced and observed, and which is therefore not a sensual, empirical reality. It is the non-empirical world which is valid or not valid (*Geltung*). This is the non-sensual, non-empirical world (*die unsinnliche Welt*) of *values and meanings*. Our spoken words, for instance, can be heard and their sound waves can be measured natural-scientifically, but their meaning and significance cannot be sensually experienced, nor

[89] 'Nie kann Erleben in Begriffe aufgelöst werden, aber seine dunklen, tiefen Töne begleiten, wenn auch nur leise, alles begriffliche Denken in den Geisteswissenschaften.' *Ibid*., p. 331.
[90] 'die Theorien des Verstehens sind so mannigfaltig wie der Sinn des Wortes.' Rickert, *o.c*., p. 558.
[91] 'das Schwelgen in dem Tiefsinn und in den Geheimnissen des "geisteswissenschaftlichen Verstehens".' *Ibid.*, p. 559.
[92] 'Nur um Ansätze zum Verstehen des "Verstehens" handelt es sich.' *Idem.* Rickert develops his ideas about explaining, understanding and empathy in *Ibid*., pp. 557-611.
[93] 'Was ist ein "Inneres"? Darauf kommt doch alles an. Wir wissen, wie nichtssagend der Begriff des Inneren ist.' *Ibid.*, p. 560, note 1.

scientifically measured. They make sense (are meaningful and thus valid) or they are senseless (meaningless, invalid). Now these non-empirical values and meanings are not psychological realities, since the psyche or soul belongs together with the body to the empirical world, nor are they metaphysical realities, floating around, as in traditional Idealism, as a kind of metaphysical *Geist.* They are forms which through meaning bestowing acts (*Aktsinn*) are, as it were, attached to 'substances', i.e. to cultural goods (*Kulturgüter*), like value-judgments and institutions, organizations, social movements, and other sociological configurations. In addition, these objectified meanings hang together, constitute coherent configurations which Rickert called *Sinngebilde*, i.e. meaningful structures or configurations. Value-judgments, for example, constitute coherent ideologies, scientific values hang together in theoretical paradigms, religious values in organized and institutionalized belief systems, etc. Once again, Rickert is keen on emphasizing that the non-empirical world of values and meanings (the Second Realm) is neither metaphysical, nor psychological. In fact, as transcendent forms they 'are' not, but they are or are not *valid*. Validity, not being is their main characteristic. This has all been explained in the former chapter, but had to be repeated briefly in order to grasp Rickert's theory of understanding.

Now Rickert argues that knowledge of the empirical reality of facts, objects and events, including those of the human psyche, is a typically Natural-Scientific explaining (*Erklären*), while knowledge of the unreal and non-empirical world of values and meanings, and their meaningful configurations, is a typically Cultural-Scientific understanding (*Verstehen*). For example, we can explain through experiments and measurements the psychological processes that go on in the psyche of a religious person. In that case, the psychologist will not be interested in the specific content of the religious values this person adheres to. He searches rather for a detection and explanation of general, psychological processes which may as well occur in aesthetic emotions or lust experiences. But we can, in any case, not explain in such a natural-scientific, generalizing way the values and meanings of the specific religious sect to which this person belongs. That would require a different approach, the approach of Cultural Science in which understanding rather than explaining, and also historical, individualizing research, would be necessary.

In the case of an individual religious believer within the context of an historically specific religious sect, we, of course, want to understand what is going on within his mind and soul: what is it that makes him believe the doctrines, observe the rituals and attend the ceremonies of this particular sect? That, it is obvious, must have something to do with values and meanings. We want to understand *not* the general psychological processes of true believers (that is the task of the psychological discipline), but the experience of values and meanings by persons who may be very different from us, who may be even alien to us, as in the case of believers of a strange sect, or of members of a civilization far back in the past. For this kind of understanding, Rickert admits, we must indeed rely on empathy or introspection. This is a remarkable step! Although Rickert castigates Dilthey ironically, as we saw above, for his focus on 'something inside', he himself now needs to introduce the 'inner' psyche as the focus of empathetic understanding! Yet, he keeps denying that this is in fact psychology, mainly because he has, as it were, 'fixed' psychology to the Natural-Scientific pole of the continuum.

In any case, empathy or introspection, he argues now, is of special importance to history as the Cultural Science *par excellence*, because by investigating historical records (archives, archeological discoveries, etc.) historians try to understand how human beings in the past were related to values and meanings, how these values and

meanings were experienced in the often distanced past.[94] This can only be done through empathic introspection. Naturally, the historian will also study the cultural goods of the past (the institutions, organizations, movements, theories, etc.) since they are the empirical embodiments of the non-empirical values and meanings of those days. This understanding of the meanings, the values and the norms coincides with empathy or introspection regarding the psyche, mind or consciousness of the person or persons involved. This, of course, demands a further explanation. As to empathy, the essential question is how it could be possible to draw valid conclusions from the direct experience of our own psyche about the strange psyche of others (in the present or the past) that obviously cannot be experienced directly.[95]

Rickert distinguishes understanding (*Verstehen*) and empathy (*Nacherleben*). He gives a heuristically helpful example. Often someone expresses words which we understand completely and immediately, and which for that reason are "familiar". (This is similar to Dilthey's elementary form of understanding.) Yet, at the same time, they may strike us as being "strange", preventing any feeling of empathy. This paradox of "familiar" and "strange" is illustrated by Rickert with the help of the following example. After World War I a German expresses his satisfaction about the Peace of Versailles.[96] One thing is clear, Germans in the 1920's did understand immediately the unreal meaning (*den irrealen Sinn*) of these words. They knew, in particular, without any reflection the meaning of the "familiar" words "Peace of Versailles". The reaction could indeed be: "I know what you mean." But having experienced this war, most Germans in Rickert's days, including, we may assume safely, Rickert himself, would at the same time find the statement rather "strange". They may respond by saying: "I know what you mean, but find your statement strange." We encounter here, Rickert argues, the distinction between the *understanding* of the unreal (non-empirical) meaning of the words and the *empathy* (or, in this case the lack of empathy) with the real (empirical) psychic processes within the other.[97] Now, if they do not angrily dismiss the other and turn their back on him, his fellow-Germans could, of course, make an effort to understand the psyche of the other who expressed these words. To him who expresses these words, they are not at all "strange" but on the contrary rather "lively" (*lebendig*), to his fellow-Germans they are not, or in any case, not yet "lively" at all. They had at least initially great troubles to empathize (*Nacherleben)* with what to him was "lively".

Now if they were historians, they might try to overcome this gap between their "own" psyche and the "strange" psyche of the other who expressed his satisfaction about the Peace of Versailles. However, it is only possible to know and understand directly one's own psyche, whereas there is no direct road from one's own psyche to that of another. There is only the indirect road via the understandable meanings and meaning configurations of the expressed words. German historians in Rickert's example will remind themselves of the unreal, but understandable meaning and value of the words "Peace of Versailles", and next remember through introspection how the words of satisfaction

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[94] It is interesting to remember once more the approach of so-called *cliometrics* which investigates archives natural-scientifically (statistically) and searches for general regularities ('laws') with the aim to explain rather than to understand the workings of a societal and economic configuration like slavery.

[95] Obviously, historians, archeologists in particular, will also often need to explain things in a Natural-Scientific manner, as for example in the case of the chemical compositions of food remnants, found in archeological sites, or, in these days, in the case of the genetic (DNA) composition of bones in human skeletons. This is the domain of explaining (*Erklären*) which for clarity's sake is disregardedat the moment.

[96] In a subtle value-judgment Rickert places Peace between quotation marks: "*Frieden"*. *Ibid.*, p. 575. In fact, the example given here is itself based upon a political value-judgment which, according to his own theory, is inadmissible, certainly in a logical exposition. The following quote is pregnant in this respect: 'We may content ourselves with the statement that a German who expresses satisfaction with the Peace of Versailles, thinks like a Frenchman, and perhaps we try to "empathize" with that statement on the ground of the "psychological" knowledge that there are people everywhere who, because they have had little luck in their fatherland, rejoice when the others fare badly also.' ('Wir begnügen uns eventuell damit, zu sagen, ein Deutscher, der über den Frieden von Versailles Genugtuung empfindet, denkt wie ein Franzose, und das suchen wir vielleicht "nachzuerleben" auf Grund der "psychologischen" Kenntnis, dass es überall Menschen gibt, die, weil sie in ihrem Vaterland wenig Glück gehabt haben, sich freuen, wenn es den Anderen ebenfalls schlecht geht.'). *Ibid.*, p. 579.

[97] This, of course, reminds us of the earlier discussed distinction of Frege between *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*.

regarding this peace may be "strange" to themselves, yet are apparently "familiar" to others. In other words, they will place themselves in the position of the other who expressed the words of satisfaction, and understand through their meanings and meaning configurations what has probably gone on in his mind and psyche, when he spoke such understandable, yet strange words. However, this is not to say that, in terms of value-judgments, they will agree and sympathize with the content of the words.[98]

Historians will not be satisfied with a mere understanding of meanings and meaning configurations of the past, but want to know also what is going on in the mind and psyche of the "strange" and "alien" persons under scientific scrutiny: what is driving them? They can only reach these "strange" and "alien" minds and psyches of the past indirectly by a combination of (a) the understanding of the values and meanings to which their objects of research have been related and (b) by realizing through introspection how he himself is related to values and meanings, and how they become "lively" (*lebendig*) in his own psyche and mind. Rickert calls this *Nacherleben*, i.e. living through what others experience or have experienced. The distance to Dilthey is now rather small. The difference is, of course, that Rickert focuses beyond the Diltheyean expression upon the general meaning and value configurations which form the understandable context of the historical object under investigation – in the case of the above example, the person who expressed his at first sight "strange" opinion of being satisfied with the Peace of Versailles. And the other difference is, of course, that Dilthey views in this whole operation of empathic understanding the core of the psychological discipline, whereas Rickert sticks to his almost dogmatic conviction that psychology is and should be a generalizing, i.e. natural-scientific discipline.

As he does so often, Rickert tries to explain all this by entering into a critical discussion with a fellow-philosopher. In this case he does not address himself to Dilthey which is quite understandable since his ideas about empathy are in fact so similar to Dilthey's hermeneutic psychology. He addresses himself critically to a theorem of Max Scheler who claims that it is incorrect to say that only one's own psyche could be known or understood directly, that however the psyche of others could not be understood without mediation.[99] As different as individual human beings may be, Scheler argues, they nevertheless all share the same kind of psychological constitution. But although corporeal sensations like erotic lust or physical pain are often similar, they are yet never identical. As to their kind and degree of intensity such bodily sensations are experienced by each of us personally and differently. However, psychological sensations like grief or sorrow, joy and happiness are not only similar but also identical. We can immediately empathize with the psychological sorrow or joy of someone else. Rickert questions this. Scheler's argument, Rickert points out, suffers from the psychologistic error which fails to acknowledge that the human psyche and its processes are empirical and real phenomena which we cannot immediately, without mediation, 'enter into', just as we cannot directly get at the things and processes of the objective world around us. Psycho-physical sensations such as lust, or pain, or joy in others cannot directly be understood but only 'reached at' through the mediation of related meanings and meaning configurations which in their turn, as we saw before, are related to generally valid values.

We do not feel precisely what someone else feels, when he is in grief, or experiences pain or joy. But we do know what grief, or lust, or joy, or pain *means* since such psychological processes are related to non-empirical values which are deemed to be valid. 'Grief', 'pain' or 'joy' are value-laden phenomena with a position in our general culture. When it is said "it was *one* joy, *one* grief, *one* delight that got

[98] This is similar to George Herbert Mead's theorem of the 'taking the role or position of the other'. See my *De theorie van het symbolisch interactionisme*, ('The Theory of Symbolic Interactionism'), (Amsterdam: Boom Meppel, 1973), pp.73-85. As we saw also in Chapter Three there are, despite Rickert's dislike of Pragmatism, distinct similarities between some basic theorems of Mead and Rickert's epistemology and methodology.

[99] For this debate with Scheler see *Grenzen*, pp. 568-575.

hold on the population",[100] we realize that each individual alone experiences his or her private joy, grief or delight, as far as these are psychological (empirical) realities. The experience is private and individual, but the understandable *meaning* of such a national joy, or grief, or delight is related to a objectively valid value (e.g. the nation), virtually shared by the entire population. Incidentally, Rickert, we saw in Chapter Three, is aware of the fact that there will always be dissidents who evaluate such national sentiments not positively, e.g. as a laudable patriotism, but negatively, e.g. as a despicable nationalism, since in the realm of values each positive value has its opposite counterpart: true-false, good-evil, beautiful-ugly, lust-pain, divine-demonic, etc.

In conclusion, understanding is, according to Rickert, empathy but not as a direct 'feeling into' the mind and psyche of others, either in the present or in the past. *Verstehen* is rather an 'indirect' process, a combination of (a) an understanding of the non-empirical, value-related meanings in the context of which people think, act and feel; and (b) the empathic introspection of the observer or investigator which teaches him how the values of his cultural environment and the connected meanings are "lively" at work within his own psyche and mind enabling him by analogy to grasp what is going on in the minds of others past and present. *Verstehen* is a combination of (a) and (b). Rickert calls it *empathic understanding.*[101]

Again, he admits that he is unable to present a satisfactory theory of the process of understanding and that much remains unclarified. But he hopes to have presented some first steps towards a sober understanding of understanding which is, he adds, 'scientifically more valuable than the carousing in the abstruseness and secretiveness of the "geisteswissenschaftlichen" *Verstehen.*'[102] It is questionable, if he has managed to exceed Dilthey who kept calling his psychological theory of understanding "geisteswissenschaftlich", in clarity and lucidity.

Value-relationship, relating to values and abstaining from value-judgments

It need not to be repeated again: *value-freedom* is not possible in history, or in Cultural Science, since, as Vico and others after him have argued time and again, the objects of Cultural Science are like its subjects human: human beings, human artifacts, human events, etc. Unlike the animals and atoms, molecules, light waves and sound waves, etc. of the natural sciences, the people and their cultural goods are not and can not be free from values. Nor are the historians, or the researchers of Cultural Science, ever free from values and normative value-judgments with regard to the values and value-judgments of their objects of research. Natural scientists too are, of course, not just in their personal lives but also in their research, related to values, truth in particular. Moreover, science and research are values too, objectified values, or in Rickert's terminology, cultural goods. Scientists are related to these values, loyal to and dependent on these goods. They even in some cases believe in Science as in a kind of religious or ideological substitute. It is called *scientism*. But these values and value-judgments of the natural scientists do obviously not stand in any relationships to any values of their objects of research, as is the case in Cultural Science, since the objects of natural-scientific research are simply value-free, value-indifferent.

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[100] Quotation marks by Rickert:' "es war *eine* Freude, *ein* Leid, *ein* Entzücken das die Bevölkerung ergriff." ' *Ibid.*, p. 574.

[101] 'nacherlebenes Verstehen'. Rickert, *o.c.*, p. 582.

[102] 'wissenschaftlich wertvoller als das Schwelgen in dem Tiefsinn und in den Geheimnissen des "geistewissenschaftlichen" Verstehens.' *Ibid.*, p. 559.

What is at stake here is the logical and methodological nature and differences of value-relatedness (value-relationship) as a *fact*, the relating to values as a *practice* and the abstaining from value-judgments as a methodological rule or *norm.* In the debates on the so-called value-freedom of the social sciences fact, practice and norm are usually mixed up.

Cultural Science, we have seen before, in contrast to Natural Science is characterized methodologically by the fact that it not only focuses on what is individual, particular, or unique, but also reduces the complexity of reality as a heterogeneous continuum by constantly referring, or relating to values, because by means of this relating to values (*Wertbeziehung*) the essential and relevant is separated from the inessential and irrelevant. Moreover, as we also saw before, the historian as the representative *par excellence* of Cultural Science is enabled to focus on what is individual, particular or unique because he relates his objects of investigation to values. Only he who, or that which is related to values, can logically be singled out from the irrational chaos of facts, objects, and living beings as individual, particular, unique.

There are, obviously, various kinds of value-relationship which, incidentally, Rickert does not always distinguish sharply enough. To begin with, there is the sociological fact that the objects of historical investigation – human beings, events, works of art, organizations or institutions – are always related to values. If the historian wants to investigate the life and works of Erasmus or Napoleon in order to write their biographies, he will have to study their cultural contexts, their contemporary sets of values, norms and meanings to which they are positively or negatively related. This is the value-relationship of the object of historical research. However, the historian himself is, of course, also related to his own contemporary values, norms and meanings which, needless to say, will differ significantly from those of Erasmus or Napoleon. This is in both cases the factual, sociologically determined, past and present value-relationship (*Wertbezogenheit*). To formulate it somewhat bluntly, value-relatedness (or value-relationship) is a fact like gravity. It is senseless to deny it, or to revolt against it.

Secondly, there is the act of relating objects of investigation to values by the historian (*Wertbeziehung*) which Rickert defines as a theoretical act in contrast to the practical act of expressing a normative value-judgment (*Wertung*). The latter is not just a relating to values, but a practical (political, religious, aesthetic, etc.) evaluation of present or past realities. Rickert stresses the fact that the theoretical relating of objects to values remains within the domain of scientific determination of facts and it is for that reason that he calls relating to values 'theoretical'. But the expression of normative value-judgments (evaluations, *Wertungen*) in terms of praise and reproach departs from the domain of science, belongs rather to the atheoretical world of religious, political, artistic, etc. practice. It is for that reason that he calls value-judgments 'practical'. Or, in other words, it is a fact that people acknowledge certain values as valid values and try to produce in relation to these values cultural goods. In his research the historian separates relevant facts from irrelevant ones in accordance with this relating to values of the people under investigation.

Yet, he is not concerned with the question whether these values are objectively *valid*: 'The *value-relating* procedure (…) must therefore be separated (…) as sharply as possible from the *evaluating* procedure. That means, values are only relevant for history in so far as they are *de facto* evaluated by subjects and in so far as, therefore,

certain objects are to be considered *de facto* as cultural goods.'[103] To give an example from after Rickert's death, it is for an historian as a cultural scientist irrelevant what the validity of Hitler's worldview and its values was or is. These values are only historically relevant in so far as they were evaluated positively or negatively, and deemed valid or invalid between 1933 and 1945 by Nazi's and anti-Nazi's, and in so far as the Nazi party NSDAP and the resistance movements had developed into cultural goods, i.e. objectified crystallizations of the Nazi and anti-Nazi values. All this is, of course, notwithstanding the possibility, or even the human obligation, to disclaim Hitler's worldview morally in strong terms, and thus to judge it morally invalid. But one has then made a logical transition – a *metabasis eis allo genos* – from the scientific (theoretical) to the moral (atheoretical) realm. The historian ought to be conscious of such a logical transition.

Even if in the eyes of the historian (i.e. in his own experience of values, norms and meanings) none of the values under investigation carry any validity, the fact remains that the practical relating to the values, expressed in value-judgments by the people under investigation, assists the historian to separate the scientifically relevant from the scientifically irrelevant. That is to say, without practical value-judgments on his part, but by theoretically exhibiting the value-relatedness of his objects under investigation, the historian can determine what is and what is not relevant and significant. Or, in other words still, it is through his theoretical relating to the values and the value-judgments of the people under investigation that "historical *individua*" emerge.[104] For example, historians will generally agree that the events called "French Revolution" have been significant and important for the further political, social and cultural development of France and Europe, and that therefore these events are in their individuality, particularity and uniqueness historically essential and relevant. Yet, historians will not be able to prove scientifically that the French Revolution has fostered or injured the political, social and cultural developments of France and Europe in terms of *progress* or *decline*. Those are normative, practical value-judgments which ought to be kept out of any scientific enterprise.[105] In fact, in the world of values and normative value-judgments there exists no objective validity but a permanent conflict about what is deemed to be positive or negative.[106]

Cultural-scientific objectivity

All this leads to a complex set of questions about the 'objectivity' of Cultural Science in general and history as a Cultural Science in particular. Does all this not end up in historicism and relativism?[107]

Although he criticizes him as 'the journalist of science' whose 'thought displays a constant, restless fluctuation, a crowding of questions upon questions, a dropping of problems once taken up and a failure to keep apart historical and systematic problems', Karl Mannheim (1893-1947) sees the voluminous study *Der Historismus und seine Probleme* (1922) by Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923) as the

[103] Rickert, 'Das *wertbeziehende* Verfahren (…) ist also (…) auf das schärfste vom *wertenden* Verfahren zu trennen, und das heisst: für die Geschichte kommen die Werte nur insofern in Betracht, als sie *faktisch* von Subjekten gewertet und daher *faktisch* gewisse Objekte als Güter betrachtet werden.' *Kulturwissenschaft und Naturwissenschaft*, p. 112. Italics by HR.
[104] *Ibid.*, p. 113.
[105] *Ibid.*, p. 114.
[106] *Idem*.
[107] Cf. Guy Oakes, *Weber and Rickert. Concept Formation in the Cultural Sciences*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, UK: The MIT Press, 1988). It discusses primarily the problem of the objectivity of the cultural sciences as analyzed and allegedly not at all solved by Rickert and Weber.

main source of inspiration for his own theory of historicism.[108] In fact, he follows Troeltsch when he claims that historical knowledge can only be acquired, if the historian occupies 'an ascertainable intellectual position (*Standort*) (….) harboring definite aspirations regarding the future and actively striving to achieve them. Only out of interest which the presently acting subject has in the pattern of the future, does the observation of the past become possible. The trend of historical selection, the form of objectification and representation becomes understandable only in terms of the orientation of present activity.'[109] But also the objects of historical research must be seen in terms of their sociological 'positional determination' (*Standortgebundenheit*).[110] Troeltsch, Mannheim relates with approval, rejected neo-Kantian epistemology because of its alleged formalistic conception of the knowing subject, but he obviously failed to notice Rickert's theory of the value-relatedness of both the subject and the object of historical research which comes close to his own 'positional determination'..

Mannheim broadens Troeltsch's theories considerably, defining historicism as something more than just a scientific methodology. Historicism in Mannheim's view is a worldview (*Weltanschauung*), a way of life and a state of consciousness 'which came into being', he adds, 'after the religiously determined medieval picture of the world had disintegrated and when the subsequent Enlightenment, with its dominant idea of a supra-temporal Reason, had destroyed itself.'[111] Mannheim attacks neo-Kantian, allegedly formalistic epistemology in favor of a clearly vitalistic standpoint. Historicism does not only see and experience 'every segment of the spiritual-intellectual world as in a state of flux and growth', it also seeks 'to derive an *ordering principle* from this seeming anarchy of change – only by managing to penetrate the *innermost structure* of this all-pervading change.'[112]

Rickert, of course, would object to the vitalistic core of Mannheim's historicism and would probably have joined Karl Popper who radically criticized the historicist's faith in 'historical laws' and its 'utopian social engineering', both of which are scientifically unacceptable and indefensible.[113] In *Die Probleme der Geschichtsphilosophie* ('The Problems of the Philosophy of History'), 1924, Rickert devotes a small section to historicism which he labels 'an absurdity' (*ein Unding*) since it is couched in relativism and skepticism. That must end up in a radical nihilism which always dissolves itself, because it also has to annihilate itself.[114] He is convinced that a philosophy of history which wants to avoid the nihilism of historicism needs the concept of progress. The past must not only be mediated and reconstructed but also critically evaluated in terms of what ought to be ('was sein soll'). That, of course, comes close to metaphysics which, as he always has emphasized, has no place in a scientific philosophy oriented towards the empirical reality.

The historian is related to the values of his own cultural context and will approach the objects under investigation in terms of this value-relationship. As a result, a historian will not and cannot be value-free in the sense of Natural Science. In fact, Rickert admits, he will often subject his objects and their values and value-relationships to normative (positive and/or negative) value-judgments which are, of course, not his private opinions because those are not very interesting and relevant. They are rather judgments that relate to the leading cultural values of his days.

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[108] Karl Mannheim, 'Historicism', 1924, in: Karl Mannheim, *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, transl and ed. By P. Keckskemeti, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1952), pp. 84-134; quotation: p. 98 (slightly altered by me in accordance with the German original text, ACZ).
[109] *Ibid.*, p. 102.
[110] *Ibid.*, p. 103.
[111] *Ibid.*, p. 85.
[112] *Ibid.*, p. 86.
[113] Karl Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism*, 1957, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), pp. 64-71: 'Piecemeal *versus* Utopian Engineering'. By his one-sided (very critical) focus on Karl Mannheim who identified historicism with a sociology of knowledge, Popper wrongly attacked and radically rejected this type of sociology. Cf. Peter L. Berger, Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966) which refutes from the start Mannheim's approach and takes Alfred Schutz's phenomenology as theoretical frame of reference. Being the positivist he was, Popper would probably also have rejected this type of sociology though, but could not have accused it of either historicism or holism.
[114]Heinrich Rickert, *Die Probleme der Geschichtsphilosophie*, (Heidelberg: Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1924), pp. 129-132: 'Der Historismus und seine Überwindung'. Quotation: p. 129.

Historians will often relate and refer to these leading values of their cultural environment in order to express the historical importance or significance of historical events and processes. In other words, such judgments related to the shared values of the historian's cultural context will help to demarcate the field of historical research. Yet, he should abstain from personal and private (positive or negative) value-judgments, nor is it his task to determine, whether the objects of his historical investigation are moral or immoral, beautiful or hideous, truthful or mendacious, lustful or painful, etc. This is, of course, not easy since human beings are intrinsically evaluating creatures. An example, not offered by Rickert but in the spirit of his ideas, may illustrate this. A dictator responsible for genocide is scientifically relevant because of this abhorrent fact of mass murder. But a biographer should abstain from further value-judgments for the duration of his research, trying to collect as many objective facts about the dictator's regime as possible. He should even try to understand empathically what inspired the dictator to commit or condone such abhorrent acts. What drove him, what caused his dictatorship, what were the values and anti-values he related to, what were and still are the meaning and significance of his written and spoken words?

Rickert admits further that historical investigations, or Cultural Science in general, are mutually different according to differences of the cultural contexts to which they are value-related. He calls it 'the variety of leading value-related points of view' (*die Verschiedenheit der leitenden Wertgesichtspunkte*). A simple example, given by Rickert, illustrates his point. The rejection of the emperor's crown by Friedrich Wilhelm IV is historically interesting, relevant, essential. After all, it is a bold act to refuse such an exalted office, certainly in those days. And the refusal had important political consequences to boot. However, it is historically completely irrelevant who this particular prince's tailor has been. That is to say, it is irrelevant in terms of political history, because from the viewpoint of the history of fashion or of the dress-making craft, it may again be very relevant to know who this particular tailor has been.[115] This has two methodologically far-reaching consequences. First there is obviously a shifting of historical relevances in line with the perennial changes and transformations of cultural contexts. This fact is expressed by the cliché dictum that each generation re-writes history and writes its own history. It entails, secondly, a pluriformity of historical perspectives which is, for instance, demonstrated by the co-existence of different historical schools. The question then emerges, of course, if there is any historical *objectivity*. Or re-phrased negatively, do these two consequences not imply that history, or Cultural Science, is at the end of the day hopelessly arbitrary, if not totally subjective, and beyond that turned over to relativism? If that were true, if Cultural Science were couched in *arbitrariness* and *subjectivism*, Rickert argues, it would no longer be scientific. Unlike common-sense and everyday-life experience, science wants to be systematic and is always in search of objective, i.e. absolute and timeless truth. What then is the *objectivity* of history, or Cultural Science? And what is its *systematic* nature?

The concepts of the empirical generalizing natural sciences, Rickert reminds us, are forged by one generation of researchers, and modified or radically overhauled again by the next generation, which in its turn will have to accept the fact that their concepts and theories will be succeeded by often quite different ones in the following generation. In fact, Rickert points out, Natural Science and empirical natural-scientific research are themselves historical inventions, cultural goods, which in time have

[115] Rickert, *Kulturwissenschaft und Naturwissenschaft*, p. 115f.

emerged in the European cultural context and which, as is the case with all cultural goods, are taken care of sedulously in universities and laboratories.[116]

In the recent history of science the leading focus is no longer exclusively on scientific concepts and theories of the past, but rather on scientific practices, on science in action.[117] The historians Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer engaged in a detailed historical reconstruction and interpretation of the controversy between Boyle and Hobbes over the scientific, societal and political importance of experiments and experimental life. It is a commonly accepted wisdom that with the invention of the air-pump Robert Boyle established himself in the world of science as the father and founder of the experimental method and of the experimental life of scientists (experimentalism) beyond that. Thomas Hobbes was from the start a fierce opponent of Boyle, but was immediately put aside and even ridiculed as an ignoramus by the Royal Academy first and the larger scientific community of his and later days next. Thus emerged what Shapin and Schaffer call "member's accounts" versus "stranger's accounts", i.e. positions taken by the insiders of experimentalism and positions of outsiders and contenders of experimentalism. Shapin and Schaffer did not intend to prove that Hobbes was in fact right and Boyle wrong, or the other way around, but rather assumed the role of strangers vis-à-vis the community of Boyle followers, and next studied the debate and in particular the arguments and actions of the Boyle camp from this assumed standpoint: 'We have said that we shall be setting out by pretending to adopt a "stranger's perspective" with respect to the experimental program; we shall do this because we have set ourselves the historical task of inquiring into *why* experimental practices were accounted proper and *how* such practices were considered to yield reliable knowledge. As part of the same exercise we shall be adopting something close to a "member's account" of Hobbes's anti-experimentalism. That is to say, we want to put ourselves in a position where objections to the experimental programme seem plausible, sensible, and rational.'[118] (Rickert would have applauded such a heterological approach!)

The interesting part of this contrary methodology is the fact that the mechanisms of power of an established and authoritative in-group like the Boyle experimentalists, are being demonstrated, while the belief in the self-evident nature of the experimentalist truth is being questioned. Both historians set out 'to break down the aura of self-evidence surrounding the experimental way of producing knowledge. (….) Of course, our ambition is not to rewrite the clear judgment of history: Hobbes's views found little support in the English natural philosophical community. (….) Giving other circumstances bearing upon that philosophical community, Hobbes's views might well have found a different reception.'[119] This gives an important clue of what objectivity is all about in the cultural-scientific context of history – in this case the history of science. As in a thought experiment both historians assume the position of a stranger to the experimentalist community, then the texts and facts of the debate are carefully studied from an outsider's point of view. That yields fruitful insights and knowledge of the working of power and authority within an in-group that is certain of the self-evidence of its 'truth'. Boyle was wrong, Hobbes was right? That is not what these historians set out to prove. All they did was to question the taken-for-granted assumption that Hobbes was an ignoramus in respect to the experimentalist issue, and beyond that to lay bare the mechanisms of power and authoritarianism of an in-group of believers. Actually, Shapin and Shaffer apply to historical research the principle of democratic justice formulated as "hearing the other side". They hope in this way to come closer to an objective evaluation of the past.

That the accounts of a stranger entail epistemological objectivity was argued convincingly by Georg Simmel in his short essay on 'The Stranger'. Simmel claimed that the stranger 's outsider-position entails both objectivity and freedom: 'Objectivity may also be defined as freedom: the objective individual is bound by no commitments which could prejudice his perception, understanding, and evaluation of the given.' It provides the stranger with critical 'a bird's-eye view'.[120]

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[116] *Ibid.*, p. 173.

[117] Cf. Bruno Latour, *Science in Action*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987). It is a detailed study of what goes on in laboratories and other centers of scientific research.

[118] Steven Shapin, Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump. Hobbes, Boyle, and Experimental Life*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985, p. 12f.

[119] *Ibid.*, p. 13. The Latin text of Hobbes's attack on Boyle *Dialogus Physicus de Natura Aeris* was, according to Shapin and Schaffer, never translated and read by his critics. Simon Schaffer translated it and added it to his and Shapin's book.

[120] Georg Simmel, 'The Stranger', in: Kurt H. Wolff (ed. and transl.): *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, (London: The Free Press of Glencoe; Collier-Macmillan, 1964), pp. 402-408; quotation: p. 405.

The main difference between the objectivity of Natural Science and that of Cultural Science is that the natural laws and the concepts of generalizing Natural Science are *unconditionally* valid, even if we did not possess any knowledge of them. That is, the various natural-scientific concepts come more or less close to an absolutely valid truth, while the historical expositions lack such a relationship to an absolutely valid truth, as long as the leading principles of their conceptualizations consist of actual evaluations which, Rickert adds, 'come and go like the waves in the sea'.[121]

The objectivity of a specialized historical investigation, say of the dress making craft in 17th century Germany, is in a sense assured by the relationship to the leading contextual values of the historical specialist in question. There is a forum of historical specialists who deem this topic relevant and the majority of whom is devoted to such a kind of historical research. In a sense, this forum of fellow historians and the interested readers of the subsequent publications on the dress making craft in 17th century Germany will acknowledge the value of his scientific endeavor and thus constitute the objective (intersubjective)[122] validity of the results of his research. A problem arises, when one transcends this level of empirical specialization and operates at a higher level of generality, usually called universal history (*Universalgeschichte*). At this level, Rickert argues, we need an objective and systematic concept of culture consisting of a system of objectively valid values. Such a concept of an objectively valid and systematic culture which is the logical and methodological equivalent of the absolutely valid concepts and laws of Natural Science, does not exist in reality, Rickert asserts. It must remain a hypothesis, or – and these are not Rickert's words – a kind of dream or utopia, which the empirical, specialized historical investigations try to approach as closely as possible.[123]

It is, one may add, not the utopian dream of the historicist which Popper castigated. One is rather reminded of Kant's concept of a transcendental *Idea* which is a possibility, a postulate, not a reality. In this concept of a hypothetical, objectively valid and systematic culture we find an equivalent of the objectivity and systematic nature of Natural Science: 'The unconditionally, generally valid *value* which is more or less realized by our cultural goods, must correspond with the unconditionally, generally valid *law* of nature which the generalizing sciences search for.'[124] Rickert is, however, quite honest, when he sighs that he might not have given satisfactory answers to the many reservations this theory will evoke. But then, he says as an excuse, 'the relationship of science to the validity and the systematic nature of values contains difficult problems', which he has addressed previously, he adds, in his epistemological treatise *Gegenstand der Erkenntnis* (cf. Chapter Three).[125]

However, it is possible and legitimate to speculate about the absolute objectivity of values beyond the mere hypotheses to which the empirical, specialized,

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[121] 'die kommen und gehen wie die Wellen im Meer.' *Kulturwissenschaft und Naturwissenschaft*, p. 165.

[122] Rickert does not use the concepts intersubjectivity and intersubjective but I think they do adequately cover what he meant to say about cultural-scientific objectivity.

[123] See his monograph *Probleme*, chapter 3: 'Die Geschichtsphilosophie als Universalgeschichte' , *o.c.*, pp. 121-156.

[124] 'Dem unbedingt allgemeingültigen *Gesetz* der Natur, das die generalisierenden Wissenschaften suchen, muss dann der unbedingt allgemeingültige *Wert* entsprechen, den unsere Kulturgüter mehr oder weniger realisieren.' *Ibid.*, 169f.

[125] 'das Verhältnis der Wissenschaft zur Geltung und Systematik der Werte enthält schwierige Probleme.' *Ibid.*, p. 169.

cultural sciences have to restrict themselves. At this point we, of course, remember Rickert's concept of the full-filled reality as the coping stone of his conceptualization of the reality-*in-toto*. It was discussed at the end of the former chapter where there was this remarkable shift from the realm of science to that of metaphysics. In that realm the normal concepts of science could not be used anymore. The metaphysical concepts are rather symbols or allegories, referring to virtual, sur-real realities. In his search for an absolute objectivity of Cultural Science, Rickert again leaves the scientific, empirical domain and transfers to the metaphysical, non-empirical domain, which is theoretically no longer covered by scientific history but by philosophy of history (*Geschichtsphilosophie)*. It is presented as the heterological counterpart of natural philosophy (*Naturphilosophie*).[126] Sciences always operate empirically, never metaphysically. However, the scientific disciplines adhering to the methods of Cultural Science are permanently in danger of falling back on 'naturalism' (or neo-positivism) which is, as we saw before, the belief that Natural Science is the only legitimate scientific approach to reality. It entails, of course, a radical denial of the world of meanings, values and norms which is in itself rather ideological, metaphysical and thus unscientific. But Rickert also wanted to avoid the opposite error which claims that social reality cannot be investigated in a generalizing, natural-scientific manner because human beings are not only value-related, but also 'conscious' and 'free'. They are individuals whose thoughts, emotions and acts ought not to be explained in terms of natural-scientific laws of causality (*Erklären*), but can allegedly only be understood (*Verstehen*) in an empathic manner. We have seen how Rickert accepts the notion of empathic understanding (of the values of the subjects under historical investigation), but rejects any metaphysical connotations, since metaphysics can never be part of empirical and specialized, scientific investigations. All that belongs to the domain of philosophy, or the philosophy of history.

Since we focus in this chapter on the logic and methodology of history and related cultural sciences, we will not deal with Rickert's endeavors in the domains of metaphysics. Much of it has been covered already by the former chapter. There is one final issue we still must discuss: Rickert's dealing with the idea of causality in Cultural Science.

Causality in Cultural Science

Rickert, we saw in the Introduction and in the second chapter, is often in opposition to fashionable ideas and theories, and discusses them, as it were *e contrario*, in order to be able to clarify his own thinking. Causality in history, or in Cultural Science is, in his day particularly, a hotly debated issue giving rise to conceptualizations and methodological propositions which he takes apart analytically without compromises, often operating on the sharp edge of his logical raiser blade.

So, in the tradition of *Geisteswissenschaft* it has been popular to claim that causality has no place in it, since human beings are 'free' and therefore not caught in the webs of cause and effect.[127] Consequently, its approach is allegedly not causal, i.e.

[126] See the last part of *Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung,* entitled 'Naturphilosophie und Geschichtsphilosophie", *ibid.*, pp. 624-736.

[127] This is not the place to discuss in depth Max Weber's theory of cultural-scientific causality which he interprets in terms of 'causal imputation' which he links to rational 'ideal types'. See e.g. Max Weber, 'Knies und das Irrationalitätsproblem', in: *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre, o.c.*, pp. 42-145, particularly pp. 127ff. Rickert's echo, as discussed in more detail in Chapter Six, is loud and clear in these logical considerations of Weber.

its focus is not causally on origins, but teleologically on ends. In this teleogical focus man is defined as being essentially free. Needless to say that Rickert rejects such metaphysical juxtapositions. Often, he argues, the concept of freedom is, together with that of casualness (*Zufälligkeit*), dished up as the opposing counterpart of causality. Freedom is then reduced to something like 'causelessness' (*Ursachlosigkeit*) which is philosophically not very helpful. One may believe in freedom as a kind of 'transcendent' freedom of the will, but it is logically very hazardous to apply such a concept to an empirical science like history, let alone to found its methodology upon it. History as a specialized cultural science can admittedly not apply the generalizing concepts and methods of Natural Science, but that is the case *not* because its objects of investigation, human beings, are allegedly free creatures, but because these creatures must be investigated and understood in their individuality, particularity and uniqueness. Causality is logically not the issue, the generalizing method is! As we saw before, history as a Cultural Science is characterized by the individualizing approach, *not* by the alleged fact that it focuses on human freedom. Thus, the idea that history is concerned with free individuals which is then contrasted to Natural Science whose objects and processes are causally conditioned, does logically and methodologically not make sense.[128] It is not an empirical but a metaphysical idea.

Much confusion around the idea of the 'causal method' which he calls 'a meaningless catchword',[129] are caused, according to Rickert, by the erroneous identification of the concept of *empirical causality* with that of *conceptual, law like regularity* (*Gesetzmässigkeit*). There is an important, often overlooked difference between them: in order to be real, empirically causal relations are individual, particular and non-repeatable realities, whereas the laws of Natural Science are not real but conceptual, not individual but general. So we ought to speak of 'individual' causal connections as empirical realities and of 'general', natural laws as abstract concepts.[130]This holds true for both Natural Science and Cultural Science.

Max Weber follows Rickert in this logical distinction closely, but re-phrases it as follows. Discussing the duality of cause and effect he introduces the two concepts 'real origin' (*Realgrund*) and 'epistemic origin' (*Erkenntnisgrund*) and warns never to confuse them. He gives two examples to clarify the distinction. There was in his days an anthropologist who had studied the relationships between the sexes in two American-Indian tribes. He then concluded that these relationships caused the formation of a state and he, in addition, claimed that this case was 'typical' for all state formations and thus possessed universally historical relevance. Now, Weber argues, it is obvious that the alleged state formation among these Indian tribes did not have any real, empirical impact on state formations elsewhere in the world. In that respect – that is, as 'real origin' – this historical and empirical case of state building has been of no importance whatsoever. However, Weber continues, it is possible that the anthropologist's analysis of this specific case of state building may be heuristically effective in that it provides knowledge about how states are generally being formed. This specific case of state formation may well be, heuristically useful, and thus present an 'epistemological origin'.

The second example stems from the world of 'nature', as Weber phrases it. The concrete X-rays that Röntgen saw flash from his screen, left concrete effects in his environment which, according to the law of the conservation of energy, must still be effective in the cosmos. However, it is not this real, cosmic cause-and-effect that render these discovered X-rays important and relevant, but the fact that they and Röntgen's experiments increased our knowledge about the laws of these rays in particular and of energy in general.[131]

[128] Rickert, *Grenzen*, p. 378.
[129] Rickert, *Probleme*, p. 48.
[130] *Idem.*
[131] Weber, *Wissenschaftslehre*, pp. 234-238.

Logically this distinction, as phrased by Weber, remains, I find, questionable. The 'real origin' can, of course, never be 'detected' without the intervention of concepts and is thus, in the end 'epistemological' as well. That is proven by Weber's own theory of 'causal imputation' by means of *ideal types.*[132] Moreover, he tries to connect this logical distinction of *Realgrund* and *Erkenntnisgrund* with Windelband's and Rickert's methodological distinction of the idiographic/individualizing and nomothetic/generalizing approaches to reality, but gets, in my opinion, quite confused in the process.[133] Rickert avoids such confusions by sticking to his differentiation of the individualizing and generalizing methods as two heterological, correlated modes of scientific knowledge of reality.

Historical facts – persons, things, events, institutions, etc. – are never isolated realities as they are always constitutive parts of larger totalities, and they continuously act upon each other in terms of cause and effect. Cultural Science searches for causal origins and causal effects just as Natural Science does, and it is senseless to claim, as often happened in Rickert's days, that there were two alternatives: causality (reserved for Natural Science) and teleology (reserved for Cultural Science, or history). It is false, Rickert says time and again, to think in terms of two opposed realities, causally conditioned nature and causeless historical development: 'we only know *one* empirical reality which constitutes the only material of the natural-scientific as well as the historical disciplines. And the *general* forms of this reality, for instance causality, must be relevant to the generalizing as well as the individualizing sciences.'[134]

Systematic coherence is one of the hallmarks of science. In Natural Science this coherence consists of generic concepts (*Gattungsbegriffe*) which constitute lawful regularities (*Naturgesetze*). There are, according to Rickert, in history as a Cultural Science two dimensions which constitute systematic coherence. There are, to begin with, the *synchronic relationships* of the objects investigated or events with their surrounding environment (*Umwelt*). These connections can in principle be extended well-nigh endlessly. There must be a limit to them, but it is hard to determine what that limit is and where it should be drawn. Theoretically, each particular object of investigation relates to a vast network of connected objects which in the end is reality--*in-toto*, the last and final totality which, of course, is hard to deal with empirically. In a specialized, historical investigation one will not stretch these synchronic connections to the utter limit of such an unfathomable total reality. Depending on the main issue or theme of the specialized investigation, the historian will impose certain limits on his investigation of the synchronic connections. But there are, secondly, also and at the same time, the *diachronic developments* of the investigated historical objects which were caused by former objects that in their turn were again caused by previous objects. Here too, one could in principle continue the causal lines of development *ad infinitum*, as in an endless regression, moving from stage to stage of development, until one hits the absolute origin of all these developing objects. This will also not make much sense in an empirical, specialized historical investigation. Historical regressions in time will also be limited in accordance with the main issues and themes under investigation.[135]

There is, of course, a formidable problem here: what precisely are the limits of the synchronic extension and the diachronic regression? Where does, for instance, the historian who investigates the

[132] *Ibid.*, pp. 190-214.
[133] *Ibid.*, p. 237.
[134] 'wir kennen nur *eine* empirische Wirklichkeit, die das einzige Material der naturwissenschaftlichen sowohl als auch der historischen Disziplinen bildet, und die *allgemeinen* Formen dieser Wirklichkeit, z.B. die Kausalität, müssen für die generalisierenden ebenso wie für die individualisierenden Wissenschaften von Bedeutung sein.' Rickert, *Grenzen*, p. 373.
[135] Rickert, *Probleme*, p. 44.

Russian October Revolution, end his scrupulous investigations of all the synchronic and diachronic facts and processes which bear causally upon this particular object of research? Rickert argues that it depends on the main issue or theme of his specialized investigation. But that is still rather arbitrary, since in that case the limits were in the end rather individually determined, as it is the historian himself who decides that certain facts do no longer contribute heuristically to his investigation of this particular issue or theme under investigation.

It would be more in the line of his main course of argumentation, if Rickert referred here also to the dominant, intersubjectively valid values of the historian's time and society. It is, after all, this set of values which assists him in separating the relevant from the irrelevant data. It is simultaneously this set of values which will determine where the heuristically fruitful limits of the synchronic and diachronic network of causal strings lie. In the case of the October Revolution, for example, the historian of the 1970's, operating in what then was called the Cold War, will focus on different individual facts and different causal (synchronic and diachronic) networks of facts than the historian of today. Likewise a German historian of today will investigate the fateful years 1933-1945 with a different focus than his colleagues from the 1950's and 1960's – apart from the fact that there were and still are differences in view between historians from West- and historians from East-Germany. Today, German historians will (and do) pay more attention to the suffering of the German people after 1943, than their predecessors would do (or dared to do) thirty or twenty years ago.

Historical developments are not undifferentiated flows in time, but usually exhibit certain stages which, in order to be individual and mutually different, must contain, according to Rickert, some innovation, i.e. something new and not yet existing.[136] They are thus only individual, particular, and unique – that is, historically interesting and significant facts. This shows once more that history cannot be molded by the generalizing concepts and laws of Natural Science. As we have seen before, Rickert dismisses theories about 'the laws of history', as the cultural-scientific equivalents of the 'laws of nature', as unscientific, metaphysical constructions which are usually not free from ideological, political value-judgments. Yet, this is not to say that Cultural Science could not conceptually construct lawful regularities of historical developments.

At this point Rickert's arguments become very complex and admittedly rather abstract, if not vague, which is, of course, due to the fact that he apparently introduces now in the logical realm of history as the prime example of individualizing Cultural Science a clearly generalizing concept like 'the laws of development'. He has argued up till now that, unlike such disciplines as psychology or sociology, history could not apply conceptual generalizations. History, he claimed earlier, is a radically individualizing kind of Cultural Science. How does he solve the apparent contradictions which emerge, when he introduces the notion of 'laws of development'?

The following theorem of Weber is, I think, quite enlightening. Arguments of cause and effect in the cultural sciences, he argues, appertain to rules and regularities. There are five logically different, yet corresponding historical facts which have relevance with regard to causality. He takes Goethe's love letters addressed to Frau von Stein as example. (1) To begin with, the objectively observable fact of the paper Goethe used is, of course, historically irrelevant. But there is another fact which is historically important, namely the content of these letters, i.e. the expressions of Goethe's feelings towards the lady, i.e. the actual meaning (*Sinn*) of these letters which can be analyzed and interpreted scientifically. These sentiments must have had a tremendous impact on Goethe's literary personality and it is scientifically relevant to reconstruct the effect of this on the poet's creations. Weber does not formulate it thus, but he refers, of course, to the *Realgrund* which the literary historian will try to uncover. (2) Let us assume, Weber continues, that there is no such impact on Goethe's creations. In that case, these intimate letters still bear historical relevance, because they will provide a unique insight into his way of life and into his particular view of life. In other words, these letters are historically relevant as *Erkenntnisgrund*, as a means to acquire knowledge of Goethe's view of life and the world.

[136] *Ibid.*, p. 46.

(3) But, given Goethe's status and position, the contents of these letters may also throw light on the typical way of living in certain circles of the German society of those days. They then function as an epistemological means to acquire knowledge about the characteristic cultural habitude of those circles in those days, distinct from the ways of life in other times and in other societies. The letters are then placed, as it were, in a cultural-historical causal configuration. (4) However, it is possible that these letters reveal cultural characteristics which go beyond the particular features of Goethe's time and society, which are actually quite generally relevant and can be used as material for a cultural psychology or social psychology which, being sciences, aim at analytical, abstract and generalizing regularities ('laws'). In this approach the individual and unique sentiments and experiences of Goethe are in themselves irrelevant. They are only relevant as a means for the acquisition of scientific 'generic concepts' (*Gattungsbegriffe*). (5) Finally, if all of these four instances are irrelevant it is still possible that a psychiatrist, interested in the psychology of eroticism, subjects these letters to his brand of investigation. Goethe's letters to Frau von Stein may function in that case as an 'ideal typical' example of a type of erotic behavior which, Weber adds, can without doubt be compared to Rousseau's *Confessions*.[137]

In view of Rickert's theory of cultural objectivity, causality and generalization these five constructed stages from the highly historically-individual to the very general-natural-scientific is, I think, quite enlightening.

Rickert follows Kant who argued that causality is a transcendental category by means of which we are able to think about reality, if we want to consider it as 'nature'. But he adds that Kant did not restrict this idea of *categorical causal imputation* to the natural sciences, as has often be claimed, but applied it to each specialized, natural and cultural science. History in particular, Rickert claims, was according to Kant in need of such a categorical imputation of causality, if it wanted to understand the course of events in time.[138] However, this should not lead to the false conclusion that history then needs to determine, what the causal laws of historical developments are, because in that case one would again fall back upon the naturalistic fallacy which claims that the generalizing method of Natural Science is the only legitimate scientific method. The concept of causality is then falsely identified with that of natural law.

Speaking about causality in the case of Cultural Science, Rickert distinguishes three different concepts. First there is the basic principle that every event or happening in time has a cause. It is, so to say, the *categorical causality principle*. (This is, of course, a typically Kantian, transcendental, a priori concept of causality.) Second, there are historical, thus *specific and particular configurations* which we may define as distinct (synchronic and diachronic) relationships of cause and effect and which are particular, individual and unique parts of reality. Third, there are *causal laws* which in a generalizing manner group together what various historical configurations have in common in the manner of causes and effects. They constitute general judgments (*allgemeine Urteile*) whose content consists of what various individual causal configurations repeat and have in common This is surprising because it constitutes clearly the introduction of a generalizing conceptualization in history as a Cultural Science which Rickert previously expressedly called impossible and thus inadmissible.[139] These repetitive and similar regularities in history resemble strongly the laws of Natural Science. Apparently, there are, as Rickert sums it up, in

[137] *Ibid.*, pp. 241-244.

[138] Rickert, *Grenzen*, p. 374f. This is an interesting interpretation of Kant's theory of causality, because it is usually believed that Kant restricted the idea of causality, as most of the other categories, to the natural sciences.

[139] In *Grenzen* Rickert was still very explicit about this. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 376-384. In *Probleme* (1924), as we will see later, he apparently changed his mind on this issue. It is interesting to observe that he did not incorporate this change in the revised 5th edition of *Grenzen*, which came out five years after publication of *Probleme*.

history as a specialized cultural-scientific discipline (a) individual, or historical and (b) general or natural-scientific causal configurations, both of which must be distinguished from (c) the basic (transcendental, a priori) principle or category of causality.[140] It is (b) that is surprising!

Naturally, this needs further explanation. Why and how are 'causal laws' employed in a historical analysis of a particular chain of cause and effect? The reason is that the historian is not just interested in the merely accidental sequence of cause and effect in time, but as a scientist he also wants to understand the *necessity* by which this individual, unique, never recurring effect emerged from this individual, unique, never recurring cause or origin. 'The historian namely not only wants to indicate the temporal succession of cause and effect, but wants to receive insight also in the *necessity* with which this individual, never recurring effect emerges from this individual, never recurring cause. In doing so a *detour* alongside general concepts of causal relationships and maybe causal laws is unavoidable.'[141] In other words, the causes and effects are empirical realities and therefore individual, particular and unique, but that what bridges these causes and effects are often molded in 'a spatial and time bound "scheme" of everywhere and always.'[142]

Let me illustrate what Rickert means by the following example. The Glorious Revolution is a shorthand concept for a complex configuration of very individual, particular and unique (diachronic and synchronic) processes of cause and effect, so are the French Revolution, and the Russian Revolution. Now, if the historian wants to demonstrate why it is logically legitimate to label these three different historical configurations by the general concept of 'revolution', he must search for regularities in the individual cause-and-effect developments constituting the three historical configurations. Individual effects are, so to say, grouped together in generalizing concepts and then connected with individual causes which are also grouped together in generalizing concepts, and these generalizing concepts of cause and effect are then, as it were, tied together in a *schematic* development which carries the character of *necessity*. In order to be legitimately called 'revolution' the three configurations, and similar ones in history, *must* be molded by these general, law like processes of cause and effect. Needless to add, that they also carry the character of an if-then proposition or 'natural law'. Rickert adds that this exercise will not always be possible in the neat manner just formulated. Often there are not sufficient historical data to reconstruct such schematic and generalizing connections of individual causes and individual effects. In that case causal necessity cannot be demonstrated, or if so only hypothetically. Often, Rickert sneers, historians then speak of the apparent 'freedom' of the historical subjects.[143]

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[140] *Ibid.*, p. 376.

[141] 'Der Historiker will nämlich nicht nur die zeitliche Folge von Ursache und Wirkung angeben, sondern auch einen Einblick in die *Notwendigkeit* gewinnen, mit der aus dieser individuellen, nie wiederkehrenden Ursache diese individuelle, nie wiederkehrende Wirkung hervorgeht, und dabei ist ein *Umweg* über allgemeine Begriffe von Kausalverhältnissen und eventuell Kausalgesetzen nicht zu vermeiden.' Rickert, *Probleme*, p. 49.

[142] 'das räumliche und zeitliche "Schema" des überall und immer.' *Idem.*

[143] *Ibid.* p. 50. Rickert's argument in question is, as I said, abstract and rather vague. The example of the three revolutions was not given by him, but illustrates sufficiently, I believe, what he meant to say. I think that whereas Natural Science operates with if-then-propositions (and only-if!), the schematic and causal regularities of Cultural Science, and history in particular, are better formulated by when-then-propositions. It does not make sense to add 'and only when' to these propositions, as is for instance illustrated by the so-called unintended consequences and the elective affinities (*Wahlverwandtschaften*) which played such a big role in Max Weber's cultural sociology. See my *De relativiteit van kennis en werkelijkheid. Inleiding tot de kennissociologie,* ('The Relativity of

Conclusion

Generalizing, value-free Natural Science and individualizing, value-relating Cultural Science are the 'ideal typical', logically constructed extreme ends of a continuum on which the empirical natural and social sciences operate. Sometimes they come very close to the one extreme, as in the case of history which Rickert well-nigh identified with Cultural Science, although it too carried generalizing elements as we just saw when we discussed the 'laws' of historical development. Most empirical, specialized natural sciences, on the other hand, operate close to the other extreme, Natural Science, but here too there are exceptions, as in the case of evolutionary biology which, according to Rickert, works with individualizing, historical concepts. Contrary to the advocates of a *Geisteswissenschaft* he positioned psychology close to the Natural Science pole of the continuum, arguing that 'materially' the human being is a psycho-physical unity of mind-and-body and that 'formally', i.e. logically, nothing stood in the way of psychologists approaching this mind-and-body in a generalizing, natural-scientific manner. Modern psychologists do not have to adhere to behaviorism and similar exact schools in psychology, to agree with him wholeheartedly.

Yet, it remains questionable within the terms of Rickert's own continuum of sciences to pin down one single discipline to one of the two logical extremes, as he does in the case of history as an almost exclusively Cultural Science and psychology as an almost exclusively Natural Science. As to the empirical natural sciences, developments since Einstein, Bohr and Heisenberg have indicated that Rickert's definition of the 'material' object of natural-scientific research in terms of mechanically moving 'things' is old-fashioned, while his exclusive positioning of the contemporary natural sciences on the logical extreme of Natural Science is no longer possible. The extremes are, maybe more than he was aware of, indeed non-empirical 'ideal types', formal and abstract *limes concepts*. Historians can legitimately try to move from the one end of Cultural Science to the other end of Natural Science, as has been tried by the proponents of so-called *cliometrics*.[144] Likewise, psychologists can legitimately develop their discipline as an historically and culturally oriented discipline. There are, of course, scores of historical-psychological studies belonging to the Cultural Science pole of Rickert's continuum. Let me give just one, rather unconventional example. Although admittedly strongly criticized by most psychologists and historians, an interesting case is presented by the Dutch psychologist J. H. van den Berg in his *Metabletica or Theory of Changes* (1956) which bore the telling sub-title: 'Principles of a Historical Psychology'. It is an unconventional, at times rather fanciful and capricious study of often very subtle changes in the consciousness of Western men and women – changes which Van den Berg connects with societal transformations.[145]

Knowledge and Reality. Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge'), (Amsterdam: Boom Meppel, 1974), on the logica of elective affinity: pp. 137-142

[144] Cf. Robert W. Fogel, Stanley L. Engerman, *o.c.*

[145] J. H. van den Berg, *Metabletica of de Leer der Veranderingen*, 1956, translated as *The Changing Nature of Man. Introduction to a Historical Psychology*, (New York: Delta Books, 1983) An application of this theory to the changes in our attitudes towards the human body is J. H. van den Berg, *Het menselijk lichaam. Een metabletisch onderzoek*, ('The Human Body. A Study in Metabletica'), (Nijkerk: Callenbach, 1959). The theory was also applied to socio-psychological and sociological transformations in J. H. van den Berg, *Leven in meervoud. Een metabletisch onderzoek*, 1963, translated as *Divided Existence and Complex Society*, (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University, 1974). The

This leads to another point of possible criticism. Rickert warns against generalizing historical studies which tried to demonstrate the existence of long-term regularities as the equivalents of natural-scientific laws. They would inevitably end up in metaphysical and ideologically normative visions which would not have any scientific value and validity. As we saw, he refers to Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West* as a telling example, and could have added Arnold Toynbee's *A Study of History* as well. History in particular, he emphasizes time and again, is an individualizing discipline and should not try to imitate the generalizations of Natural Science, lest it drifts off into muddy metaphysics. Yet, his friend and colleague Max Weber, for instance, did also design a grand sociological theory of socio-economic change, in which he defined the modernization of the Western world as *a process of increasing rationalization* – a process which he viewed as an ever broadening and deepening 'disenchantment'.[146] As the encompassing and generalizing approach of Weber clearly demonstrates, attempts to arrive at a universal history do not necessarily have to end up in unscientific metaphysical vistas. The fascinating aspect of Weber's methodology is indeed that he moves back and forth on the continuum of the generalizing and the individualizing approaches to reality.

Another interesting example of a historical, cultural-scientific sociology which tries to demonstrate a long-term development in a generalizing manner without drifting off into metaphysics is Norbert Elias's celebrated study of *the process of civilization* which he published prior to World War II but with which he gained fame only several decades later. Starting at the end of the Middle Ages in the courtly society of absolutism but then developing further into the circles of the urban bourgeoisie, a process got hold of men and women in which they increasingly learned to curb bodily and psychical impulses. Burping, defecating, urinating, making love, etc. were gradually and ever intensively banned from public life, the threshold of shame was heightened, children were imbued with a 'constraint from outside' (*Fremdzwang*) which had to grow into an 'inner constraint' (*Selbstzwang*) behind the heightened threshold of shame. Beyond these psychological transformations, Elias demonstrates in two volumes packed with often minute historical (quite individual) data, how also fundamental sociological and political-scientific changes occurred. The social relationships between human beings became long, thin and abstract chains of interdependence – from clans, to villages, to cities, to regions, to nations, to nation-states, to continents. Likewise, organizations and institutions transformed radically in the direction of multinational and supranational bodies in which communication and power relations altered in proportion.

In short, Elias combines the individualizing historical approach with a generalizing approach without ending up in metaphysical and ideological quicksand.[147]

This can also be applied to economics and sociology. It is legitimate to define both disciplines, as much as is possible, as representatives of Natural Science, as

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neologism 'metabletica' which Van den Berg coined for his brand of historical research, is derived from the Greek verb 'metaballein' which means to change, to transform.

[146] Cf. Max Weber, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte. Abriss der universalen Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, ('Economic History. Outline of the Universal Social and Economic History'), reconstructed from posthumous lectures by S. Hellmann and M. Palyi, J. F. Winckelmann, ed. (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1958).

[147] Norbert Elias, *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation. Soziogenetische und Psychogenetische Untersuchungen*, ('On the Process of Civilisation. Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations'), 2 volumes, 1936, (Bern, München: Francke Verlag, 1969, 2nd ed.). Also Norbert Elias, *Die höfische Gesellschaft*, ('The Courtly Society'), 1969, (Darmstadt, Neuwied: Luchterhand Verlag, 1975, 2nd ed.). In a brief autobiographical essay Elias (1897-1990) relates that he attended Rickert's seminars when he studied at the University of Heidelberg in the 1920's. He was, however, not influenced by Rickert's epistemology, or for that matter by Max Weber's methodology, since he had obviously no antenna for philosophical issues. Norbert Elias, 'Notities bij mijn levensloop', ('Notes regarding my Course of Life'), Dutch translation from a German text by R.Knijff, in: A. de Swaan c.s. (eds.), *De geschiedenis van Norbert Elias*, ('The History of Norbert Elias'), (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1987), pp. 93-164.

actually happens in the case of *econometrics* and neo-positivist sociology[148], but it is as legitimate to rather move more in the direction of the other logical extreme, that of Cultural Science, as happens in *institutional economics* and *cultural sociology*. They are then methodologically defined as historical and comparative economics and historical and comparative sociology.[149] As we have seen, Rickert once suggested that the continuum should indeed be seen as flexible as this, but in general he stuck to the rather tenacious conviction that history is an individualizing discipline, whereas the social sciences are 'typically' Natural-Scientific, and thus generalizing sciences.

Sociology is an interesting case. Rickert sees this discipline, like psychology, as a science which focuses materially on 'culture', not on 'nature', but operates formally (i.e. logically and methodologically), like psychology, as a representative of Natural Science. Even the *verstehende Soziologie* of Max Weber is mentioned several times by Rickert as an example of a social science which operates as a generalizing Natural Science. Max Weber who in his methodology was deeply influenced by Rickert, is indeed of special interest here, as he published widely in the logic of science (*Wissenschaftslehre*) and demonstrated in his sociological investigations and publications that he actually moved on the logical continuum of Rickert, sometimes very closely to Natural Science, as in the case of his posthumously published *general* (sic!) sociology, entitled *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, and then again very closely to Cultural Science, as in the case of his historical and comparative essays in the sociology of religion.

Weber, who was trained as a legal scholar, but developed great expertise in history, economics, sociology and comparative religion, is generally considered to be one of the great masters of the social sciences. As no one else, he demonstrated how inspiring and influential Rickert's thinking and writing has been and still can be. He was indeed the most important but not the only scholar who was methodologically inspired and influenced by Rickert. The next and last chapter discusses what I like to call the echo of Rickert in the socio-cultural sciences. It is only a selection but, I trust, a representative one.

[148] The concept *sociometrics* has never got hold of the sociological discipline. It remained restricted to the so-called small-groups research.

[149] The classic study in institutional economics is, of course, Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, 1942, (London: Unwin University Books, 1974, 13th ed.). Institutional, historical economics is, of course, not the same as economic history, although the difference is at times very thin, as is exemplified by a classic scholar like Werner Sombart. Cf. his six volumes history of capitalism *Der moderne Kapitalismus*, 1916, (München, Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1921-1927). See also Werner Sombart, *Warum gibt es in den Vereinigten Staaten keinen Sozialismus?*, ('Why is there no Socialism in the United States?'), 1906, (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969).