

Chapter Four

Facts, Values and Meaningful Acts

‘Wenn es Wirklichkeitssinn gibt, muss es auch Möglichkeitssinn geben.’

Robert Musil.¹

The total and bifocal reality

When he speaks of the various sciences, as we saw in the former chapter, Rickert emphasizes two characteristics. First, most scientists have a rather naïve notion of the objectivity of reality. It is a kind of common-sense positivism which leads them to believe that reality is only real because it exists independently of subjects, who live in it, and act upon it. They believe, in other words, in the solid objectivity of facts and are not plagued by epistemological doubts about a possible epistemological rift between immanence and transcendence, between values and facts, norms and acts. This naïve positivism is, according to Rickert, legitimate, especially, as we shall see in the next chapter, if it occurs in the realm of the generalizing, ahistorical natural sciences. When engaged in empirical research, the scientist should not bother to reflect upon these epistemological issues and problems. Philosophical considerations remain important for them, but they are methodological by nature and pertain to the logic of the specific fields of research. If scientists venture upon general philosophical issues, they easily end up in unscientific metaphysics, such as vitalistic biologism, psychologism, historicism, sociologism or economic materialism. Yet, it stands to reason that within the framework of general philosophy the epistemological issues and problems cry for a theoretical analysis and for a solution to boot.

Second, the various scientific disciplines are, as Rickert often phrases it, *Spezialwissenschaften* (special and specialized sciences) which focus only upon mutually isolated parts of reality. The specialists of physics, chemistry, and astronomy, or, for that matter, those of psychology, sociology, history, or economics approach reality in a specialized manner. In a sense, each discipline cuts out of reality its specialized part, and subjects it to its specific brand of research. Even if they aspire to so-called ‘interdisciplinary studies’, they still merely combine specializations and do not approach reality in its totality. It also entails in the end an unavoidable compartmentalization of reality.

¹ ‘When there is a sense of reality, there must be also a sense of possibility.’ Robert Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, (The Man without Qualities), 1952, (Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag), p. 16.

Rickert wants to save an autonomous place for philosophy, next to these specialized sciences. If in philosophy one sticks to naive positivism, and if one also accepts the inherent compartmentalization of reality as an unavoidable fate, philosophy would be limited to logic and compartmentalized methodology of the sciences. Or, even worse, philosophy would be 'upgraded' into some sort of encompassing metaphysics floating in abstract air high above the fields of the various scientific disciplines, dictating the sciences how to behave. Vitalism, as we saw, presented according to Rickert a telling and fateful example. He rejects both options. The former is too modest, the latter too pretentious. Philosophy is scientifically unsustainable, if it does not entertain clear and peaceful relationships with the specialized, empirical sciences. He coins a witty metaphor in which he dresses philosophy in a royal coat: 'Also the queen of the sciences may only reign in harmony with the parliament of the single scientific parties. The times of her absolute monarchy are over.'²

As to the scientific compartmentalization of reality, Rickert tries to develop a scientific brand of philosophy - and by 'scientific' he means 'focused upon reality' and 'logically sound'. It is a philosophy of values which supersedes the various scientific disciplines, but does not present a brand of overarching metaphysics emerging from one or other scientific discipline. It has its own autonomous place alongside, and in addition to, the various specialized sciences. He defines the reality which philosophy should theoretically analyze and conceptually grasp, as a *totality* of which the compartmentalized fields of the scientific disciplines are the parts. However, this totality is more than and different from the sum of its parts: 'The totality of the world is something else than the aggregate of its parts. Moreover, if someone has understood all the parts, he has not yet grasped the totality scientifically. (...) The totality is nothing but the name for the form which holds all the parts together.'³ It is an autonomous reality with its own constitution and characteristics. We cannot put it together by placing, as it were, the various scientific disciplines in a row and adding them up into one gigantic whole. This is a misconceived sort of holism which Rickert rejects. There would be, in all probability, no end to this row. It would yield an 'endless reality' (*unendliche Wirklichkeit*), representing a semi-empirical, and rather metaphysical kind of whole. Indeed, specialists of the various sciences have come up with such metaphysical speculations as is testified by biologism, psychologism, historicism, etc. In all these cases one can observe the typically holistic *pars pro toto* reasoning.

Next to *holism* as a metaphysical system based on biology, which was explicated first by Jan Christiaan Smuts in 1926, Wolfgang Köhler's *Gestalt* psychology and Kurt Lewin's *Field Theory* come to mind here. J. C. Smuts (1870-1950), South-African General and Prime Minister who was a student in literature and science at Stellenbosch University and studied law at Cambridge University, saw 'holism' as a tendency in the organic world which incessantly forge parts into wholes that acquire autonomy vis-à-vis the parts: 'Both matter and life consist of unit structures whose ordered grouping produces natural wholes which we call bodies or organisms. The character of "wholeness" meets us everywhere and points to something fundamental in the universe.'⁴ He saw six 'progressive phases' in the holistic evolution of the world: (1) The sheer synthesis of parts in the inorganic world which lack

² 'Auch die Königin der Wissenschaften darf nur in Harmonie mit dem Parlament der einzelwissenschaftlichen Parteien regieren. Die Zeiten ihrer absoluten Monarchie sind vorbei.' Heinrich Rickert, *Allgemeine Grundlegung der Philosophie I*, (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1921), p. 94.

³ '... das Ganze der Welt ist etwas anderes als das Aggregat ihrer Teile, und auch wer alle Teile begriffen hat, hat daher noch nicht das Ganze wissenschaftlich erfasst. (...) Das Ganze ist nichts als der Name für die Form, die alle Teile zusammenhält.' Heinrich Rickert, *o.c.*, p. 16f.

⁴ Jan C. Smuts, *Holism and Evolution*, 1926, (New York: The Viking Press, 1961), p. 86.

mutual internal activities as in a chemical compound. (2) The synthesis of parts with mutual activities in order to maintain the body as in plants. (3) The co-operative activities are centrally controlled, yet implicit and unconscious as in animals. (4) The central control is conscious and culminates in a single personality, or collectively in societal groups. (5) In human associations this control is superseded by the state and similar group organizations. (6) 'Finally, there emerge the ideal wholes, or Holistic Ideals, or Absolute Values, disengaged and set free from human personality, operating as creative factors on their own account in the upbuilding of a spiritual world. Such are the Ideals of Truth, Beauty and Goodness, which lay the foundations of a new order in the universe.'⁵ Phase 6 is very similar, as we shall see, to Rickert's notion of the 'realm of values'. Yet, Smuts social philosophy and metaphysics are very different, because to Rickert absolute values are not empirical emergences from 'lower' systems but unreal, transcendent *forms*. Rickert would, of course, also reject the metaphysical idea of 'holism' as an ubiquitous process in the universe. It results in a mere adding-up of so-called 'unit structures' without any systematic order. The result is limitless and thus unknowable.

Köhler's well-known psychological notion of a *Gestalt*, i.e. a structured whole, seems likewise to be similar to Rickert's concept of totality, but is also essentially different. Rickert would sympathize with Köhler (1887-1967), yet remark that the concept of *Gestalt* belongs to the specialized discipline of psychology, not to general philosophy. Therefore it cannot contribute to a general-philosophical and transcendental notion of the cosmos as a totality. The following quote corroborates this: 'Phenomenally the world is neither an indifferent mosaic nor an indifferent continuum. It exhibits definite segregated units or contexts in all degrees of complexity, articulation and clearness. Secondly such units show properties belonging to them as contexts or systems.'⁶ That might be psychologically correct, philosophically this notion is useless.

Smuts combined his idea of wholes with that of fields. As there are, he argued, fields of energy in physics, there are fields or zones of energy around concepts and theories, as well as around things and objects.⁷ This resembles the well-known *Field Theory* of Kurt Lewin (1890-1947) which was forged and applied by him as a method of studying group dynamics. It is essential according to Lewin to observe the individual within his or her situation and to view that situation as a whole, as a field: 'What is important in field theory is the way the analysis proceeds. Instead of picking out one or another isolated element within a situation, the importance of which cannot be judged without consideration of the situation as a whole, field theory finds it advantageous, as a rule, to start with a characterization of the situation as a whole. After this first approximation, the various aspects and parts of the situation undergo a more and more specific and detailed analysis.'⁸ Rickert would again sympathize with this notion of a 'field' as a whole of facts constituting the situation of the individual, but he would once more point out that it remains restricted to the specialized field of empirical psychology. He would probably object though to Lewin's use of the concept 'theory', since it apparently is not a theory but rather a method or research technique.

Holism, Gestalt, Field – these concepts and their related theories are not useful in Rickert's conception of philosophy as an autonomous, general and totalizing science.⁹ As we saw in the former chapter, Rickert rather searches for a different kind of totality. He calls it 'the world totality' (*das Weltall*) and views it not as an endless (*unendlich*) reality, but as a full-filled (*voll-endlich*) reality. That sounds like a game of words, but, as we shall see, it is not.

⁵ Smuts, *o.c.*, p. 106f. The quotation is on p. 107.

⁶ Wolfgang Köhler, *The Place of Value in a World of Facts*, 1938, (New York, London: A Mentor Book, 1966), p. 75.

⁷ Smuts, *o. c.*, pp. 17f, 112-114.

⁸ Kurt Lewin, 'Field Theory and Learning', 1942, in: Kurt Lewin, *Field Theory in Social Science. Selected Theoretical Papers*, 1951, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964), p. 63.

⁹ Needless to note that Popper's well-known critique and rejection of holism is very different from Rickert's. According to Popper, holism in the social sciences is an utopian social engineering aiming at the improvement of society as a whole, as in socialism or Marxism. He favors the 'piecemeal engineering' in which singular institutions are either designed or, when they exist, improved in order to realize a piecemeal improvement in society. Institutions are in his view not aims in themselves, but only means towards aims. Cf. Karl Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism*, 1957, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), pp. 64-71: 'Piecemeal versus Utopian Engineering'.

From the start, Rickert divides the world conceptually into two mutually influential (heterological) components. There is first the reality of the subject-object (immanent-transcendent) dichotomy as discussed in the former chapter. It is the subjective-objective 'real' reality which we all know through our senses: we hear, touch, smell and see it. It is the reality of things and objects to which also our bodies and brains belong, but which we can only 'reach' indirectly through our sense-experiences.. As we saw in the former chapter, it is a transcendent reality, the sensual impressions of which are molded by our concepts into an immanent reality, the proper substance of our knowledge. But this 'real' (transcendent/immanent) reality is, as we saw at the end of Chapter Three, linked to another reality – the reality of theoretical and non-theoretical values which gives direction to our cognitive activity of judging, as well as to our emotional (non-theoretical) experiences of beauty, moral goodness, justice, faith and lust. That is, it structures our thinking and behavior. It is, however, a non-empirical, and in that sense unreal, yet not metaphysical reality. After all, we cannot see, hear, touch, taste, or smell theoretical and non-theoretical values like truth, reality, justice, the moral good, beauty. We can also not quantify them. In Rickert's own words, the unreal reality of values is 'something beyond the subject and object (...), it is a realm which is actually close to all of us yet misunderstood by many in its idiosyncrasy, because it seems to be (...) neither I nor non-I, neither world nor non-world, neither subject nor object, thus nothing. Maybe this country is the homeland of philosophy?'¹⁰ This is an exaggeration. It is obvious that the homeland of Rickert's philosophy consists of two heterologically linked parts: the immanent/transcendent reality of objects and facts, and the 'unreal' reality of values.

Before we explore this further, we must emphasize at this point once again that Rickert's reality-*in-toto* (*Weltall*) is initially not metaphysical and non-scientific concept. He views it, as we have seen, definitely as a theoretical concept of philosophy-as-science, which is a general, not specialized science. Neither is this reality-*in-toto* the metaphysical result of the adding-up of the different compartmentalized realities of the specialized sciences into some sort of massive and endless whole, as happens in holism. It is also not a neo-Platonic, encompassing and idealistic totality from which all realities metaphysically emanate. *Weltall* is a formal and autonomous 'reality', yet it is not real in the empirical sense of the word. In fact, he sees this reality-*in-toto* rather as a postulate which the philosopher needs in order to grasp the world of facts and the world of values in a non-compartmentalized and non-specialized manner. Or rather, reality-*in-toto* is more of a formal *Möglichkeit* (possibility) than a material *Wirklichkeit* (reality).¹¹ Indeed, coping with Rickert's philosophy needs a good deal of Robert Musil's *Möglichkeitssinn*, a sense of possibility, rather than, as we are used to in the various scientific disciplines, *Wirklichkeitssinn*, a sense of reality.

With this concept of the *Weltall*, which is admittedly at first sight hard to grasp, Rickert searches for a concept which distinguishes and simultaneously links the world of transcendent/immanent things on the one hand, and that of values on the other hand, without destroying their respective autonomies as happens in the

¹⁰ '...etwas jenseits vom Subjekt und Objekt, (...) ein Reich, das zwar allen naheliegt, das aber viele in seiner Eigenart verkennen, weil es (...) weder Ich noch Nicht-Ich, weder Welt noch Nicht-Welt, weder Subjekt noch Objekt, also Nichts zu sein scheint. Vielleicht ist dies Land die eigentliche Heimat der Philosophie.' Rickert, *o. c.*, p. 72.

¹¹ In order to understand Rickert's concept of the *Weltall* one needs to divest oneself of what Musil called the 'sense of reality' (*Wirklichkeitssinn*), and exchange it for the 'sense of possibility' (*Möglichkeitssinn*). Robert Musil, *o. c.*, p. 16.

dialectics of thesis and antithesis merging into a synthesis. In fact, he distinguishes within this total reality three interlinked realism. There is the First Realm of transcendent/immanent facts and objects, which is heterologically linked to the Second Realm of values and meanings. Reality-*in-toto* is in this sense bifocal. But that would still not be a really total, encompassing reality. There is therefore a Third Realm of meaning bestowing acts which is not metaphysical but in fact very empirical, yet not 'real' in the empiricist or positivist sense of the word. This is remarkable, because the bifocal reality in this conception of Rickert is integrated and unified by means of an act – the act by which the meaning of the Second Realm is bestowed on the transcendent/immanent facts and objects of the First Realm. However, these three realms do not yet constitute reality-*in-toto* since they are after all still three autonomous realms. We shall see later that he posits an encompassing (and quite surrealistic) Fourth Realm which is the metaphysical *Weltall*. It cannot be 'grasped' cognitively by means of scientific concepts, but 'reveals' itself by means of symbols, similes and allegories. But before we enter into this phantasmagoric world we must first continue the analysis of values and meanings.

Facts and values

The first and most basic idea of Rickert's theory of values is his distinction between two realms which exist autonomously, yet are linked to each other: 'The unreal values are an independent realm. They are juxtaposed to the real objects which also constitute an independent realm.'¹² This sounds like Platonism, but that is not what it is. The Platonic world of *ideas* is the first and utmost (essential) reality from which all realities emanate metaphysically. Rickert's realm of values, on the contrary, is heterologically linked with the empirical realm of facts and objects. Both realms are transcendent vis-à-vis the immanence of consciousness. They are autonomous and in that sense independent, yet they are heterologically linked to each other: the one is nothing without the other. There is yet a distinct difference between the two realms. The real (transcendent) objects are not of anybody's interest, they just exist, they are just factual. They are as such irrelevant, they do not touch us, we can imagine them but consider them as just being there. It is a mere existing (*blosses Existieren*). Take a block of granite somewhere in nature as an example. It is just there. However, a value like (theoretical) truth or (aesthetic) beauty, of which we are conscious, moves and interests us, touches us positively or negatively. We take position vis-à-vis values, and subject them to evaluating (approving or disapproving) judgments (*Werturteile*). The block of granite under the hands of a sculptor is no longer factually there, does no longer just exist. It has changed into a valuable object and is transformed by the sculptor into a piece of art which embodies an aesthetic value. Facts and factual objects can be explained (*erklären*), values and valuable objects must be understood (*verstehen*).

Rickert admits that it is hard to define the concept of value, because it is one of those concepts which are very hard to reconstruct, much like the concepts of Being, Existing, or Reality. However, the concept of value can be made more explicit, if one contrasts it heterologically with that of existence, i.e. merely being there, and then subject both, the value and the mere existence, to denial. Negation is, according to Rickert, a criterion for the difference between mere existence and value. One can, for example, deny the existence of the unicorn. What is meant is not that there is a non-

¹² 'Die irrealen Werte stehen als ein Reich für sich allen wirklichen Gegenständen gegenüber, die ebenfalls ein Reich für sich bilden.' Heinrich Rickert, *o.c.*, p. 114.

unicorn, but that the 'thing' unicorn does not exist at all. Existence denied, i.e. a non-existence, is nothingness. Not-coldness is not yet heat, not-height is not automatically the same as lowness, not-right is not yet left. In fact, it does not exist. It is simply nonsense to say 'the not-coldness was suffocating'. However, the negation of a value is itself an evaluation and yields not nothingness but a contrary value. Not-sense is nonsense (a negative value), not-beautiful is ugly (a negative value), not-true is false (a negative value as in a lie). As Max Weber once remarked, in the realm of values there is a continuous 'war of the gods' which cannot be solved rationally and scientifically. Each 'god' is always opposed by a contesting 'god' or 'devil'.¹³ If one wishes to get to know something which is merely existing, merely being there, one ought to refrain from judgments about possible values adhered to it. One observes the thing, the object, without any involvement or interest, as something that is simply and merely there - a value-free *Dasein*, so to say. This happens in everyday life all the time: we simply want to know, irrespective of its value(s), if something is a fact or not, if it simply exists or not. This *Wertungsfreiheit*, i.e. this abstaining from making value-judgments, is the essence of the scientific attitude towards reality.¹⁴

Inspired by Heidegger's exposition of *das Nichts* in the inaugural address of 1929¹⁵, Rickert devotes the last section of his book on predicative logic and ontology to the same issue.¹⁶ Not surprisingly he discusses it primarily in the epistemological and logical terms of concept formation, adding that it has occupied metaphysicians in the past, such as Plato, the mystics and Hegel.¹⁷ The concept of non-being, or nothingness (*Nichts*) is on first sight nonsensical because it says that something *is* not, does *not exist*, yet it apparently 'is', 'exists'. Rickert points out that there is a double meaning of being at play here: first as form of thought (*Denkform*), second as form of knowledge (*Erkenntnisform*). He gives a simple example: we can think, or imagine a 'four cornered circle', i.e. as a form of thought, or as an image such a 'thing' exists, yet it can never be a real object of knowledge. We know that a 'four cornered circle' cannot be, does not exist. In this sense we can think of nothingness as the opposite of being, but it can never be a predicate of our knowledge. Or, as Rickert re-formulates it, 'nothingness is the something which in fact is *thought* of as being, but which does not *exist* in the world.' The mythological unicorn, I may add, 'is' as a form of thought, but it does not exist in the world as an object of knowledge. We must, Rickert argues, have thought about the 'four cornered circle', otherwise we could never say something about it which is true, e.g. that it does not exist in the world of mathematics.¹⁸

Rickert continues his concept formation by distinguishing an absolute and a relative nothingness. Absolute nothingness is 'something' which can in no way be thought of. It is the complete denial of any predicative being. It simply denies each something. But the concept is usually not applied in this radical manner. When we use the word 'nothing' it carries mostly the meaning that it can be actually thought of, but that it does not in fact exist in the world. It is the relative nothingness, i.e.

¹³ Max Weber, 'Wissenschaft als Beruf' ('Science as a Vocation'), 1919, in: Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1968), p. 604.

¹⁴ In Chapter Six I shall discuss Simmel's important critique of this theorem of Rickert, which he calls the 'negation problem' (*Negationsfrage*).

¹⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Was ist Metaphysik?*, (Frankfurt a.M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1975; 11th ed.).

¹⁶ Heinrich Rickert, *Die Logik des Prädikats und das Problem der Ontologie*, ('The Logic of the Predicate and the Problem of Ontology'), (Heidelberg: Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1930), pp. 198-236.

¹⁷ Rickert discusses the concept of nothingness in Plato's 'Sophistes', the 'negative theology' of the mystic Angelus Silesius, Goethe's Faust (the radical nihilism of Mephistopheles), and Hegel's dialectical logic comparatively: *ibid.*, pp. 210-226. Quite remarkably Rickert overlooks the theory of being and nothingness by his neo-Kantian predecessor Hermann Lotze (1817-1881) who claimed that the being of things is experienced in their relations and interactions with other things. He then defines nothingness as 'pure being' without relations and interactions. It is not a metaphysical but a logical concept, Lotze claimed. Cf. Hermann Lotze, *Der Zusammenhang der Dinge*, ('The Coherence of Things'), (Berlin: Deutsche Bibliothek, 1864), pp. 7-19.

¹⁸ This conceptual distinction reminds one of Gottlob Frege's distinction of sense (*meaning*) and significance (*Bedeutung*) which will be discussed presently.

nothingness in relation to the actual existing in the world. Again, the 'three cornered circle' or the unicorn are examples of relative nothingness. Rickert does not provide us with an example of absolute nothingness. That, of course, is impossible because there is no way to imagine it, thus there are no words for it. The mystic would have an answer: in mysticism God is the absolute, unimaginable Nothingness which can only be experienced without thoughts and without words.¹⁹

Rickert then concludes his discussion of the concepts of being and nothingness by addressing himself to Heidegger's inaugural address. Heidegger, he argues, rejects logic and epistemology in favor of metaphysical ontology. As to nothingness, *das Nichts*, he rejects the idea that logic, epistemology, reason are able to grasp and reveal its very nature. However, Rickert points out, Heidegger has to use words in order to explain his ideas, words which must be understood by means of reason. The word 'nothingness' is such a word, a concept that must be clarified. The epistemological and logical question then emerges what Heidegger means by 'nothingness' and what its relation is to the theory of 'nothingness' as a logical predicate, i.e. not just as a form of thought, but as a form of knowledge. In Heidegger's metaphysics, Rickert summarizes nothingness is the 'something' of which nothing positive can be said, yet which 'is' not a simple negation but a non-something in view of its predication. Actually, Heidegger's 'nothingness' is heterologically the other side of predicative being (*das Andere der erkennbaren Welt*). It is even the source and origin of each 'no' and each denial, not the other way around. He goes even one step further, Rickert continues, when he describes the world in which we live, the world of predicative and immanent being, as a finite world, whereas the other dimension of this world is the infinite world of transcendent nothingness. Being reveals itself in our *Dasein* when it is confronted with this transcendent nothingness. Rickert wants to elaborate this metaphysical notion in an epistemological and logical direction: 'we need nothingness as the other dimension of the world, in order to "catch" comprehensively that which is, i.e. that which is *for us*, or the world, i.e. *our* world.' And he adds with some pride: 'Heidegger thus thinks not just logically, but even "heterologically", i.e. he knows that one understands "the one" only then *completely* logically, when one *distinguishes* it simultaneously from "the other".'²⁰

Rickert finishes with the observation that all the philosophers whom we call "great" focused primarily not on the metaphysical Beyond of Nothingness, but on the world which can be known and understood, i.e. real world which can be predicated positively. Heidegger's expositions about nothingness may be confronted, Rickert concludes, by these words of Goethe: 'Remain happy in Being.'²¹

Science usually starts with non-evaluative indifference to the objects to be investigated. The scientist wants to know first of all - *sine ira ac studio* - if something that he wants to investigate, does exist, is at all the case. This, in fact, is the very essence of scientific objectivity. In other words, the form Reality is adjudicated to the objects under investigation: "the objects of research are really there". One wants to know next, if the knowledge one has acquired about the existing objects, laid down, as it were, in theories, is *true*. Does the theory really pertain to the observed objects? Thus, a value (truth) and a value-judgment (verification) come into play. Truth is, of course, a (theoretical) value and it is a value that interests and moves us! Rickert phrases it as follows: "The *question* if an object exists, and the *statement* that it exists, interest us. These configurations do not leave us "indifferent". Truth is not simply

¹⁹ In his discussion of Silesius he brands this mystic as a representative of the relative notion of nothingness. Silesius did indeed put his 'negative theology' into words 'defining' God by negating everything that is usually said, felt, written about him: 'What God is, we do not know: he is not light, not spirit, not truth, unity, oneness, not what one calls divinity, not wisdom, not reason, not love, not will, not goodness, no thing, no non-thing (*Unding*), etc.' Rickert, *o.c.*, p. 212. Yet, it seems to me that even this attempt to formulate the being of God in terms of various negations is not really relative, as it strips God of all positively existing features. What rests is total emptiness, total *kenosis*, i.e. total nothingness. The true mystic remains silent, abstains from speech and written words. The Greek verb *muein* from which the word 'mystic' is derived, means 'to remain silent'.

²⁰ 'wir brauchen das Nichts als das Andere der Welt, um das Seiende, d.h. *unser* Seiendes, oder die Welt, d.h. *unsere* Welt, im Ganzen zu "begreifen". Heidegger denkt hiernach nicht nur logisch, sondern sogar "heterologisch", d.h. er weiss, dass man "das Eine" nur dann logisch *vollständig* erfasst, wenn man es zugleich vom "anderen" *unterscheidet*.' *Ibid.*, p. 231.

²¹ 'Am Sein erhalte Dich beglückt.' *Ibid.*, p. 235.

merely there, but it interests us, and as theoretically involved human beings we cannot disregard this interest. Truth is thus not just imagined by us, but it involves us, it moves and grasps us, and we take up a position in regard to it.²²

The second basic idea in Rickert's theory of values is the distinction between *theoretical* and *atheoretical values*. Truth and, narrowly related with it, Reality as forms imposed on contents, are theoretical values. That can be simply illustrated by the sentence: "this statement is true". That is to say, what is being said about reality makes sense, has meaning. The meaning of the sentence is, more precisely, that this statement applies the value Reality to the content of the statement. Or in Kantian terms, the content the statement is about, is brought under the form Reality. "This statement is true" means "this statement covers reality". It is the essence of science to arrive at meaningful and true statements about reality - whatever that reality may be. The essence of such scientific, theoretical statements is their value which is in this case truth (*Wahrheit*). That is, of course, closely connected with reality (*Wirklichkeit*). As scientists and philosophers we are involved with Truth and Reality, they grasp us, and we take up positions in regard to them. Rickert is in his theory of values primarily interested in these theoretical values. They are, in fact, the measuring rods for the other (atheoretical) values.

Atheoretical values are either aesthetic (beauty-ugliness), hedonistic (pleasure-pain), ethical (goodness-badness), or religious (faith-unbelief).²³ They are non-scientific and cannot be criticized sensibly by rational logic. Rationalists like to believe that these non-theoretical values can be criticized logically, but they disregard the essential difference between scientific and non-scientific rationalities.²⁴ Scientific rationality, Rickert argues, is dominated and even steered by the value of truth. However, it cannot employ legitimately the values of the other atheoretical domains (e.g. beauty, goodness, or faith), nor can it 'reach' the atheoretical domains by means of its value of truth. The theoretical statement "this is true" cannot be criticized or rejected in terms of aesthetic beauty or ethical goodness, just as it is difficult to fathom how a statement like "this painting is beautiful" could be rejected in terms of theoretical truth, as it is impossible to prove empirically that the painting is in actual fact beautiful, or for that matter ugly. Atheoretical values depend on belief, not on proof.²⁵ Again, in the realm of values there is a continuous 'war of the gods'.

²² 'Die Frage, ob ein Gegenstand existiert, und der Satz, dass er existiert, geht uns etwas an. Diese Gebilde lassen uns nicht "gleichgültig". Wahrheit ist nicht einfach bloss da, sondern sie interessiert uns, und wir können als theoretische Menschen von diesem Interesse nicht absehen. Wahrheit also stellen wir nicht nur vor, sondern an ihr sind wir beteiligt, sie ergreift und fesselt uns, zu ihr nehmen wir Stellung.' *Ibid.*, p. 115.

²³ One may, of course, raise the question whether this series of values is exhaustive. What about the economic value of economic goods? What about socio-political values such as power - powerlessness, order/system - chaos/anarchy, or the legal values (justice-injustice)? He did refer to the monetary value, as we shall see instantly, but this did not result in a special category of Economic Value, comparable to Truth, Beauty, etc. At the end of his life, Rickert did try to construct a social philosophy in which socio-political values, such as community and people (*Volksgemeinschaft*), occupied a prominent role. Regretfully, he then came close to a fascist worldview, evaluating power, order, system positively and their heterological counterparts negatively.

²⁴ Here Rickert differs, of course, radically from the Vienna School. See the manifesto of this school written by R. Carnap, H. Hahn, O. Neurath, *Wissenschaftliche Weltauffassung: der Wiener Kreis*, ('The Scientific Worldview of the Vienna Circle') (Vienna: Wolf, 1929). Also R. Carnap, *Der logische Aufbau der Welt*, ('The Logical Construction of the World'), (Berlin: Weltkreis Verlag, 1928). For an introduction and collection of relevant texts see A. J. Ayer (ed.), *Logical Positivism*, (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1959).

²⁵ As to scientific proof Rickert was somewhat naively positivistic. In the debate on verification (Carnap) and falsification (Popper) he would probably have chosen for the former. It is not clear, if he

The theoretical and atheoretical values belong to an unreal, virtual reality, yet they become concrete and can then be investigated empirically (for instance, sociologically or psychologically) in the value-judgments (*Werturteile, Wertungen*), and in what Rickert called the *Güter* (literally, the goods) which are the empirical embodiments of the values. The theoretical value of truth, for example, is rendered 'concrete' and 'empirical' in scientific statements (papers, books, lectures) and in cultural institutions, like laboratories or universities. Atheoretical values in their turn are 'embodied' in aesthetic 'goods', such as objects or art and institutions like the museum or the symphony orchestra. Religious or hedonistic values find their 'objectification' in 'goods' like respectively the church, the temple, the mosque, the brothel, and the amusement park, etc. Incidentally, instead of *Güter* Rickert also uses the concept *Sinngebilde* which can best be translated as 'meaningful configuration'. It is equivalent, I find, to the sociological concept institution in which sense it is used by Max Weber. In any case, here again Rickert distinguishes conceptually the real from the unreal, keeping the two connected heterologically: 'Only goods and value-judgments are real, values as values are never real.'²⁶

Rickert takes a painting as a concrete example. As a material composition of linen and paint it lacks, in the eye of a beholder, meaning or value (*sinnfrei und wertindifferent*). It is a matter of sheer objectivity. Standing in front of a painting that hangs on the wall of a museum as part of an exposition (two goods, or institutions), the objective dimensions of the painting will not interest him. It is the painting as a work of art and as a meaningful configuration (*Sinngebilde*), representing an aesthetic value, which concerns the beholder, draws his attention, exerts his fascination and involvement. Clearly, there is an essential difference between the real, material object and the unreal, ideal value. In our daily parlance we are usually not aware of it, but in philosophy it is essential to be conscious of this conceptual difference. Take monetary value as an example: 'Money in itself is not a value, just like the work of art as a real object isn't, but there is a value which is attached to it. When we say that it is a realized value, we mean to say that a value connects itself with it through which it is transformed into a good. Also in this case, the value itself is not real. If we look at money solely as a real object, it is value-free.'²⁷

Rickert mentions the atheoretical, hedonistic value of pleasure (*Lust*) as another example. As a psychological feeling pleasure is a real good that can be investigated empirically. But it is at the same time an unreal value which ought to be distinguished conceptually from the real psychological pleasure experience. In fact, *Lust* is a general, unreal value which attaches itself realistically to scores of hedonistic individuals throughout the ages. Thus, we should distinguish *Lustwirklichkeit* (the reality of pleasure) from *Lustwert* (pleasure as a value).²⁸

was acquainted with this debate. That could have been possible, since Karl Popper's *Logik der Forschung*, translated into *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, 1959, (London: Hutchinson, 1974, 7th ed.) appeared in Vienna in 1934.

²⁶ 'Nur Güter und Wertungen sind real, Werte als Werte nie.' Rickert, *o.c.*, p. 122.

²⁷ 'Das Geld selber ist kein Wert, sowenig wie das reale Kunstwerk, sondern es haftet an ihm Wert, und wenn wir sagen, dass es ein verwirklichter Wert sei, so meinen wir damit, dass ein Wert sich mit ihm verbindet, der es zum Gut macht. Der Wert selber ist auch in diesen Fällen nicht real. Betrachten wir Geld ausschliesslich als reales Objekt, so ist es wertfrei.' *Ibid.*, p. 119. I changed the plural 'in diesen Fällen' in the singular 'in this case', since the main subject of the quoted sentence is a singular. An interesting case is, of course, the restorers of old paintings. Their interest is not only and not even primarily the aesthetic value of the painting to be restored, but in particular the material composition of the linen and the chemical composition of the paints and lacquer which the painter originally used. Natural science, art history and the skills of craftsmanship thus form a unique unity within the interest and expertise of the art restorer. See Anne van Grevenstein-Kruse, *Restauratie: Geschiedenis en Vooruitgang*, ('Restoration: History and Progress'), inaugural address University of Nijmegen, May 26, 2005, (Rotterdam: Nijmegen University Press, 2005).

²⁸ Rickert rarely referred to Freud but it seems obvious that he would disagree with his theory of the pleasure principle vis-à-vis the reality principle. He would interpret pleasure, as Freud has dealt with it, as a psychological good, and thus as an inherent component of reality.

There is, incidentally, an essential difference between the theoretical value of truth and the hedonistic value of pleasure. Truth is, according to Rickert, valid even if there are no individuals to whom it bears validity²⁹, whereas pleasure lacks such an independent and eternal validity, as it always needs historical subjects who will claim validity, when their pleasure is or is not gratified here and now.³⁰ Here Rickert disagrees obviously once more with Nietzsche, whose Zarathustra sang: 'All pleasure wants eternity, wants deep, deep eternity.'³¹ Pleasure, Rickert would probably sneer, does not want eternity, it wants immediate gratification. Yet, values, including Truth, do not float about but are always connected to the interest and the will of empirically real, evaluating subjects: 'There can be no values without a will that acknowledges or demands them. The will, however, is always part of reality.'³²

Naturally this *Wollen* (will) is closely tied to the *Sollen* (ought to): most *Sollen* depends on *Wollen* in whose name something ought to be and thus is demanded. However, we should realize that a demanding value is never identical with the demanding will as it occurs in reality, because there is this difference between the 'real' reality of the objects and the senses, and the 'unreal', ideal reality of the values and norms. Nevertheless, it is obvious that the value which expresses a demand would disappear, if there were no people who wanted it, and who practically and actually demanded it. Take the normative rule "thou shall not kill". It could be seen as the demand of a divine will. Since in that case God wants it (a divine *Wollen*), many of us consider this norm to be valid for us. But if one no longer believes in God, one will either no longer acknowledge the norm's validity, since the real divine will disappeared, or one will in its stead posit a human will, and next claim that this human will validates the norm. Killing is then no longer viewed as sin, i.e. as an offence against the norm "thou shall not kill", but as an inhumane injustice, or a crime punishable by a secular state law. If, however, there were no people who rejected killing, it would no longer be an injustice, and the norm would no longer be valid.³³

Incidentally, this goes to show that values and norms are actually not that tidily knit together as is often believed. The norm "thou shall not kill" was connected first, as part of the Ten Commandments, with a divine will and thus with an allegedly divine value. But the very same norm may disengage itself from this religious value, and next be tied unaltered to a very different, more humanist kind of value, namely that of humane justice. Nowadays we fill the norm in with the notion of human rights.

All this demonstrates once again that values do not exist, but are or are not *valid*. Not *Sein* (being) but *Geltung* (validity) is the essence of values! This validity is not something like recognition or acknowledgement on the part of empirical human beings. In that case validity would be an empirical, rather relativistic fact or datum which it is not. Validity is not empirically real and contingent like facts, things or objects. Validity is tied to values and partakes in their 'unreal', virtual character. Try

²⁹ Rickert claims that such values, in particular the theoretical value of truth, are eternally and absolutely valid. But there are, of course, occasional statements such as "it rains now" and "this is red". Rickert would probably counter that, if it has been proven empirically that the rain falls and the color is red indeed, the validity of these truths will be eternal and absolute because it is no longer dependent on "now" and "this".

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

³¹ 'Doch alle Lust will Ewigkeit, will tiefe, tiefe Ewigkeit.' Friedrich Nietzsche, *Also sprach Zarathustra*, ('Thus Spoke Zarathustra'), part three, in: Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke in Drei Bänden* (Works in Three Volumes), volume two, (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1955), p. 473.

³² 'Ohne einen Willen, der sie anerkannt oder fordert, gibt es auch keine Werte, die gelten, und der Wille gehört stets zum Wirklichen.' *Ibid.*, p. 128. This stands in contrast to Rickert's observation that the theoretical value of truth is eternal and absolute, not related to individuals, including their will we may assume.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

to imagine value-free validity! 'Value-free validity', Rickert comments playfully, 'reminds one of non-nicotine tobacco or decaffeinated coffee. Maybe many love it only, because they are philosophically too "nervous" to "endure" the world problems scientifically.'³⁴

Only values can be valid. Something that just exists and in fact does not interest us, cannot be valid. So facts as such are never valid or invalid, but value-judgments about facts are valid or invalid in so far as the values involved are valid or invalid. The existence of a piece of paper is neither valid nor invalid, but the statement "this paper is white" is either true or false, since the form and value Reality is or is not applicable: it is or is not 'really' white. After all, the value couple of truth/reality-falsehood/nonreality is involved here. These are theoretical values, but the atheoretical values too are characterized not by their existence but by their validity. A banknote is valid or invalid. However, not the real object, i.e. the banknote as a piece of paper, but its 'embodied' unreal monetary value is valid or invalid.³⁵

From relativism to relationism

Rickert points out that there is a time dimension involved in this conceptual distinction between the 'real' reality of objects and the 'ideal' reality of values. The former is always historical, temporal and in that sense relative, the latter is ahistorical, timeless and in that sense absolute. It is of great importance, he continues, to avoid two mutually opposed pitfalls: relativism which denies the 'ideal' world and absolutism which rejects the 'real' world. The latter, the rather radical rejection of the 'real' world, can be found in Schopenhauer's worldview in which he flirted with Buddhism and the notion that reality is but a phantasmagoric illusion.

Rickert finds relativism far more interesting than Schopenhauer's 'illusionism', because it had in his days much more impact – and, as we will see presently, probably also because he himself came in some respects rather close to a relativistic position. He speaks of the contemporary tendency to focus all philosophical attention on the here and now, and to be wary of philosophical ideas about a timeless and absolute, 'unreal', 'ideal' reality. An easy going relativism is, Rickert claims, most clearly visible in the various currents of vitalism, discussed in Chapter Two. He himself is always trying to find a heterological balance between the 'real' and the 'ideal' which, he believes, can be found in the idea of a total reality (*Weltall*) which is neither relative nor absolute. But he is also aware of the fact that this attempt is out of step with the modern, strongly relativistic tendencies of vitalism.

In a small and in my view fascinating little book on the logic of the concept of numerals,³⁶ Rickert juxtaposes a similar heterological opposition of two visions on the nature of numerals: empiricism and rationalism. There are logicians who claim a necessary connection between numerals

³⁴ Wertfreies Gelten erinnert an nikotinfreien Tabak oder koffeinfreien Kaffee. Manche lieben es vielleicht nur deshalb, weil sie philosophisch zu "nervös" sind, um die Weltprobleme wissenschaftlich zu "vertragen". *Ibid.*, p. 126.

³⁵ In daily parlance we, of course, say this banknote is counterfeited and thus invalid. Yet, if we go to the bank for reimbursement, we will be told that the counterfeited banknote is null and void because it does not 'carry' any monetary value. Or, in other words, that this banknote is indeed just a piece of paper like any other valueless piece of paper. Values are 'carried' by 'goods', but Rickert emphasized time and again that one should distinguish between 'unreal' values and 'real' goods which are the 'carriers' or 'embodiments' of the values.

³⁶ Heinrich Rickert, *Das Eine, die Einheit und die Eins. Bemerkungen zur Logik des Zahlbegriffs*, ('The One [as Opposite of the Other], the Unity, and the First [as in Number One]. Comments on the Logic of the Concept of the Numeral'), (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1924).

and the empirical, psycho-physical reality of the senses. This is the empiricist position as, for example, phrased by John Stuart Mill who allegedly had said that we cannot at all be certain, if $2 + 2$ could not be 5 on another planet. It is, of course, a relativistic position. Rickert quotes Frege who labeled it 'ginger biscuits and pebble mathematics'.³⁷ But it is interesting to learn that Rickert, despite his strong Kantian leanings, also rejects the opposite, rationalist position which believes that numerals belong to an autonomous, ideal realm. In this ideal reality there are allegedly rules which do not necessarily fit real, empirical circumstances. Arithmetic knowledge is in this rationalist vision an *a priori* knowledge which is valid without any connection to time, space, and the world of our senses. Numerals, it is concluded, are purely logical phenomena. Rickert is in agreement with this rationalist position in so far as numerals are indeed and of course not sensually real (*sinnlich real*). But he rejects this position at the point where mathematics is identified with formal logic. As abstract, pure, ideal and non-sensual as numerals are, they are nevertheless the substantial, quantitative objects of mathematics. After all numerals do exist. Logic on the other hand deals with qualitative *forms*, not with substances. Validity, not existing, is what characterizes logic. Logical validity is a theoretical value as in the case of the truth of a theoretical (scientific or mathematical) statement. The sentence $1 + 1 = 2$ does as such, substantially, not belong to logic, but to mathematics as a science. Logic presupposes that the sentence is true. That is, it assigns the form and value of truth to this sentence. Or phrased differently, logic investigates which form the objects of the sentence, the numerals 1 and 2, possess.

In this essay Rickert analyses in detail the different forms of the numeral 1 and their mutual relationships. The numeral One can be (i.e. can assume the form of) the differentiated opposite, i.e. the Other, as is the case of 1 as distinct from 2 within the sentence $1 + 1 = 2$. Or, we may add, as in the expression 'the one and only'. The symbol + is a pluriform object also. It can be just a *copula*, a connection, as in $1 + 1 + 1 + 1$, but it can in cooperation with the symbol = also be a multiplier as in $1 + 1 = 2$. The numeral 1 can, however, also be the first in a row: 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. Thus, logic always focuses abstractly on the forms of numerals (or other objects), not, as in arithmetic, on substances like the numerals. The numerals of arithmetic *do exist* like other substantive objects we encounter in life, albeit that their existing is non-sensual, thus ideal. The forms of logic are also ideal, but they *do not* exist like the sensually real objects and the non-sensually ideal objects (e.g. numerals) of mathematics. They are instead valid or invalid. They constitute vis-à-vis the reality of the sensually real objects (First Realm) and the reality of the non-sensually ideal objects (Second Realm) a Third Realm which does not as in an Hegelian synthesis transcend the first and the second realm, but connects them logically. It judges that the sentence $1 + 1 = 2$ is true under all circumstances, also in the sensual reality of everyday life. If one wants to give this position a name, it could be called, Rickert suggests, 'transcendental empiricism'.³⁸

³⁷ 'Pfefferkuchen- und Kieselsteinarithmetik', Rickert, *ibid.*, p. 6. Mill did not argue in such a simplistic manner. In his logic of the sciences he defended a radically inductive method, applying it even to what he called 'the science of number'. 'All numbers must be numbers of something; there are no such things as numbers in the abstract. *Ten* must mean ten bodies, or ten sounds, or ten beatings of the pulse.' But such induction will eventually lead to the notion 'numbers of anything' and thus give cause to the idea that numbers are abstract things not tied to concrete experiences. The proposition $1=1$ is not as certain as we want to believe because both units are not necessarily equal: 'for one actual pound weight is not exactly equal to another, nor one measured mile's length to another; a nicer balance or more accurate measuring instruments would always detect some difference.' John Stuart Mill, *A System of Logic*, 1843; abridged version: Ernest Nagel (ed.), *John Stuart Mill's Philosophy of Scientific Methods*, 1950, (New York: Hafner Press; Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1974), 161-170; quotations on p. 163, 167, 168. For Nagel's critique on Mill's inductive theory of number see his (informative) Introduction, *o.c.*, p. XLVI f.

³⁸ Rickert, *ibid.*, p. 8. The concept 'transzendentaler Empirismus' was coined, Rickert says, by the philosopher Sergius Hessen in his book *Individuelle Kausalität. Studien zum transzendentalen Empirismus*, ('Individual Causality. Studies on Transcendental Empirism'), (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1909). Rickert, *o. c.*, p. 84. It is incidentally important to realize that Rickert's conception of logic is not the traditional one which we usually associate with Aristotelian syllogisms or, as Rickert phrased ironically, with 'Byzantine embellishments' (*byzantinische Verschnörkelungen*). He admittedly restricts logic 'to what words mean when they are members of a meaningful, true statement.' ('... was Worte bedeuten, wenn sie Glieder eines sinnvollen, wahren Satzes sind.) *Ibid.*, p. 76.

His philosophy of values may be alien to vitalistic notions and tendencies, yet he is convinced that this is only the case on a first and superficial view. In a sense, he argues, Nietzsche set the tone, when his Zarathustra prophesized a radical re-evaluation of all values (*Umwertung aller Werte*). Rickert commended Nietzsche for this idea, because it at least opened the minds of his readers to the relevance of value problems. However, Nietzsche's brand of philosophy is, according to Rickert, more concerned with value-judgments, i.e. with evaluations and re-evaluations, than with values as such. If one really wants to understand what life is all about, one should focus one's philosophical attention on values. 'Without them', Rickert claims, 'all of life is reduced to a meaningless shoving and pushing.'³⁹ What is denied by vitalists like Nietzsche, yet systematically emphasized by transcendental philosophy, is the fact that man's evaluations and value-judgments are historical and temporal, and in themselves merely unstructured substances which come and go. On the other hand, values like truth, justice, beauty, lust, etc. are timeless and eternal, and function as the *forms* which structure these in and of themselves chaotic substances. Value-judgments are relative, values are absolute. There is, therefore, in transcendentalism no room for either relativism or absolutism.

Once again, Rickert wants to subject relativism to a critical analysis since it has infected, often covertly though, modern philosophical thought and reasoning. He distinguishes two kinds of relativism: an absolute, radical relativism on the one hand, and a relative, conservative one on the other hand. He is brief about absolute relativism, because it is obviously an absurdity, as it posits itself as being something absolute and thus not relative. It is the absurdity of the Cretan who claims that all Cretans are liars. He focuses on the non-radical relativists and in fact shows some sympathy with them, yet rejecting their position as philosophically unsustainable. Relativists always claim, Rickert asserts, that the theoretical (scientific) man should not argue in terms of an absolute truth, because all he can search for and he should want to find is historically relative truth. But in that case, there is nothing stable and clear in the temporal float of events. This is the opposite of the philosophical belief in the absolute contrast of true and false ideas, and in the possibility to advance from falsehood to truth.⁴⁰ Relativism would indeed be the euthanasia of philosophy as an autonomous, theoretical (scientific) enterprise.⁴¹

Relativists usually point at the temporal and thus permanently changing nature of all thoughts and ideas, but do not realize that this then applies to their own relativistic thoughts and ideas as well. In that case, the relativistic thoughts and ideas are constantly discharged and dissolved in time. What they desperately need is a *concept of temporality* which as a concept is free from the brute force of time. Without such a concept the notion of relativity is itself relative and thus self-destructive. Moreover, if one believes that everything is always in motion, one can claim that everything is true, but also that everything is false. That ends up in a theoretical limbo with the obvious result that relativism is itself dissolved in scientific nothingness and nihilism.⁴²

What is actually the meaning of the words 'relative' and 'relativity'? 'Relative', Rickert argues, 'is everything that does not rest in itself, but stands in a relationship to something or someone *else*, on which it conceivably somehow depends. Relative truth, for instance, does not stand on its own, but is only valid with respect to a subject

³⁹ 'Ohne sie wird alles Leben zum sinnlosen Geschiebe und Getriebe.' *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 40

⁴¹ 'die Euthanasie der Philosophie als Wissenschaft'. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 41.

that believes it to be true. To different subjects different things can seemingly be true.⁴³ This is the very old, epistemological position of skepticism.⁴⁴ Protagoras expressed it, when he claimed that man is the measure of all things. Does this then necessarily end up in epistemological relativism, or skepticism Pyrrhonism, as the concept 'relative truth' seems to suggest? One should realize, Rickert reminds us, that the essence of the concept 'relative' is the concept 'relationship' (*Beziehung*), and simultaneously the concept 'something or someone else' (*der/das Andere*) to which one relates. Relative then means that something is related to something else which is not relative but absolute. Here Rickert argues once again heterologically: 'whoever thinks something relative, thinks necessarily something absolute, with regard to which he relates the relative'.⁴⁵ Because, if one missed the absolute as the non-relative, stable point to relate to, one would relate parts of reality to other parts of reality and that can be repeated endlessly. In fact, one would be busy, as in an endless regression, relating parts to parts indefinitely. This then would lead to the notion of an endless total reality as the sum of all the mutually relative parts. Rickert admits that this logically faulty concept of an endless *Weltall* is at least able to function as the stable, non-relative point to which single parts of reality can be related meaningfully. But that is, of course, no longer relativism. In fact, it is the only correct use of the concept of relativity, i.e. as something relating to something else which is not relative. As we shall see presently, he does not embrace the relativistic notion of an 'endless totality' as the result of an endless regression, but is in agreement with the allegation that it at least can function as a relatively stable point to which the compartmentalized parts of reality can be related. He prefers to call it *relationism* instead of relativism,⁴⁶ and searches next for a more adequate concept of the non-relative *Weltall* (totality).

⁴³ 'Relativ ist alles, was nicht in sich ruht, sondern in Beziehung zu einem *Andern* steht, von dem es in irgendeiner Weise abhängig gedacht wird. Relative Wahrheit z.B. hat keinen eigenen Bestand, sondern gilt lediglich mit Rücksicht auf ein Subjekt, das sie für wahr hält, und verschiedenen Subjekten kann Verschiedenes wahr scheinen.' *Idem*. Is not 'relative truth', to use Rickert's own metaphor, comparable to caffeinefree coffee, or nicotine free cigarettes? 'Relative truth' is, of course, a remarkably relativistic concept which Rickert immediately corrects by the heterological argument given in the text above. However, as we shall see shortly, Rickert avoids such relativism also by defining truth as a formal, transcendental (eternal and thus absolute) value, while human evaluations as judgments are circumstantially and historically relative.

⁴⁴ Cf. Richard H. Popkin, *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Descartes*, (Assen: Van Gorcum & Comp.; Prakte, 1964). In particular chapter two: 'The Revival of Greek Scepticism in the 16th Century', pp. 17-44. The skeptic and relativist position is known in the history of philosophy as Pyrrhonism. Pyrrho of Elis (360-270 BC), who joined Alexander the Great during his expedition to the East, was allegedly influenced by Indian, ascetic philosophy and taught that it was impossible to have knowledge of the world as it is in itself. For that reason men should abstain from any judgment about it, and live without any preferences. Cf. Popkin, *o.c.*, p. X: 'The stories about Pyrrho that are reported indicate that he was not a theoretician, but rather a living example of the complete doubter, the man who would not commit himself to any judgment that went beyond what seemed to be the case.' Rickert, of course, was far removed from this kind of non-theoretical Pyrrhonism.

⁴⁵ 'wer Relatives denkt, denkt notwendig Absolutes, mit Rücksicht auf welches er das Relative relativ setzt.' *Ibid.*, p. 44. This reminds me uncomfortably of the firm believer who claims that atheism is impossible, because before one can deny the existence of God there must be something - God - that is being denied. It may be a satisfactory argumentation theologically, but logically it is just a circular argument and a *petitio principii* to boot. Rickert would defend his argumentation about the relative and the absolute as an example of heterology.

⁴⁶ The philosopher and sociologist of knowledge Karl Mannheim also uses this distinction. Yet, his brand of relationism is in Rickert's terminology a form of absolute relativism, since he rejects the notion of a non-relative, transcendental and absolute realm of values and meanings. One finds the endless relating of parts to parts in Mannheim's theory: 'Relationism signifies merely that all of the elements of meaning in a given situation have reference to one another and derive their significance

Rickert then sums all this up in his customary heterological manner: 'Everything is never just the one which is related to something else, but everything is always the one *and* the other to which the one is related. In the one and the other linked together we then encounter the absolute, within which something relative is at all possible.'⁴⁷ It is remarkable that the notion of relativity is not rejected, but placed in the context of the transcendently absolute – the formal reality-*in-toto*. It is this *a priori*, unreal, formal absolute which enables the relative to exist at all. However, as far as the non-theoretical (religious, ethical, aesthetic, hedonistic) values are concerned, Rickert seems to be a relative relativist himself - a position, incidentally, which he compares with agnosticism. The absolute, radical relativist is an atheist who radically rejects the notion of the absolute. But the relative relativist is an agnostic who will not categorically deny that there is an absolute, but who is unable to acquire a firm knowledge of it and therefore settles for the relative.⁴⁸

Being, existing and valid meanings

As we know by now, Rickert defines the realm of values in terms of an unreal reality, a rather paradoxical formulation which needs further explanation. The problem is, according to Rickert, that it is difficult to distinguish between being and meaning (*Sein und Sinn*), existence and significance (*Existenz und Bedeutung*), reality and value (*Wirklichkeit und Wert*), the real and the unreal or unreal (*Reales und Irruales*).⁴⁹ It is particularly hard to realize that the unreality of values is not necessarily the negation of reality, but rather a kind of non-reality which is heterologically linked to reality.

Rickert, we have seen earlier, does not distinguish as sharply between *Sinn* (meaning, or sense) and *Bedeutung* (significance), as Frege did. The meaning of a sentence is, according to Frege, expressed by the thought it contains, whereas the significance of this meaning consists of its truth value, i.e. whether it is true or false. Significance is usually attributed (or, for that matter, denied) to the meaning of a sentence by scientific research. Sentences can be meaningful without being significant in the sense of true or false. For example, the sentence 'Ulysses was put to land in Ithaca while soundly asleep' is meaningful, yet lacks any significance. The same holds true, Frege says, for an epic, or we may add, for novels, mythologies and religious dogma's. They are meaningful but in Frege's definition of significance, insignificant. Judgments (*Urteile*) are the results of advancing from thought (meaning) to truth value (significance), and may often offend our aesthetic or religious sensitivities: 'With the quest for truth we would leave the enjoyment of art and turn towards a scientific observation. For that

from this reciprocal interrelationship in a given frame of thought. Such a system of meanings is possible and valid only in a given type of historical existence, to which, for a time, it furnishes appropriate expression.' Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia. An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, translated from the German by Louis Wirth and Edward Shils, 1936, (New York: A Harvest Book. Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., n.d.), p. 86. Later on he defines relationism in terms of relating ideas and thoughts to the surrounding social structures, but the latter are still conceived of as historical and culturally relative phenomena. *Ibid.*, p. 282f. Rickert would probably argue that Mannheim's arguments may well be valid within the context of the specialized science of sociology, but is null and void within the context of general philosophy.

⁴⁷ 'Alles ist niemals bloss das Eine, das auf ein Anderes bezogen wird, sondern alles ist immer das Eine und das Andere, auf welches man das Eine bezieht. In dem Einen und dem Andern zusammen haben wir dann aber das Absolute, innerhalb dessen ein relatives überhaupt erst möglich wird.' *Allgemeine Grundlegung der Philosophie., o. c.*, p. 42f. This heterological section of his book on General Philosophy is repeated verbatim in his previously quoted essay *Das Eine, die Einheit und die Eins*, pp. 9-16.

⁴⁸ Cf. *Allgemeine Grundlegung*, p. 43.

⁴⁹ I shall consistently translate the concept *Sinn* by *meaning* or *sense*, and the concept *Bedeutung* by *significance*.

reason we do not care, whether for instance the name “Ulysses” contained any significance, as long as we adopt the poem (i.e. Homer’s ‘Odyssey’, ACZ) as a work of art. It thus is the pursuit of truth, which inspires us everywhere to push from meaning to significance.’⁵⁰

Rickert’s conceptual distinction of *Sinn* (meaning, sense) and *Bedeutung* (significance) is not as clear as Frege’s. However, the weak spot in Frege’s theory is the (sociological!) notion that we are being driven from meaning to significance *everywhere* and thus *always*. This is, of course, extremely questionable. In everyday life, and also outside Western culture, people are more often than not quite satisfied with meaning-without-significance. In fact, it can be argued that unlike science, particularly religion and art are grounded upon meaning-without-significance. Truth and its pursuit have a very different meaning in religion and art than in science and logic.

Let us start, Rickert the teacher proposes, all over again.⁵¹ The most comprehensive concept which covers all conceivable objects is that of Being (*Sein*). Being can indeed mean everything that we are able to think of. If we say ‘this paper is white’, we state that this particular sheet of paper belongs to being, carrying predicatively an additional feature, namely that it is white. Next, we can also say ‘the world is’. We then mean to say that everything that belongs to the world exists, including what possibly could be thought of as being unreal. After all, ‘something is unreal’ means to say that the unreal is thought *to exist*. Otherwise it would be nothing in the sense of non-existent. That would be a nonsensical statement: ‘The sentence that something is non-being, sounds indeed like something falls non-falling, or burns non-burning, and thus seems to express nonsense.’⁵²

We encounter here the double meaning of the concept of being. There is, first of all, the grammatical, analytic copula-meaning. The verb ‘is’ merely connects an arbitrary subject with an arbitrary predicate as in ‘this paper is white’. Nothing is being said about the being or non-being of the subject or of the predicate. The statement is merely analytical and descriptive. Subject and predicate are just linked by the copula ‘is’. The second meaning of the concept of being is synthetic, if it expresses a statement about the being or the non-being of something. In this second meaning the sentence ‘something is non-being’ (*etwas ist nicht-seiend*) can make sense! After all, the non-being is conceivable. The reason why we find it generally hard to conceive of it, is the simple fact that we, as in a naïve empirism, usually identify being with the empirical and physical reality which we can observe through our senses - i.e. the spatial and temporal reality of the sense-data (*die räumlich-zeitliche Sinnenwelt*) in

⁵⁰ ‘Mit der Frage nach der Wahrheit würden wir den Kunstgenuss verlassen und uns einer wissenschaftlichen Betrachtung zuwenden. Daher ist es uns auch gleichgültig, ob der Name “Odysseus” z.B. eine Bedeutung habe, solange wir das Gedicht als Kunstwerk aufnehmen. Das Streben nach Wahrheit also ist es, was uns überall vom Sinne zur Bedeutung vorzudringen treibt.’ Gottlob Frege, ‘Über Sinn und Bedeutung’, 1892, in: Gottlob Frege, *Kleine Schriften* (Small Papers), 1967, (Hildesheim, Zürich, New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1990, 2nd ed.), pp.143-162. Quotation, p. 149. In this context the quest for the ‘historical Jesus’ is an interesting case. The four gospels in the New Testament provide ‘stories’, it is claimed by most theologians, which are not ‘historical’ but ‘kerygmatic’; i.e. they belong to and originate in the preaching and teaching of early Christianity. Some New Testament scholars have tried to distill from the recorded sayings of Jesus a picture of who he historically, i.e. prior to the preaching and teaching of the early Christian community, ‘really’ was. In Frege’s terms, the gospels have meaning (in particular for Christian believers), but they have no significance (in particular for historians). Cf. H. Ristow, K. Matthiae (eds.), *Der historische Jesus und der kerygmatische Christus* (‘The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ’), (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1960).

⁵¹ Cf. Rickert, *o. c.*, pp. 101ff.

⁵² ‘Der Satz, etwas ist nicht-seiend, klingt in der Tat wie: etwas fällt nicht fallend, oder brennt nicht brennend, und scheint also Unsinn zu enthalten.’ Rickert, *o.c.*, p. 103.

which we live.⁵³ This reality of the senses is then usually distinguished in an objective, physical reality which is spatial, temporal, and identical for all persons on the one hand, and the subjective, psychological reality which is temporal but not spatial and belongs exclusively to single individuals. But, as we saw, there is still another kind of reality, the unreal, non-sensual reality of the values. Truth or beauty cannot be seen, touched or smelled, neither can the meaning of a sentence. In that sense they are non-sensual (*unsinnlich*), and in that sense not real. They are also spaceless and timeless. In short, they constitute a non-empirical, unreal reality.⁵⁴

If we find it difficult to think of a reality which is non-empirical, unreal because it is (a) neither physically objective nor psychologically subjective, (b) neither spatial nor temporal and (c) neither collective nor individual, Rickert invites us to think of the objects of *mathematics*, e.g. the numerals, since they present a reality which lacks these three characteristics of sensually experienced reality. Mathematical numerals do exist, as we all know, but it is an unreal reality compared to the world of the senses. Rickert could have quoted Frege whom, incidentally he had read, yet rarely mentions or quotes: ‘The theorems of mathematics are never about signs, but about the objects which are designated by them. These objects are admittedly neither tangible nor visible and not even real The numerals do not change, because the theorems of mathematics contain eternal truths.’⁵⁵

The world of values is a non-empirical, unreal reality in the double sense of *unsinnlich* (i.e. not carried by the senses) and *unwirklich* (i.e. neither subjective-objective, nor time and space bound, nor collective and individual). The fanatics of reality (*Wirklichkeitsfanatiker*)⁵⁶ often decry all this as ‘Platonism’ which in a sense is correct, since Plato was the first to understand that reality is more than what lies between subject and object, space and time, collectivity and individuality. It is incorrect because Rickert’s theory of the non-empirical values is not metaphysically essentialist, as Plato’s theory of the *ideas* was. Moreover, Platonic ‘Idealism’ drifted off into the massive metaphysics of neo-Platonism (cf. Plotinus) and its emanation theory. This is epistemologically, of course, unacceptable because it is in effect an ontology that degenerated into metaphysics.

In order to avoid this kind of epistemological derailment, Rickert, who, as we have seen repeatedly, defends the primacy of epistemology over ontology, proposes to substitute the concept of *existing* (*Existieren*) for that of *being* (*Sein*).⁵⁷ Existing is in Rickert's system a purely technical term and thus not at all related to any kind of metaphysical ‘existentialism’. It is introduced in order to cover the two dimensions of reality: existing is first the subjective-objective (immanent-transcendent) reality of the

⁵³ I have adopted the useful concept of ‘sense-data’ from Bertrand Russell. Cf. Bertrand Russell, ‘The Relation of Sense-Data to Physics’, in: A. Danto, S. Morgenbesser (eds.), *Philosophy of Science*, 1960, (New York: New American Library/Meridian Books, 1974), pp. 33-55, in particular p. 36.

⁵⁴ One may object that lust can definitely be felt and experienced physically. However, Rickert would remind us to distinguish between the lust experience and the lust value, as we usually know to distinguish beauty as value and the experience of it in daily life.

⁵⁵ ‘Die Theoreme der Arithmetik handeln also niemals von den Zeichen, sondern von den durch sie dargestellten Gegenständen. Diese Objekte sind freilich weder greifbar noch sichtbar und nicht einmal wirklich Die Zahlen ändern sich nicht; denn die Theoreme der Arithmetik enthalten ewige Wahrheiten.’ Frege, ‘Le nombre entier’, German translation by M. and K. Held in: *o. c.*, p. 212. Rickert mentions Frege approvingly a few times in his essay *Das Eine, die Einheit und die Eins*, without however giving any references. The two philosophers had much in common, particularly, as we saw before, with regard to the unremitting rejection of founding logic on psychology.

⁵⁶ *Allgemeine Grundlegung*, p. 107.

⁵⁷ He is regretfully not very consistent in this, because the concept of being returns in his expositions recurrently. That is, apparently, unavoidable.

senses (*sinnlich Reales*) and second the ideal reality beyond, or prior to the senses (*unsinnlich Ideale*)⁵⁸, as in the case of *values*. These are two epistemological domains, two realms. However, there is still a kind of reality which *is* something, yet does *not exist* in the double sense mentioned. It constitutes a third domain, a third realm. It is neither *sinnlich real*, nor *unsinnlich ideal*. For example, if we understand that a statement is 'true', we call that which is being understood the *meaning* of the sentence. There is, in other words, this understandable meaning of the true sentence, yet this meaning is unreal, i.e. it does *not exist* as either an empirical and sensual reality (meaning cannot be smelled, touched, heard, etc.), or as a non-sensually ideal reality (meaning is not comparable to a mathematical statement or a value). It is an ideal (transcendent) reality but without existing in the dual sense of the word. In short, meaning does not 'exist', but is valid. *Being valid* and *validity* (*gelten, Geltung*) characterize meanings.⁵⁹ Or, as Rickert phrases it, the word 'existing' (*Existieren*) contains everything that is not valid. Validity then can be viewed as a special kind of 'being', but is not 'existing'.⁶⁰

Scientific activity is not possible without understandable, true meanings.⁶¹ But, once more, the meaning of a true sentence is unreal in the sense of non-existent. The psychological act of understanding the meaning of the true sentence (*Verstehen*) is real, and thus does exist, yet the meaning that is to be understood, 'is' but does not 'exist'. Here we encounter once more the difficulty of expressing all this in everyday life language which is inaccurate, when it comes to a priori phenomena. Meaning, it was said, *is* neither sensually real, nor non-sensually ideal, and thus *is* non-existent. Yet, it *is* not nothingness in which case we would not have to talk about it at all.

This is hard to conceive: meaning 'is' not and does not 'exist', yet the word 'nothingness' does not apply to it. It is in a sense a third realm which connects the first realm of sensual objects and the second realm of ideal objects in a heterological manner. He views these three realms as the *Weltall*, the reality-*in-toto*, he searched for. It covers the 'real' and the 'unreal', i.e. it covers (1) what exists sensually real (*sinnlich real*), that is, the sense-data. Rickert calls it the First Realm. It covers also (2) what exists unsensually ideal (*unsinnlich ideal*), that is, the values and the mathematical statements. He calls it the Second Realm. But it covers in addition (3) what is non-existent ideal (*ideal nicht-existierend*), that is, the meaning of a true

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

⁵⁹ Rickert applies this also to the rules of formal logic which are, unlike the rules of mathematics that belong to the non-sensual, ideal reality, components of a third realm that 'is' not and that does not 'exist', but that is or is not valid. This validity, as we shall see, is part and parcel of the value of Truth.

⁶⁰ Rickert, *Das Eine, die Einheit und die Eins, o. c.*, p. 83. This is, on first sight, confusing, since we saw before that validity is also what differentiates values from the being of the immanent-transcendent reality of experiences and impressions. In the Preface to his *Die Logik des Prädikats und das Problem der Ontologie*, ('The Logic of the Predicate and the Problem of Ontology'), (Heidelberg: Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1930), p. 8, Rickert announces 'an essential change of the use of language'. The concept 'Being' is now no longer used in opposition to the unreal 'Validity', i.e. to values, meanings and 'Sollen'. Validity, value and meaning, are, he argues, after all, inherent components of the world-*in-toto* which without them would be incomplete. He refers to the Preface of the 4th and 5th edition of *Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, ('Object of Knowledge'), 1892, (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1921), p. XII, where he also re-defined 'Being' as no longer the opposite of 'unreal' validity and meaning, but as the encompassing concept for 'everything that can be thought of at all' ('alles Denkbare überhaupt'). Regretfully, he did not incorporate this re-definition in this epistemological *opus magnum* and neglected the useful distinction of 'Existieren' and 'Sein'. Consequently, this re-definition does not contribute to the necessary perspicuity of his ontological and epistemological concept formation.

⁶¹ Naturally Frege would use the concept of significance (*Bedeutung*) here instead of the concept of meaning (*Sinn*).

statement or, Rickert adds, the rules of logic. This is the Third Realm. These are three realms, of which the third one ‘reconciles’ the other two that are heterologically differentiated. That resembles Hegel’s *Aufheben*, because the first and the second realm are not annulled but, as it were, lifted up into a third realm.⁶² We will see, however, that this is not what Rickert meant.

The expression ‘the meaning of a true statement’ needs a further explanation. Here Rickert introduces a logical difference between *meaning*, that belongs to the Third Realm, and *value*, that belongs to the Second Realm. It is obvious that the Truth of a true statement is in fact a value. It actually is, as we saw before, the predominant value of all theoretical (scientific) statements. Yet, by assigning in an act of *judgment* this (formal, transcendent) value Truth of the Second Realm to statements, which belong to the First realm, we render them meaningful. The *meaning* that can be understood, does not belong to the First Realm of sensual reality, nor to the Second Realm of non-sensual unreality, but is a component of the Third Realm of *validity*. The theoretical value of truth, in other words, partakes through judgments in the unreal, non-existent, ideal Third World of validity. Moreover, the atheoretical (hedonistic, ethical, religious and aesthetic) values and their correlated meanings share this basic feature of the theoretical value of truth. The crucial factor in all of this is the act of judging and assigning. As a result of this a curious element of activism enters into Rickert’s epistemology and theory of values and validity. This needs a further analysis. But before, we must understand Rickert’s ideas about values and meanings. They are in the first instance logically different, in that the former belong to the Second Realm, which is non-sensual (*unsinnlich*) and unreal (*ideal*), and the latter to the Third Realm, which is also unreal (*ideal*) but in addition non-existent (*nicht-existierend*). After all, the beauty of a painting can be beheld (is ‘in the eye of the beholder’), but the meaning of a word or a sentence can merely be understood, not sensually felt or grasped. However, there is more to meanings than that. By means of a value-judgment, i.e. the active assignment of Truth, or Beauty, or any other value to statements or objects of art or any other sense-data in the First Realm, values of the Second Realm are linked to the sense-data of the First Realm. Moreover, the values thus are rendered *meaningful* and partake in the Third Realm which is in effect the ‘reconciliation’ of the heterologically different First and Second Realm, and constitutes what we have been searching for: reality-*in-toto*.

To sum up, we must further analyze the logical nature of meanings, values and the act of judging which is, as we shall see shortly, a meaning bestowing act (*Sinnakt*). The crucial concept in all this is not ‘being’ but ‘validity’.

⁶² This is not the place to discuss the similarities and in particular the differences of Hegel’s dialectics and Rickert’s heterology. Rickert admired Hegel’s logic which he studied intensively, yet placed his own heterological logic in the tradition of Kant. Cf. Heinrich Rickert, ‘Die Heidelberger Tradition und Kants Kritizismus. Systematische Selbstdarstellung’ (The Heidelberg Tradition and Kant’s Criticism. Systematic Self-Presentation), 1934, in: Heinrich Rickert, *Philosophische Aufsätze*, (Philosophical Papers), R. A. Bast, ed., (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1999), pp. 347-412. In his preface to *Das Eine, die Einheit und die Eins*, he calls Hegel ‘the greatest philosopher Heidelberg has had’. *O. c.*, p. III.

Stages of being and validity

But before we discuss Rickert's theory of values, validity and meaning bestowing acts, we must still investigate first another aspect of real being and valid values, namely the fact that they occur in three, or perhaps four stages. Rickert enumerates first the three, or four, *stages of being*.

Firstly, we begin with the stage of real being which Rickert heterologically links to appearance (*Schein*). Being and appearance (*Sein und Schein*) are, of course, strictly separated in scientific research. Also in common-sense the two are usually kept apart. The difference between being and appearance depends on the subject-object relationship. After all, each appearance presupposes a subject that holds for real something that is not real, whereas real being exists 'objectively' independent of any subject. Yet, quite often appearance is a form of real being as well, as is the case with the hallucinations of an individual. They are, strictly taken, appearances, but they are not nothing, in fact they are quite real to the individual involved. (Or in Frege's terminology, hallucinations are subjectively, i.e. to the person involved, meaningful but have objectively, in terms of empirical science, no significance.) The hallucinating person sees something apparently real which others do not behold. It is easy to think of other examples of such individual and subjective, phantasmagoric appearances. This then is the first stage of real being. It is an individual-subjective stage of being, which is the heterological counterpart of appearance. Whenever we want to determine what is real, we must avoid this primary form of appearance.

Secondly, there are forms of collectively subjective appearances which do exist, yet are unreal. For example, we all see a straight staff as if it were broken in the water, or in the summer the cellar feels cool, while it feels warm in the winter. These are not individual and particular, but collective and general experiences. They are real, yet they are nonetheless only subjective appearances.

Thirdly, the former two stages of appearance were (individually and collectively) subjective. The third stage is very different, as it concerns an objective, independent being which is the objectively testable reality of the empirical sciences - the 'proper' and 'real' reality, devoid of any appearance (*Schein*). Neo-positivists believe it to be the one and only true reality, outside of which everything is but appearance.

Rickert would agree with the following argument of Rudolf Carnap. In section 10 of his *Scheinprobleme in der Philosophie*, ('Fictitious Problems in Philosophy'), 1928, he presents by means of illustration the following philosophical case. Two geographers, the one a philosophical realist, the other a philosophical idealist, are sent to Africa to find out, whether a legendary mountain really exist or not. As scientists the two geographers are in possession of certain criteria by which the question can be answered, independently of idealist and realist philosophical positions and propositions. After some diligent research the two geographers will arrive at a consensus as to the existence (or non-existence) of this mountain. And if it exists, they will also come up with concurrent facts about its height, location, *Gestalt*, etc. There will be consensus on all such empirical questions. The option for one or the other philosophical standpoint has no substantial bearing on their scientific investigations.

However, disagreement will arise the moment these scientists change into philosophers and begin to interpret the data of their empirical research. The realist will then say that this mountain does not only carry geographical characteristics, but is also 'real'; or, he will conclude in a 'phenomenalist' version of realism that there is something real, though unknowable, in the essence of this mountain. The idealist will disagree and claim that this mountain is not real, but it is our observations and other conscious processes that are real. Now these two theses, Carnap concludes, lie beyond our empirical experiences and are therefore *nicht sachhaltig*, not relevant. Neither of them proposes to verify his

thesis by a joint, conclusive experiment, nor does either of them offer the suggestion of an experience which could give a foundation for his thesis.⁶³

Rickert would agree with this conclusion, but add that Carnap should have said 'scientifically not relevant'. Geography is one of the specialized sciences which focuses its attention on but one compartment of total reality, and in doing so is completely justified in disregarding philosophical questions and sticking to a (philosophically naïve) positivism or empiricism. However, the moment one does ask realist or idealist questions as to the constitution of reality and consciousness, one engages logically in a *metabasis eis allo genos*, i.e. a transition to a completely different world – a general-philosophical world in which the debate between realism and idealism is meaningful. In fact, Carnap himself testifies blatantly to the fact that he has chosen for a radically realist position. Moreover, after this logical transition from specialized science to general philosophy and epistemology it does make sense to conclude that both geographers are as scientists also 'driven' or 'guided' by values, the value of Truth to begin with. These values cannot be grasped or understood, if one sticks to the naïve positivist focus on objective facts. In fact, these values are facts as well, but they are facts of a completely different composition and status.

Fourthly, many philosophers go one step further still. They are in search of a metaphysical reality which transcends the subjective and objective reality and constitutes the essence of being. In their view, even the objective reality of the sciences is but appearance (*Schein*), or phenomenon (*Erscheinung*) hiding the real and true being. Schopenhauer's view of the world as just a phantasmagoric illusion, and of the spaceless and timeless Will as the true being and moving force, is a telling example of such a metaphysical philosophy. In such metaphysics being or reality is radically separated from each kind of subject, and next posited as something absolute and trans-objective. Scientifically - Rickert's transcendental philosophy, one should not forget, wants to remain scientific - this sort of metaphysics is 'completely problematic'.⁶⁴

Each stage considers the previous stage as being too subjective and thus as appearance instead of being. As to the subjective side, there are, Rickert teaches, three heterologically linked types of subject: (a) the single and individual subject, (b) the collective and general subjective and (c) the scientific and everyday life subject. In the fourth, metaphysical stage the subject is, as we have just seen, actually annihilated, causing a total evaporation of subjectivity and objectivity. That is, of course, a complete domination of appearance.

Rickert then distinguishes three parallel *stages of values*, in which again each stage considers the previous stage as an apparent, not a real and thus an invalid, value. However, one should keep in mind that Rickert discusses here not so much the *formal* values, but rather their concretizations as evaluations and valued practices, as value judgments and goods in the First Realm. Formal, transcendent values after all do not exist and can thus not be discussed. Value judgments and valued practices, however, are empirical data, sense-data, and can be subjected to research and to discussion. Firstly then, there are the individually and particularly subjective values which are only valid for the individuals adhering to them. These are personal preferences or hobbies, the validity of which depends generally on the moods of the moment. It is hard to give examples, Rickert observes, since examples usually refer to more general and collective kinds of values. Nevertheless Rickert comes up with a telling example: the habit of collecting stamps with a printing error, a curious and rather rare

⁶³ Rudolf Carnap, *Scheinprobleme in der Philosophie. Das Fremdpsychische und der Realismusstreit*, ('Fictitious Problems in Philosophy. The Non-I and the Realism Conflict'), (Berlin: Im Weltkreis-Verlag, 1928), pp. 35f. The concept 'Fremdpsychisches' is very hard to translate. It means the psyche or consciousness of other people apart from myself. I decided to translate it as 'Non-I'.

⁶⁴ Rickert, *o.c.*, p. 131.

idiosyncrasy. Such idiosyncratic preferences are comparable to the hallucinations which are not facts, but carry validity only to the individuals involved.

The second stage consists of collectively and generally subjective values which are valid to all human beings. Rickert mentions the hedonistic values (*Lustwerte*) as an example: food, average temperatures, sensual and erotic pleasures, etc. There are, of course, always ascetically inclined people who will deny the validity of such values, but they represent the unavoidable exceptions. They are comparable to people who do not partake in the collective illusions and hallucinations of the second stage of being and appearance, although the hedonistic values are far more binding and coercive. One cannot but see the straight staff in the water as if it were broken, but one cannot be forced to embrace values which are collectively and generally subjective. After all, one has the moral liberty to say 'no' to them. Yet, these are exceptional cases. Without exception food will be a valid good to hungry people, and we may add, exquisite food will be a valid and quite coercive good to wealthy and hedonistically inclined people. In short, such goods constitute a reality to which unreal values are attached that are valid to all hungry or wealthy and hedonistic persons. Yet, these values still remain subjective.

Thirdly, Rickert asks, if it is actually possible to speak of 'objective' values which function independently of evaluating subjects, just as there is the scientific objectivity of facts and objects that are independent of subjects. Or, philosophically formulated, can we construct a concept of objective values? 'Objective' means independently valid - independent of all empirical, sensually real subjects. For Rickert this is, of course, a rhetorical question. He gives once more the example of the theoretical value of true sentences, i.e. of Truth. The theoretical (scientific) value of truth is objective, as was illustrated by Carnap's geographers who concluded after diligent research that the legendary mountain in Africa did indeed exist. After their empirical research, nobody in his right mind would challenge the statement 'this mountain does indeed exist'. It expresses what is really the case, it is self-evident. Its truth is an objective value! In contrast, the value of food is always (individually or collectively) subjective, never (universally) objective. Yet, one may not forget the fact, as 'rationalists' are prone to do, that the statement 'this mountain does indeed exist' is also a value-judgment (*Werturteil*), because truth or falsehood is involved here, and truth is after all the prime (theoretical) value.

However, what applies to the theoretical value of truth (i.e. its objective validity), cannot simply be applied also to the atheoretical (aesthetic, ethic, hedonistic, religious) values, because if these values were objectively valid, i.e. true, they would not be atheoretical but theoretical, i.e. scientific. It would be sheer intellectualism to believe that the atheoretical values, like beauty or lust, could be proven logically and scientifically to be true and absolutely valid. This, we could add, would be scientism, i.e. an inadmissible, metaphysical overrating of science through which the world is viewed as a scientific world.⁶⁵ Rickert labels it rationalism or intellectualism. Its origin lies, according to him, in Plato's concept of the metaphysical *Logos*, which was

⁶⁵ This is, of course, what Rickert separates from the philosophers of the Vienna Circle. See for instance Rudolf Carnap, *Der logische Aufbau der Welt* ('The logical Construction of the World'), o.c. It is interesting to contrast this book with Alfred Schutz, *Der sinnhafte Aufbau der Welt. Eine Einleitung in die verstehende Soziologie*, (The Meaningful Construction of the Social World. An Introduction to Understanding Sociology), 1932, (Wien: Springer Verlag, 1960). Alfred Schutz (1899-1959) was a professional banker and a lay philosopher, but he saw himself as a student of both Edmund Husserl and Max Weber. In this PhD dissertation and later publications he made an attempt to go beyond Weber's neo-Kantianism in the direction of a phenomenologically inspired understanding sociology.

further elaborated by Hegel in his concept of *Geist*. 'Logos' or 'Geist' as the most general concept which covers everything, not just the real reality of objects and things but the goods, as the incorporations of values, as well.⁶⁶

The rejection of intellectualism or rationalism, Rickert warns, should not lead us astray into relativism or skepticism. First of all, if the atheoretical values cannot be theoretically (i.e. logically and scientifically) supported, their validity can at the same time not be theoretically shaken either. All attempts to prove by means of logical arguments that aesthetic, ethic, hedonistic or religious values are invalid, are as untenable as opposite attempts to prove their objective validity by means of theoretical arguments. It is the main task of a sound theory of values to *understand*, not to falsify or prove, the atheoretical values and their possible validity or invalidity. Rickert launches again one of his paradoxical statements: 'one just ought to understand the atheoretical validity in its theoretical groundlessness.'⁶⁷ This, of course, begs the question. The question was and is, if, and if so, how relativism regarding atheoretical values is to be avoided. Or, in other words, how we can ascertain that the atheoretical values are not relative but objectively valid without the interference of the theoretical value of truth? We come back to this question in the next section but finish first our discussion of the four stages.

Rickert warns against any preferential treatment of the theoretical value of truth or of one of the atheoretical values, as happens in scientism, aestheticism, hedonism, moralism, etc. Most of these –isms excel in value-prophecy (*Wertprophetentum*), from which a truly scientific theory of values should abstain. We should rather try to understand (*Verstehen*) values and their validity, and should abstain from practical, atheoretical evaluations in terms of good and bad, beautiful and ugly, pleasant and unpleasant, moral and immoral, etc. It also cannot tell us how to live a blissful life. A scientifically sound theory of values rather aspires to bring about theoretical clarity about theoretical and atheoretical values. If the philosopher of values is driven by pathos at all, it is the 'pathos of pathoslessness'.⁶⁸

Finally, is there a fourth stage of values and validity? Is there a metaphysical validity of values which generally denegrates even the third, objective stage as a collection of allegedly fictitious values with an allegedly fictitious validity? This is hard to fathom, since it seems that objective values and validity (the third stage)

⁶⁶ Rickert, *o.c.*, p. 150. Needless to add that Carnap would not have been amused by this argument which labels his 'positivism' as 'scientism', and 'scientism' as Platonic or Hegelian 'Idealism'.

⁶⁷ '(...)man hat gerade das atheoretisch Geltende in seiner theoretischen Unbegründbarkeit zu verstehen.' *Ibid.*, p. 152. We encounter here, of course, again Rickert's previously discussed distinction between a normative, metaphysical worldview and a scientific, theoretical analysis of worldviews, i.e. *Weltanschauung* versus *Weltanschauungslehre*.

⁶⁸ 'das Pathos der Pathoslosigkeit'. *Ibid.*, p. 155. Rickert emphasizes the importance of philosophical pathos but distinguishes three different types: (a) the intellectualist pathos as exhibited by Spinoza; (b) the anti-theoretical pathos, as in Nietzsche, Wilde or Kierkegaard (the main prophets of the Philosophy of Life!) and (c) the pathos of pathoslessness which distinguishes theoretical, objective values from atheoretical, subjective values and rejects the primacy of either one of these two groups of values. He gives Kant as an example but adds that he relapsed often into (a). Naturally, he meant to say that he himself is the best example of the third pathos. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 154. Max Weber fulminated against 'lectern prophets' at the university in similar terms. In his swan-song 'Science as a Profession', 1920, he claimed 'that the prophet and the demagogue do not belong on the lectern of the university classroom.' Max Weber, 'Wissenschaft als Beruf', in: *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre, o.c.*, p. 602. See also Theodor Geiger, *Demokratie ohne Dogma. Die Gesellschaft zwischen Pathos und Nüchternheit*, ('Democracy without Dogma. Society between Pathos and Soberness'), 1950, (München: Szesny Verlag, 1964). See also my *The Abstract Society. A Cultural Analysis of Our Time*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970), chapter 7: 'The Need for Intellectual Asceticism', pp. 168-190.

present the highest stage possible. One could imagine some sort of trans-individual, divine, absolute Will to which everything is arbitrarily 'absolute', or for that matter 'relative'. But that would not render validity more valid. The objective validity which is independent of all subjectivities, is the apex of transcendental, a priori validity. 'No value can do more than be objectively valid. When a value is objectively valid, it is already detached or absolute, if it does exist at all.'⁶⁹

*The meaning bestowing act*⁷⁰

Rickert is in search of a concept which covers reality-*in-toto*. Up till now he has distinguished two heterologically connected realities. There is the world of objects and facts which is a temporal, spatial and causally determined world – the observable 'real' reality. He calls it the First Realm (*das erste Reich*). It is juxtaposed to the Second Realm (*das zweite Reich*) which consists of the spaceless, timeless and non-causal world of values – the understandable 'unreal' reality which cannot be 'reached' by the senses (*unsinnlich*). But this then yields a divided reality which is not the *Weltall*, the reality-*in-toto*, the *sur-réalité*, he is searching for. There must be a Third Realm (*das dritte Reich*) which connects the First and the Second Realm without destroying their independent existence, their autonomy. This Third Realm, we have just seen, is not a kind of Hegelian synthesis resulting from a coalescence of a thesis and its antithesis, both elevated into (*aufheben*) and merged in an alleged synthesis. Nor is it a kind of metaphysical, Platonic aboriginal reality which incorporates or colonizes the First Realm and the Second Realm. It is rather a heterological connection of the autonomous First Realm and the autonomous Second Realm, a conceptual bridge between facts and values, being and validity - a mediating and bifocal reality. Rickert views this third, connecting realm as an *act*, i.e. a meaning bestowing act, namely the judgment (*Urteil*) that plays, as we saw in Chapter Three, such a crucial role in his epistemology. This needs further analysis.

Ordinary language, we have repeatedly seen before, is deficient in Rickert's eyes, if one tries to conceptualize the 'unreal' reality of the values. It is even more so, if one tries to construct rational concepts for the Third Realm which establishes a total reality by bridging the juxtaposed worlds of the empirical, objective, temporal, spatial, causal reality of things and objects (the First Realm) and the non-empirical, subjective, non-temporal, non-spatial and non-causal reality of values (the Second Realm). In his system the conceptual bridging of these two realms is of crucial importance. For most of us, who, like Rickert's contemporaries, are used to thinking positivistically, exclusively in terms of the First Realm, his thoughts on the Third Realm are hard to grasp.

In order to help us, Rickert starts with a common-sense expression: what do we mean, when we speak of the 'meaning of life' (*Sinn des Lebens*)? We do not simply couple meaning *and* life, but relate, without actually realizing it, an 'unreal' meaning (Second Realm) to 'real', immediately experienced life (First Realm). Intuitionists and vitalists take the easy road: allegedly we can directly experience (*erleben*) what life and its meaning is all about, so why bother to conceptualize it? As

⁶⁹ 'Mehr als objektiv gelten kann kein Wert. Gilt er objektiv, so ist er schon losgelöst oder absolut, falls es ihn überhaupt gibt.' *Ibid.*, p. 136.

⁷⁰ The concept 'the Third Realm' completes Rickert's conceptualization of the reality-*in-toto* (*Weltall*). The following discussion of it is based on a pivotal section in his *Allgemeine Grundlegung der Philosophie, o.c.*, pp. 254-265. However, as we shall see, Rickert postulates a Fourth Realm which is in fact a metaphysical super-reality which represents a true *Weltall*.

we saw in Chapter Two, Rickert sympathizes to a certain extent with that position, but finds it insufficient, if one has the ambition to think about the world theoretically and scientifically. Unlike the vitalist, the theoretical (scientific) philosopher wants to grasp the world in terms of concepts, just like the empirical and specialized scientist does. Now, as to the expression ‘the meaning of life’, it is hard to explain it in terms of ordinary language, but after the previous exposition it is not difficult to realize that this expression refers not only to the heterological duality of meaning (Second Realm) and life (First Realm), but also to *the act* of connecting them. This act is the Third Realm. It may sound as if the Third Realm would refer to a metaphysical ‘beyond’ but that is not at all what Rickert means. As a metaphysical ‘beyond’ the Third Realm would destroy the autonomy of the First and the Second Realm as in an Hegelian synthesis. Rickert wants to maintain their autonomy and postulates the Third Realm as their *practical* connection.

Once again, the Third Realm consists of the *act* of connecting the First and the Second Realm, the world of objects and facts on the one hand and that of values on the other. This is, of course, an *evaluating act* (*Akt des Wertens*), because the ‘meaning of life’ is not meant as an objective fact, but constitutes a subjective, evaluative judgment (*Werturteil*), namely that life has meaning, is inherently meaningful.⁷¹ Or, in other words, we evaluate life as being *more* than just a biological fact. It is a biological fact which carries an inherent meaning. The fact is thus related to a value, and that is an act. How one fills in this ‘more’, this inherent meaning, depends on one’s set of values. To a believer life may be a gift of God, to the unbeliever a gift of Nature, to some a miracle, to others a painful burden.⁷² Yet, they all have in common that they experience and express a connection between facts and values, that they *actively* connect the First Realm of real facts with the Second Realm of unreal values. For this act Rickert coins the concept *Aktsinn*, i.e. *meaning bestowing act*.⁷³ He views it as the Third Realm that stands between the First and the Second Realm, connecting them heterologically (as it were bifocally), without annihilating their autonomy. Life still remains a biological affair, its value still remains a non-sensual, non-real reality. By connecting values of the Second Realm with facts, events and objects in the First Realm, human beings render the latter meaningful. In this sense the *Aktsinn* is a *meaning bestowing act*. This is remarkable, because the Third Realm then consists of an activity comparable to the epistemological evaluating judgment. The values in the Second Realm may be subjective and thus relative, the act of linking the two realms is universal, objective and thus non-relative. Everywhere and in all times, human beings have been busy bestowing meanings on the objects and events they ran and run into. In conjunction the three realms constitute the world-*in-toto*.

Rickert’s three realms may remind the contemporary reader of Popper’s First, Second and Third World, or as he preferred to phrase it, *world 1* (‘the physical world or the world of physical things or states’), *world 2* (‘the mental world or the world of mental states’), and *world 3* (‘the world of intelligibles, or of *ideas in the objective sense*; it is the world of possible objects of thought: the world

⁷¹ Naturally, the judgment about life can be, and often is, also negative: ‘life is meaningless’. Each value, we have seen before, has its counter-value which is not its denial but an opposite value. For the sake of clarity Rickert restricts the present discussion to the positive value.

⁷² Schopenhauer was, of course, the philosopher who pre-eminently defined life as a painful burden. For a modern version of this vision see E. M. Cioran, *De l’inconvénient d’être né*, (‘On the Inconvenience of Being Born’), (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1973).

⁷³ *Aktsinn* (literally: Actmeaning) is an awkward neologism. In the present context I prefer to translate *Aktsinn* as ‘meaning bestowing act’.

of theories in themselves and their logical relations; of arguments in themselves; and of problem situations in themselves.') World 2 is pivotal, since it can 'interact' with the other two worlds and links them. World 1 and world 3 cannot interact without the help of world 2. For instance, the mind (world 2) can literally, i.e. by means of the eyes, behold physical objects in world 1, but is also capable of 'seeing' or 'grasping' objects in world 3, such as a number, or a geometrical figure. World 3 can work upon world 1 as in the case of technological interventions which apply certain consequences of the mathematical or scientific theories. But this is only possible via world 2, the mind. Actually, these theories might have been invented by persons who were not aware of their practical possibilities, and have remained hidden until they were discovered by other people who have tried to grasp, to understand them and apply them in world 1. This testifies to the fact that also world 3 is an objective reality.⁷⁴

Rickert would remark that world 1 and world 2 are the Cartesian *res extensae* and *res cogitans*, a dualism which Popper does not solve but which Rickert solves by juxtaposing them heterologically as transcendence and immanence within the First Realm. Popper's world 3 is then similar to Rickert's Second Realm. Despite Popper's often repeated claim that he is a realist, he falls back, Rickert would certainly remark, into idealism when he inhabits world 3 admittedly with Plato's Ideas, although he defines them not as metaphysical realities but as human products, more precisely as products of language. But that is also problematic. He even applies this idea to numbers: 'I believe (...) that even the natural numbers are the work of men, the product of human language and of human thought. Yet, there is an infinity of such numbers, more than will ever be pronounced by men, or used by computers.'⁷⁵ Pronouncing numbers is counting (adding, subtracting, multiplying), Rickert would certainly say, but counting is not the same as numbers in themselves, just as words in themselves are not speaking or writing, or thoughts in themselves are not thinking. It remains odd to state 'that the third world (i.e. the abstract world of mathematics, logic, true statements, etc. ACZ) originates as a product of human activity.'⁷⁶ That, of course, reminds one of Mill's rather fallacious inductivism, which in view of Popper's devotion to deductivism is quite curious. Rickert's Third Realm, on the contrary, is a true activity – a meaning bestowing act – which connects the transcendent/immanent First Realm with the ideal Second Realm of values.

In everyday life, Rickert argues, we engage constantly in meaning bestowing actions, relating values to realities. In fact, we evaluate constantly, i.e. connect with values what we encounter, see, hear, feel and smell. Naturally, common sense does not distinguish an objective world of 'real' facts from a subjective world of 'unreal' values, let alone a Third Realm of meaning bestowing acts. In our experience the first two realms are blurred, and we are not at all consciously aware of our meaning bestowing acts. There is nothing wrong with that, but in the theoretical and scientific attitude, we are obliged to distinguish these realms conceptually. In science we ought to be critical and criticism is in essence nothing else than drawing analytical lines of distinction and difference. Then the problem arises, how the two realms can be connected without destroying their heterological independence. But we need to connect them, lest we remain burdened theoretically with a fragmented, dualistic reality concept.

In order to further elucidate his idea of a Third Realm which connects the First and the Second Realm, Rickert gives two examples. First, in science a true statement is a theoretical good (*theoretisches Gut*) which as such belongs to the First Realm, because we can hear and read it, subject it to investigation or debate, and thereby objectify it. It also belongs to the institution science which again is part of the institution university. In other words, a true statement is solidly embedded in the First Realm. But there is always the duality of the person who expresses and intends the statement (e.g. a teacher), and the person who hears and does or does not understand it

⁷⁴ Karl R. Popper, 'On the Theory of the Objective Mind', 1968, in: Karl R. Popper, *Objective Knowledge. An Evolutionary Approach*, 1972, (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1974), pp. 153-190. Quote on p. 154.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

(e.g. a student). This duality of intending and understanding is made possible by thoughts, or rather by judgments. Now, the judgment 'this statement is true' involves both the First Realm (judgments can be investigated objectively, for instance by psychology) and the Second Realm (the judgment belongs to the theoretical value of truth). But there is a third dimension involved here. Due to the acts of intending and understanding, on which all theoretical communication between people depends, the 'unreal' value of truth is as it were bestowed upon the 'real' statement. Intending and understanding connects the statement with the value of truth, rendering the statement meaningful. It is a theoretical meaning (*theoretischer Sinn*), carried by the acts of intending and understanding. It is in that sense again an *Aktsinn*, a meaning bestowing act.⁷⁷

Rickert's second example is in the area of atheoretical values. A work of art, say a painting, is an objective reality (linen, paint, lacquer, etc.) to which an aesthetic value (e.g. beauty or its opposite) is attached. If one focuses only on the objective reality, one will not understand the meaning of the painting, nor its aesthetic value. The painting acquires meaning the moment the beholder begins to evaluate it aesthetically, i.e. by calling it 'beautiful' or 'not beautiful'. That is a meaning bestowing act relating the object involved (First Realm) to the world of aesthetic values (Second Realm), thereby providing the object with an aesthetic meaning. Naturally, this has nothing to do with reason and logic, as in the case of the theoretical judgment. The aesthetic meaning depends on the atheoretical aesthetic values (Second Realm) which is actively brought into the world of the work of art (First Realm) by the beholder of it. If we disregard this meaning bestowing act of the beholder, the reality of the painting and the 'unreal' aesthetic values would, of course, still exist, but they would remain juxtaposed as two separated realities, not linked into a total reality. It is by the meaningful aesthetic act of the beholder (Third Realm) that the First and the Second Realm are connected and joined into the total reality.⁷⁸

Finally, Rickert does not only distinguish three realms but also three different methods of approaching them theoretically. The First Realm of objective reality is investigated in an *explanatory* manner (*Erklären*), the Second Realm of values is investigated in an *understanding* manner (*Verstehen*). The Third Realm of the meaning bestowing act, linking the two realms, is investigated in an *interpretive* manner (*Deuten*). These conceptual distinctions seem to be quite arbitrary, yet they are meant to maintain the conceptual differentiation of reality (*Wirklichkeit*), value (*Wert*) and meaning (*Sinn*). This can be summarized in a simple scheme:

1. Reality - Explanation (*Erklären*) - the in itself meaningless and value-free world of objects
2. Value - Understanding (*Verstehen*) - the normative world of values
3. Meaning - Interpretation (*Deuten*) - the act of relating values to realities

⁷⁷ H. Rickert, *o. c.*, p. 263f.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.264f. One can, of course, also bestow theoretical (scientific) meaning on a piece of art, as in the case of the restorer or renovator, who in fact will combine theoretical (chemical, physical, art-historical) and atheoretical (aesthetic) values and relate them to the painting or the historical building that must be restored or renovated. Cf. footnote 33.

Neither psychologism, nor metaphysics

The previous section may give rise to the opinion that the Third Realm is in essence a psychological world, since the *Aktsinn* is performed by the subject. Others may conclude that Rickert's conceptualization of the Third Realm in terms of the meaning bestowing act which connects the 'real' world of objects and the 'unreal' world of values is, despite his arguments to the contrary, actually rather metaphysical. He spends considerable time in denouncing these two opinions which in his view gravely distort his theoretical intentions.⁷⁹

In Rickert's view, we repeatedly saw, psychology is an empirical, specialized discipline whose object of research lies in the First Realm. The object of psychology is circumscribed by him alternatively as 'empirical psychic life' (*empirisches Seelenleben*) and as 'real psychic being' (*real psychisches Sein*). Today, he would probably rather speak of 'individual behavior' or 'psychological functions'. In any case, as an empirical science psychology should stick to the description and explanation (*Beschreibung und Erklärung*) of facts. Its proper field of operation is, according to Rickert, the empirical world of objective things and processes, not the 'unreal' reality of values and meanings. He is, therefore, certainly not an adversary of psychology as a scientific discipline. On the contrary, he holds for instance experimental psychology in high esteem as long as it abstains from philosophical considerations and metaphysical ruminations. His criticism is, in other words, directed against metaphysical transgressions of the disciplinary boundaries of the psychological discipline into the domains of philosophy, i.e. he fought and rejected psychologism.⁸⁰ In his view psychologism leads in philosophy to all sorts of confusions. He mentions in particular Dilthey, Wundt and Lipps as philosophers-psychologists who confuse facts, values and practical evaluations. Despite various mutual differences they share the belief that the human being who interprets meanings in terms of values (*Sinndeutung auf Grund von Werten*) should be analyzed in terms of these meanings and values. They thereby confuse facts and values, real being and unreal meaning, description and interpretation. It is a psychology soaked in normative value-judgments, and thus neither scientifically nor philosophically acceptable. Rickert emphasizes time and again that a psychology of science, morality, art, love or religion is logically completely legitimate, but it differs logically greatly from the normative interpretation of the intrinsic meanings of these phenomena in terms of their values (truth, the good, beauty, eros, desire, faith). Psychology should stick to the First realm and restrict itself to the description and (causal) explanation of the factual events that occur, when people make theoretical judgments, behold works of art, act morally, are bound with others through ties of love, belief in God, etc.

⁷⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 277-297.

⁸⁰ In a letter to the experimental psychologist Alexius Meinong (1853-1920), founder of the first laboratory for experimental psychology in Graz, Austria, Rickert allegedly had written that he knew not one central issue in philosophy to which psychology could contribute positively. Meinong responds to this remark in a letter dated December 22, 1912, in which he turns the argument around: 'I know of no problem which would be so central, that one would not have addressed it, as far as one is acquainted with it, by means of psychological techniques, and that, while doing so, one would not need, given the circumstances, to stay in close contact with a possibly advanced stage of psychological knowledge.' ('Ich weiss kein Problem, das so zentral wäre, dass man an dasselbe, sofern man es kannte, nicht schon mit psychologischen Bearbeitungsmitteln herangetreten wäre und bei dem man nicht unter Umständen eine recht enge Fühlung mit einem möglichst vorgeschrittenen Stande psychologischen Wissens bedürfte.' (Letter from the personal archive of Mrs. Marianne Rickert Verburg.) With such a *petitio principii* a further discussion between Rickert and Meinong was, of course, impossible.

Of course, values do play a role in such descriptions and explanations, certainly in the case of cultural psychology which focuses upon cultural, i.e. value related phenomena. Yet, also in that case the values and their related meanings remain objects of investigation, constitute value-judgments and goods (institutions), i.e. they belong to the First Realm, never change, within the boundaries of the scientific explanation, into constitutive components of meaningful interpretation (*Sinndeutung*). The task of cultural psychology is indeed the explanation and description of values and evaluations as objects (goods) in the First Realm, not the meaningful interpretation of values as components of the Second Realm. This is clearly illustrated in the case of a theoretical judgment which depends on logic and its central value of truth, as was the case, we may add, with Carnap's geographers who upon closer scientific scrutiny came to the consensual conclusion that the legendary mountain did indeed exist. But they must stick to that and not transgress the borders of science into the nature of Truth as a non-sensual and unreal value. Naturally, man's psyche is involved, when he engages in logical and scientific arguments, yet the intrinsic meaning of logic and science - its truth content - is not psychological. It is essential to distinguish between psychological being (*psychisches Sein*) and its description and explanation on the one hand, and logical meaning (*logischer Sinn*) and its interpretation on the other.

The agent who interprets the meaning of a theoretical judgment or a work of art in terms of the values truth or beauty, is the subject of the ensuing statement. It is but a small step to view this subject as a super individual 'spirit' (*Geist*) which subsequently is posited as the solution to the problem of the total reality. The Third Realm of the immanent *Aktsinn* is to the philosophical taste of many too abstract and too 'unreal'. What holds everything together should be something 'real', should be that which is actually and absolutely 'real'. This metaphysic of the spirit is the psychology of the meta-individual I - an absolutely valuable, trans-sensual *Geist* or *Logos* which evaluates only valid values. Religiously speaking, this meta-individual I is a god who incorporates all realities and all values. From this metaphysical point of view, Rickert continues, the values and their validity, as well as the meanings and their interpretations become quite thin, ghostly, liquid. According to the metaphysicians philosophy ought to go beyond this and penetrate into the depth, the essence, the background of reality. This would mean, Rickert says on purpose rather grandiloquently and ironically, that 'it (i.e. philosophy) ought to base the valid values upon an absolute, metaphysical reality of a world subject in order to understand the meaning which inhabits our individual evaluations, as a reflection of the global acts of the true global reality of the spirit.'⁸¹

Another drawback of this metaphysical approach is the fact that the absolute spirit assumes a unifying position in which the essential autonomy of the three realms

⁸¹ '... sie hat die gültigen Werte auf eine absolute, metaphysische Realität des Weltsubjektes zu stützen, um dann den Sinn, der unsern individuellen Wertungen innewohnt, als Widerspiegelung oder Abglanz von Welttaten der wahren Wertwirklichkeit des Geistes zu verstehen.' *Ibid.*, p. 291f. This is obviously an ironical reference to Hegel's philosophy. He adds that this sort of metaphysics works with words and names that resonate strongly in the chest of many people and obviously satisfy more than just theoretical needs. 'The word "Geist" alone has a magical influence on many which by far transcends that of a scientific theory.' ('Schon das Wort "Geist" übt auf Manche einen Zauber, der weit über den einer wissenschaftlichen Theorie hinausgeht.') *Ibid.*, p. 292. The same holds true, of course, of the Platonic *Logos*, and it is not far-fetched to apply it also to the Marxist notion of the Proletariat as the agent which eventually causes the End of History in the world revolution. Cf. Georg Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein*, ('History and Class Consciousness'), 1923, (Neuwied, Berlin: Hermann Luchterhand, 1971).

is lifted, or better: annihilated. The result is 'a multiplication table of witches which is equally mysterious to wise men as to fools: and three make equal, so you are rich! To the *scientific* man the three parts will always remain *unequal*.'⁸² Science always moves from the fuzzy and indistinct mass of experiences to the clear plurality of concepts. It is the only way to make people conscious of the wealth of the world. 'Yes, one will skeptically examine the content of the word "spirit", when man searches more for clarifying concepts than for uplifting or intoxicating sounds.'⁸³

Rickert agrees with Nietzsche: we should shy away from this metaphysical 'back world' (*Hinterwelt*).⁸⁴ Since he loves to play with words, he states that his own theory of the logically predominant role of the Third Realm of meaning interpretation (*Sinndeutung*) and meaning bestowing activity is not a meta-physical 'back world', but rather a pro-physical 'front world' (*Vorderwelt*): it is the logical predecessor of reality and values, and of our knowledge of them.⁸⁵ This 'front world' is not an abstract, far away reality, but it is part of our everyday world, since we constantly, though usually unconsciously, interpret the meaning of what we and the others do and say in terms of values. Or, in more modern terms, we are essentially meaning bestowing, that is communicating beings. It is the task of philosophy to conceptualize this activity. That is precisely what the not meta-physical but pro-physical theory of the three independent, yet heterologically connected realms does. 'In the night of the back world everything is, to quote Hegel, "black". In the day of the front world the one stands out clearly from the other. He who wants to *know*, cannot doubt in which direction he ought to look.'⁸⁶

The philosophy of culture in outline

We must now ask how it could be possible to acquire philosophical knowledge of values. This is, of course, a tricky question, in particular since Rickert rejects the metaphysical approach. In answer to this question he argues that to begin with values can only be known through their deposit, or objectification in value-judgments and cultural goods (from scientific theories and objects of art to institutions). These, of course, belong to the First Realm. The values of the Second Realm are, as we saw before, forms which are in the meaning bestowing acts 'imposed' on the contents of the First Realm. As empty forms values cannot be experienced and known. Truth, beauty, justice, moral goodness, etc. cannot be seen, smelled, heard, or touched. They are in this basic sense not real as the transcendent objects are which through the senses become immanent phenomena, enter our minds as impressions after they have been 'caught' by the senses. However, values are, as it

⁸² '...ein Hexeneinmaleins, geheimnisvoll für Weise wie für Toren: Und Drei mach gleich, so bist du reich! Für den *wissenschaftlichen* Menschen werden die drei Teile immer *ungleich* bleiben.' *Ibid.*, p. 293.

⁸³ 'Ja das Wort "Geist" wird man besonders misstrauisch auf seinen Gehalt prüfen, falls man mehr nach klärenden Begriffen als nach erbaulichen oder berausenden Klängen sucht.' *Idem*. This is one of the main reasons why Rickert, as we shall see in Chapter Five, replaces the concept *Geisteswissenschaft* by *Kulturwissenschaft*.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 295f.

⁸⁵ In view of this concept of 'pro-physics' the title of Christian Krijnen's voluminous study is remarkable: *Nachmetaphysischer Sinn*, i.e. 'post-metaphysical meaning'. Krijnen, *o. c.*

⁸⁶ 'In der Nacht der Hinterwelt wird, um mit Hegel zu reden, alles "schwarz". Im Tage der Vorderwelt hebt sich das Eine von dem Andern deutlich ab. Wer *erkennen* will, kann nicht zweifeln, wohin er zu blicken hat.' *Ibid.*, p. 297.

were, deposited in our value-judgments and in our cultural goods which are objective components of the First Realm. It is there that we can acquire knowledge about them.

This is remarkable because the philosophy of values now seems to coincide with the cultural sciences, the historical discipline in the first place. Indeed, Rickert seems to come close to the notion of a cultural and historical philosophy derived from various cultural-historical disciplines. But that is, of course, a notion which he has rejected earlier, when he stated that the total reality, as the objective of systematic philosophy, is more than the sum of the realities under investigation by the specialized sciences. It is precisely at this point that the Third Realm is so strategically important. The empirical cultural sciences (history, as we will see in the next chapter, in the first place) describe, analyze and explain the objective sedimentations of values in goods and value-judgments, without leaving or transcending the First Realm. The philosophy of values, on the contrary, having its proper abode in the Third Realm, performs the *Aktsinn*, the meaning bestowing act, by linking the Second Realm of unreal values to the First Realm of real objects. By doing so the meaning and nature of values are rendered understandable (*verstehbar*). Thus, the philosopher does not distill objectively valid values from the (individually or collectively) subjective value-judgments and the cultural goods, as investigated by the cultural-historical disciplines. He rather instills them with meaning and clarifies why it is that for example institutions are true *Sinngebilde*, meaningful configurations. Such interpretations could eventually even produce knowledge, Rickert claims, about what life is all about, i.e. about the grand issue of 'the meaning of life'. In the end his philosophy or theory of values, which can also be called a *philosophy of culture*, could thus produce a philosophical *Lebensanschauung*. This is, of course, a large order, certainly if one takes into account that such a philosophy may not result in a metaphysical *Weltanschauung*.

At this point of his argument he again warns and argues against psychologism. We should not focus on individual and personal acts of value-judgments, since that would not yield any systematic knowledge and insight. One would get lost in the chaotic thicket of subjective emotions and opinions. Individuals, for instance, usually experience and evaluate the aesthetic value of a work of art in vastly different manners. And when individuals are described and analyzed psychologically in a uniform manner, as in the case of a true scientific statement, it is generally not asked, whether their judgment is true or false, because it is psychologically irrelevant whether someone thinks and argues correctly or falsely. Telling lies is psychologically interesting in terms of the mental and psychic processes involved in the lying. The nature of a lie in terms of truth and falsehood as values is of no concern to the scientifically operating psychologist, nor are for that matter the normative, moralistic value-judgments about lying. Those are philosophical issues. Psychology as an empirical science should stick to the explanation of real psychological processes and is as such not of any significance to the philosophical theory of values.

This argument can be illustrated additionally in the case of religion. The scientific study of religion, as in the case of 'comparative religion', or 'sociology of religion', or 'psychology of religion', is interested in the empirical expressions of religious values in the First Realm. It subjects these values which are dear to the true believers, to objective analysis and research, without leaving the First Realm, e.g. without asking what the intrinsic values and meanings of the religious expressions under investigation 'essentially' are. An atheist can be a perfect scientific student of religion, just as a musicologist does not have to excel in musicality. In Rickert's *Aktsinn*, however, the philosopher will focus on the immanent meaning of the religious values in the Second Realm and bestow them on the empirical religious expressions in the First Realm. Without necessarily being a believer, he will try to

determine what it exactly is that renders these expressions 'religious'. In this sense he will search for the essence of religion, but without any normative religious intentions. This brings him close to the phenomenology of religion, as formulated in an exemplary manner by Gerard van der Leeuw who would be fully acceptable for Rickert because he did not take refuge in psychologism as most phenomenologists of religion have been prone to do, nor did he alter his comparative study of religious phenomena into a normative theology.⁸⁷ It is necessary to distinguish the philosophy of religion as a scientific enterprise from systematic theology as a normative, dogmatic discipline. In Rickert's terms theology would certainly not belong to the Third Realm, but rather be part of metaphysics which is beyond the three realms. The history of systematic theology, however, would again be part of the First Realm, as a scientific study of religion.⁸⁸

Rickert then draws the conclusion that not individual value-judgments which lack objective validity, but collective goods which carry an intersubjective validity, constitute the proper material of the philosophy of values. They are objective realities - the institutions of historical culture - to which the values adhere. To a philosophical theory of values history as a scientific discipline is of far greater importance than psychology and the natural sciences. In the next chapter we shall encounter Rickert's idea of historical or cultural science (*Kulturwissenschaft*) as a distinct approach of reality, heterologically distinguished from the natural-scientific approach (*Naturwissenschaft*). We shall then also discuss his ideas about a specific philosophy of history.

Following Kant, he singles out four areas which he deems to be the heart of cultural reality constituting the four basic, but mutually distinguishable domains of a philosophy of values, or cultural philosophy (*Kulturphilosophie*): (a) mores and morality; (b) the arts and beauty; (c) the religions and the divine; (d) the sciences and truth. It is interesting to note though that the domain of pleasure and erotic lust which Rickert discusses also, is absent from this Kantian catalogue, as is the domain of justice which Rickert too neglects.⁸⁹ In any case, Rickert repeats once more that the cultural-historical, special sciences subject the institutions (cultural goods) within these domains to investigation. They thereby remain in the First Realm of objective facts. They offer the material for the philosophy of values which distills from these investigations information about the values of the Second Realm. By an interpretation of the intrinsic meaning (*Sinn*) of these four cultural areas, relating it to their respective values, Rickert tries to construct an autonomous philosophy of values. Let us briefly follow his arguments.

⁸⁷ Gerard van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation. A Study in Phenomenology*, 2 volumes, 1933, transl. From the German by J.E. Turner, (New York, Evanston: Harper & Row Publishers, 1963). See also Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane. The Nature of Religion*, 1957, transl. From the French by W. R. Trask, (New York: A Harvest Book; Harcourt, Brace & World, 1959). A classic in this tradition is Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy. An Inquiry into the Non-rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational*, 1917, transl by J. W. Harvey, 1923, (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1969). This book is drenched in romantic psychologism though, as it defines the Sacred as the human feeling of being nothing, and thus dependent on the awe inspiring sacred as a *mysterium tremendum* (tremendous mystery).

⁸⁸ As an example of such a normative, dogmatic theology see the brief introduction in orthodox-Calvinist, systematic theology of Karl Barth, *Evangelical Theology*, 1963, (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books; Doubleday, 1964). For a liberal-Lutheran introduction see Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 1957, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1958). A classic history of Christian doctrines is Adolf Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, 1889, (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1905). Examples from other world religions can, of course, be added.

⁸⁹ For a philosophy of law which is inspired by neo-Kantianism see Gustav Radbruch, *Rechtsphilosophie*, 1914, (Stuttgart: J. F. Koehler Verlag, 1950; 4th ed.), in particular chapter one: 'Wirklichkeit und Wert' (Reality and Value'), pp. 91-97, and various references to Kant, Windelband and Rickert.

*Mores and morality.*⁹⁰ Human beings grow up and lead their lives in an environment of mores which are part of a collective, social culture. These 'ways of doing things' are, of course, related to values and the philosophical observer naturally wants to know what the validity of these values are. He will observe that these value laden mores provide people with the experience of meaning (*Sinn*). It is, for example, impossible to interpret the 'meaning of life' without reference to these mores and their inherent values.

Now, what does actually the concept of morality mean? In order to be called 'moral', Rickert argues, human actions must be driven by a conscious and purposeful will which intends to do what is considered to be right. There must be an intrinsic sense of duty (*Pflicht, Sollen*), yet this should not be seen as some sort of slave morality (*Sklavenmoral*) which blindly follows alien orders. On the contrary, the sense of duty should be an autonomous self-control which is based upon the conviction that it is intrinsically right to do what one has to do.⁹¹ This is not blind obedience but voluntary compliance. In morality, the free will is essential. This free will is not arbitrary and autocratic, but based upon autonomy in the original sense of this word, i.e. self (*autos*)-imposed rule (*nomos*). The autonomous person is bound by his conscience which consists of the conviction that there are moral values which are objectively, albeit abstractly, valid. In certain historical circumstances, such as a war, it may be necessary to kill people, but the value of life is an objective one and internalized throughout history as the conscientious duty to defend it, whenever and wherever necessary and possible. Just as the sentence with a true meaning constitutes the core of logic, and the work of art with its beauty the core of aesthetics, so the autonomous personality constitutes the core of ethics.⁹²

Rickert adds the idea that human autonomy as the essential moral value is not a private and individual autonomy but a social one. Human beings grow up and live within a social community and a traditional, collective culture which they internalize, whereby their conscience develops into a social conscience. But again, they are not the puppets of their society and culture. As moral individuals they are autonomous persons who choose or reject voluntarily the moral values of their surroundings: 'It is in this manner that an individual develops into a moral human being, which freely absorbs the mores of his community into his will or refuses to absorb them.'⁹³ In any case, an individual is a moral personality, when he accepts and enacts the mores of his community, not because everyone is doing so, and one is supposed to do so, but because he finds them 'objectively' valid, and therefore morally binding. It is remarkable, of course, that Rickert puts so much emphasis on the fact that the

⁹⁰ Cf. the section 'Die Sitten und die Sittlichkeit', *ibid.*, pp. 324-333. The German concept *Sitten* can be translated as *folkways* which in itself is again a rather pluriform concept, covering 'usages', 'manners', 'customs', 'mores' and 'morals'. Cf. William Graham Sumner, *Folkways. A Study of the Sociological Importance of Usages, Manners, Customs, Mores and Morals*, 1906, (New York: A Mentor Book; The New American Library, 1960) I shall use 'mores' for *Sitten* and 'morality' for *Sittlichkeit*.

⁹¹ Rickert comes close here to the well-known distinction of *Selbstzwang* and *Fremdzwang* as developed by Norbert Elias in his historical-sociological study *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation. Soziogenetische und Psychogenetische Untersuchungen*, (On the Process of Civilisation. Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations), two volumes, 1936, (Bern, München: Francke Verlag, 1969, 2nd ed.), in particular vol. 2, pp. 312-454.

⁹² Rickert, *o. c.*, p. 362.

⁹³ 'So erst wird er zum sittlichen Menschen, der mit Freiheit die Sitten seiner Gemeinschaft in seinen Willen aufnimmt oder nicht aufnimmt.' *Ibid.*, p. 329. It is in view of Rickert's emphasis upon the importance of the free will of the individual as a moral personality strange that he embraced at the end of his life the social philosophy of the national-socialists.

objectivity of the validity of the values is the result of the definition of it by the autonomous, moral person. This comes close to the rather relativistic, sociological theorem of the self-fulfilling prophecy which was initiated by William Isaac Thomas which runs as follows: 'If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences.'⁹⁴ It seems as if Rickert at this point remains stuck in the First Realm of value-judgments and cultural goods, and is unable to get hold conceptually and theoretically of the ahistorical, unempirical (ideal, formal) values in the Second Realm. He would, however, probably argue that he as philosopher bestows meaning on the values of the Second Realm linking them to their moral enactment by human beings (moral personalities) in the First Realm.

He follows the same route of arguing, when he defines cultural goods in terms of institutions such as marriage, family, law, state, etc. which harbor the social values of a social morality. These institutions, he argues, are the proper object (*Gegenstand*) of social sciences, like psychology, sociology and anthropology. When philosophy tries to formulate its autonomous theory of moral values in the format of social ethics, it must stay in close contacts with these disciplines, because they explain how the mores and the institutions function. Yet, it ought to transcend these empirical sciences and try to understand the intrinsic meaning (*Sinndeutung*) of the institutions as meaningful configurations (*Sinngebilde*) which are related to objective values and their objective validity. In this respect there is this special place of philosophy next to the special sciences: a moral theory in the format of a social ethics which does not offer normative directives but rather interprets moral values as the immanent moral meaning of the social institutions. It, in other words, reveals the moral nature of the institutions which empirical disciplines like sociology or anthropology could never do without leaving their specific field of expertise.

To sum up, the concept of freedom or autonomy, linked to the internalized sense of duty, is what demarcates mores and morality as the special subject and focus of moral philosophy. This branch of cultural philosophy is in fact social ethics which, as we have seen above, views morality as being *social*, *personal*, and *active*. This is in contrast to the other branch of cultural philosophy which is predominantly *non-social*, *factual* (*sachlich*), and *contemplative*.

*The arts and beauty.*⁹⁵ Works of art are cultural goods and therefore bearers of a value which we can loosely describe as 'beauty' (or its heterological counterpart). This artistic value is not attached to individual human beings or social units, but to buildings, sculptures, paintings, poems, plays and musical compositions.⁹⁶ Even if the artist is seen as a creative subject, driven by the aesthetic value of beauty, he or she is actually not viewed as a person, but rather as the bearer of an aesthetic value, and thus as an aesthetic object ('*Sache*'). In that respect the domain of aesthetic values is, unlike the moral domain, *sachlich*, 'factual' or 'matter-of-fact like'. There is and has been a rather romantic worldview of aesthetic beings (*Weltanschauung des Aesthetentums*) which tries to superimpose the aesthetic values on personal, social, or political values, as was exemplified by Oscar Wilde whom

⁹⁴ Cf. William Isaac Thomas, *The Unadjusted Girl*, 1928, (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 42f. Also Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure*, 1944, (New York: Macmillan, 1964), pp. 421-438.

⁹⁵ 'Die Künste und die Schönheit'. Rickert, *o.c.*, pp. 333-338.

⁹⁶ Rickert speaks specifically of works of art. There is, of course, the beauty of persons (beautiful women or children or men), of animals (beautiful horses or dogs or cats), or the beauty of nature (mountains, sunset at sea), but he restricts himself here to the world of the arts.

Rickert mentions here specifically. But that is not of much interest to the philosophical theory of art and beauty. In this theory the focus is rather upon the intrinsic value of art (*Eigenwert der Kunst*) and not upon aestheticist ideologies.

Beauty is the basic value here. However, Rickert is aware of the fact that this word is quite old-fashioned and misleading. Yet that is, according to him, but a matter of terminology. What is meant essentially, is the fact that special values adhere to art and these values are lumped together in the concepts 'beauty' and 'beautiful' (and their heterologically related opposites). How can we theoretically substantiate these admittedly vague concepts? Rickert argues as follows. We behold an object of art and dwell with it for its own intrinsic worth. It stands apart from the rest of the world, and it constitutes, with all its often quite different, yet mutually related parts, a complete, well-nigh closed configuration. A framed painting demands its own place on a wall, a sculpture fills its very own space in the exhibition hall. Furthermore, such works of art do not need any reference to other realities. It is in that sense, unlike mores and morality, impersonal and non-social. In fact, we are ready to call 'beautiful' each part of reality which constitutes a 'harmonious', 'independent' whole, which seems to rest in itself. Our primary reaction towards it is not one of activity, as in mores and morality, but of *contemplation*.⁹⁷ Our personal will remains silent, the urge to act dwindles. We just behold, listen. This is the intrinsic meaning of our evaluation of a work of art. It is an inner taking up of position without reference to any outward behavior.

At the same time, feeling (*Gefühl*) is not a relevant component of the aesthetic experience, as is often mistakenly believed. To begin with, aesthetic values adhere to things, to objects, and are in that sense rather factual and emotionally neutral. Moreover, aesthetic creation and observation (seeing, hearing, reading) of works of art are primarily matters of contemplation and looking, more than of emotional feeling. Contemplation and observation constitute the proper meaningful act (*Aktsinn*) which does justice to the harmony, equilibrium, and autonomy of the beautiful object or work of art. They are comparable to the autonomous will which expresses the moral freedom in the area of social ethics. But whereas the moral individual is pressed to participate actively in social life, the value of beauty suppresses each urge to act. It detaches the beholder or listener from the humdrum of social life for the sake of a calm tranquility and impersonal surrender to the beholden object.⁹⁸

Arguing in terms of the *Aktsinn* in the Third Realm Rickert asks what kind of valid values make art possible: 'What is it that makes a work of art into a work of art, i.e. a cultural good which pretends to be evaluated by everybody without factually being evaluated by everybody? Which value should attach itself to a piece of reality in order for us to treat it as a work of art?'⁹⁹ These are the basic questions, he continues, for the philosophical discipline called *aesthetics*. Aesthetic philosophy takes as its

⁹⁷ This emphasis upon contemplation conflicts in my opinion with Rickert's crucial concept of *Aktsinn* as the meaning bestowing act of subjects on objects. This will be discussed presently.

⁹⁸ This is, of course, an anti-romantic, almost functionalist view of art. Piet Mondrian or Arnold Schönberg would probably agree with it. But it is a rather narrow view. Rickert should at least have added the heterological observation that a work of art may have an opposite effect and produce a sense of chaos instead of a sense of harmony. Expressionism certainly had this effect, and I wonder how Rickert would fit a performance of Igor Stravinski's *Le sacre du printemps* in his description of aesthetic harmony and tranquility.

⁹⁹ 'Was ist es, wodurch ein Kunstwerk zum Kunstwerk wird, d.h. zum Gut, das den Anspruch erhebt, von allen gewertet zu werden, ohne faktisch von allen gewertet zu sein? Welcher Wert muss an einer Wirklichkeit haften, damit wir sie zur Kunst zählen?' *Ibid.*, p. 335.

proper object the arts in all their diversity, i.e. the works of architecture, painting, design, poetry, music, dance, etc. However, the philosophical science of aesthetic meaning and value does not ask how art has actually and factually developed, what it does and does not do, because that is what the empirical disciplines, like art history, or the sociology, psychology and economics of art, should do. The results of these disciplines are put to use by aesthetics as material, as the empirical sedimentations of aesthetic values in the First Realm. But its proper objective is to ask what the factors are on which the aesthetic values are dependent. That is, it asks on which factors the beauty, the loftiness, the humor, or the tragedy of a piece of music, a painting, a play, a poem, etc. depend. That question cannot be answered by the specialized, empirical sciences. It is a quest for the immanent meaning of a work of art.

Objects in nature can, of course, be bearers of aesthetic values also. In fact, it is quite feasible, Rickert surmises, that natural beauty is the very origin of all things beautiful. Maybe art is just an elaboration or imitation of what nature has to offer in terms of beauty? Or, maybe it is the other way around, maybe the paradoxical phrase is correct that the beauty of nature is an imitation of the beauty of art, which means, of course, that it is works of art that teach us to behold nature as something beautiful, i.e. artistic?¹⁰⁰ In any case, this demonstrates once more that through the meaning bestowing act (*Aktsinn*) the non-empirical value of beauty attaches itself to the realities of the First Realm and thereby determines what is and what is not art.

Thus, in contrast with mores and morality art and beauty constitute a domain which in essence is *non-social, factual (sachlich) and contemplative*. Its inherent meaning (*Sinn*) is the harmonious synchrony of parts and components which often differ vastly, yet come together in a closed reality which stands apart in social life and compels the beholder to stop his activities and enjoy the beauty of it in a contemplative mood.

*Religions and the divine.*¹⁰¹ Whether one is a religious believer or not, Rickert argues, one has to admit that there are religions all over the world, albeit in vastly different historical and sociological settings. And there are people who believe in religious values and try to enact them in their lives. Apparently, these values are 'objectively' valid to them. In fact, These religious values determine what the meaning of their lives is or could be. One can try to demonstrate that these believers are wrong, i.e. that their 'truth' is 'false', but in that case one argues in terms of theoretical values – 'truth' and 'falsehood' – which belong to another domain, namely that of the sciences. It is in other words a conflict of different and differing value domains which can not be solved in terms of one of the domains. One can call religious belief 'unaesthetic' or 'unscientific', but that is as unconvincing as the religious believer who decries art or science as 'godless' and therefore 'objectionable'. Max Weber spoke of 'the combat of the gods' (*Kampf der Götter*) which necessarily reigns in the realm of values and their respective validities: 'Fate

¹⁰⁰ Rickert does not mention Oscar Wilde by name here, but it is obvious that he refers to Wilde's well-known essay in the form of a dialogue 'The Decay of Lying. An Observation', 1891, in: *Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, ed. by Vyvyan Holland, 1948, (London, Glasgow: Collins), pp. 970-992. The conclusion of the essay is that life follows art: 'The third doctrine is that Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates Life.' *Ibid.*, p. 992. Rickert loved paradoxes since they are, of course, essentially heterological. And although he rejected his aestheticism and vitalism he had a distinct preference for Oscar Wilde's writing, probably also for heterological reasons.

¹⁰¹ 'Die Religionen und das Göttliche'. Rickert, *o.c.*, pp. 338-344.

rules over these gods and in their combat, but certainly not any "science".¹⁰² In the theoretical domain of the sciences a statement can be proven to be true or false, but in the atheoretical domains of the arts or of the religious convictions one cannot prove scientifically that a piece of art, or a religious conviction is true or false.

An interesting case is the quarrel between *creationism* and *evolutionism*. Fundamentalist Christians maintain that the cosmos was created by God in seven days as Genesis 1 tells us. History is then a matter of Providence. Evolutionists claim that this is nonsense, since it has been scientifically proven ever since Darwin's theory of evolution and the cosmological theory of the Big Bang that the world began *ex nihilo* and then slowly developed according to the laws of natural selection without any meaningful (divine) plan behind it. Evolution is ruled by chance. In Rickert's terms, both fundamentalist creationism as well as scientific evolutionism transport Genesis 1 from the atheoretical religious abodes of mythology (the realm of faith) to that of the theoretical abode of science (the realm of empirical evidence). In a sense, the fundamentalists argue as scientifically as the evolutionary biologists do. In logic this is called a *metabasis eis allos genos*, a transition to a totally different genus of thought. The 'debate' between the two is senseless and fruitless.

With the help of Frege's distinction of meaning (*Sinn*) and significance (*Bedeutung*) an additional conclusion is possible: Genesis 1 has no (scientific) significance, yet it does have (religious) meaning. The evolutionists will agree with the first conclusion, but cannot possibly prove scientifically that the second conclusion is nonsensical. Likewise, Homer's *Odyssee* carries (poetic) meaning, but has, of course, no (scientific) significance.

Rickert then asks the question what it is that allows us to call a value and its believed validity 'religious'. What is the meaningful act (*Aktsinn*) by which a value and its validity is rendered 'religious'? Human beings, Rickert argues, experience their imperfection and incompleteness continuously. In particular human institutions (*menschliche Güter*) suffer from this lack of perfection and completeness. It then stands to reason that people search for and believe in values which are perfect and complete, incorporated in a super-human being. This being is defined either in terms of a super-human person (e.g. God), or of a super-human but impersonal force (e.g. the Sacred, or the Divine). In fact, one could, as a believer, heterologically argue the other way about: the experience of imperfection and incompleteness has emerged because human beings compare themselves and their institutions with this super-human, perfect and complete divinity. But one should heed Rickert's reminder: 'it is unimportant, whether we are religious believers or not.'¹⁰³ And now that we are at it, he repeats also once more that he wants to abstain from metaphysics as a doctrine which argues in terms of metaphysically religious values. Not an alleged immanent or transcendent existence of these values is the issue, but their *validity* which carries the meaning (*Sinn*) of the believer's life.

The domain of religious values occupies an interesting place between the ethic and aesthetic domains. As we saw, morality is predominantly social, personal and active, whereas art is a non-social, factual (*sachlich*) and contemplative. In religion we find both sets of characteristics mixed. There are expressly contemplative religions which profess a total merger of the personality and the divinity, and abstain from activities in the social world. In this case, religious life - 'if we still can call it "life"', Rickert interjects¹⁰⁴ - has a contemplative, impersonal (*sachlich*), and non-social meaning. In mysticism, for example, one merely wants to observe (*schauen*) God passively and be absorbed by contemplation. It is believed to

¹⁰² 'Und über diesen Göttern und in ihrem Kampf waltet das Schicksal, aber ganz gewiss keine "Wissenschaft".' Max Weber, 'Wissenschaft als Beruf', 1920, in: *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1968), p. 604.

¹⁰³ 'Ob wir selbst religiös sind oder nicht, ist dabei gleichgültig.' Rickert, *o.c.*, p. 341.

¹⁰⁴ *Idem*.

be the only way to get rid of human imperfection as one merges, as it were, with divine perfection. In the end, even the personality may disappear, being totally absorbed by the deity. Such a non-social, impersonal and contemplative religious life resembles art and artistic life. However, in religion the human being can also be oriented to his fellow human beings and be active in the world. This activity is often interpreted as a task imposed by the divinity. Religious life resembles in that case the moral activities, and is likewise social, personal and active. In fact, God is viewed as a social, personal and active force which gives society, when it identifies with this religious view, an active, personal and social character.

So we have two opposite types of religion here. On the one hand, there is withdrawal from the world and depersonalization, on the other hand there is working in and upon the world and the formation of a personal individuality. Rickert could have referred here to Max Weber's ideal typical distinction of an 'outer-worldly asceticism' (*ausserweltliche Askese*) and an 'inner-worldly asceticism' (*innerweltliche Askese*). The most telling example of the latter type is in Weber's view the protestant (in particular puritanical) ethics.¹⁰⁵ It exemplifies the coalescence of Rickert's concepts of mores/morality and active religion/deity, and demonstrates the very similar *Aktsinn* which Weber would call 'the subjectively intended meaning'.¹⁰⁶

Rickert finally points at an important feature of religion. It is inclined, he argues, to refuse to accept a co-coordinative position with the other sectors of life. It rather attempts to superimpose its values on other parts of culture, in particular when a specific religious conviction is absent and the ethical and aesthetic values acquire a vaguely religious color. In that case, religious values often exhibit a tendency to spread over all of human existence as what the sociologist of religion Peter L. Berger called a 'sacred canopy'. Thomas Luckmann caught the force of this embracing kind of religion by his notion of the 'invisible religion' which, in a secularized society, penetrates into such sectors as politics, the arts and sometimes even the sciences.¹⁰⁷

*Sciences and truth.*¹⁰⁸ From the standpoint of cultural philosophy the true statements (*wahre Sätze*) of science, to which theoretical values (e.g. truth, reality) are attached, are empirical cultural goods that exist in the First Realm. As we have seen before, Truth is just like Beauty or Morality a value concept (*Wertbegriff*). True sentences can be understood in all their pluriformity with regard to the validity of their theoretical values. We can next interpret the acts of the theoretical subject (i.e. the scientific researcher) and explain them in terms of their immanent meaning. This then results in what is called theory of science (*Wissenschaftslehre*) which should be understood as part of the general cultural philosophy, alongside ethics, aesthetics, and philosophy of religion. Its main task is to acknowledge impartially all attempts by

¹⁰⁵ Max Weber, *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*, 1904, in: *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, vol. one, (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1963), pp. 84-163.

¹⁰⁶ Hannah Arendt's discussion of the Ancient Greek and medieval ideas concerning the *vita contemplativa* vis-à-vis the *vita activa* ('bios theoretikos' vis-vis 'bios politikos' in Aristotle) and the traditional primacy of contemplation over activity, which in modernity is just the other way around, comes to mind here. See Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 1958, (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959), in particular pp. 9-18.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Thomas Luckmann, *The Invisible Religion. The Transformation of Symbols in Industrial Society*, (New York, London: Macmillan, 1967). Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1967).

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Rickert, *o. c.*, pp. 344-347. This is a brief section as its main theme is dealt with extensively in Rickert's *Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung* which we will discuss in the next chapter.

which people seek truth for the sake of truth. Indeed, it should do so impartially, because just as aesthetics should not speak up for a special artistic direction or taste, or religious philosophy for one specific religion or conviction, the philosopher of sciences should avoid any scientific partisanship. As we shall see in more detail in the next chapter, representatives of cultural science (*Kulturwissenschaft*) are related to the values of their environment, yet should abstain from normative value-judgments for the duration of their scientific activities. It is the fine, yet important difference between value-relatedness (*Wertverbundenheit*) and abstaining from value-judgments (*Wertungsfreiheit*).

Partisanship with its unavoidable value-judgments is quite common among philosophers of science, Rickert warns. He refers to those who claim that natural science (*Naturwissenschaft*) or mathematics present the true and only 'scientific' science.¹⁰⁹ Of course, he adds, the philosopher is inclined to favor those sciences that in their formal structure are closest to his own endeavors and, he adds, 'without doubt philosophy is in terms of logic closer to the natural sciences and mathematics than to the historical cultural sciences.'¹¹⁰ But that is one more reason to be very careful, if it comes to a philosophical understanding of the inner meaning of scientific life and work. The philosopher is a theoretical person¹¹¹ who is inclined to prefer the theoretical values (truth, reality) above the non-theoretical values (beauty, deity, erotic lust, etc.). Yet, such a preference is and remains theoretically incorrect. The philosopher would restrict his philosophical horizons irresponsibly, if he only focused on those scientific enterprises that come closest to his own theoretical conceptualizations and evaluative preferences. 'He will, however, only avoid such partialities, when he stays in touch with the full breadth of historical cultural life.'¹¹² Rickert, in other words, criticizes the scientific specialist who can only view the world in terms of his narrowly demarcated field of expertise.

Finally, Rickert argues that the philosopher of science should at all times keep in mind that there are truths outside the theoretical world of the sciences. They are in a sense pre-scientific, and although Rickert does not use this concept, we could call it 'common sense'. The philosopher of science should realize that people outside the world of science constantly relate their experiences to theoretical forms, albeit in primitive appearances. The substance of these experiences is being formed, put into

¹⁰⁹ In the social sciences this partisanship is usually labeled 'neo-positivism'. It was in the 1960's and 1970's opposed by a neo-Marxist partisanship which has led to not very fruitful debates. Cf. Theodor W. Adorno c.s. (eds.), *Der Positivismusstreit in der deutschen Soziologie*, ('The Positivist Conflict in German Sociology'), 1969, (Neuwied, Berlin: Luchterhand, 1979). In accordance with his heterology Rickert could have mentioned the fact that many cultural philosophers too are rather inclined to put the humanities (*Kulturwissenschaften*) on a pedestal and applaud them as the essence of science and scientific culture (*Bildung*). This was argued critically by C. P. Snow in his well known essay *The Two Cultures*, 1959, (Cambridge, UK: At the University Press, 1978). He added in 1963 *A Second Look* in which he mentioned the rise of 'a third culture' which is mainly represented by the social sciences. *Ibid.*, pp.53-100.

¹¹⁰ '... zweifellos steht die Philosophie in logischer Hinsicht den Naturwissenschaften und der Mathematik näher als den historischen Kulturwissenschaften.' Rickert, *o.c.*, p. 345.

¹¹¹ Needless to say once more that Rickert means by 'theoretical' scientific and logical. It stands heterologically over against 'atheoretical' which refers to ethics, religion, the arts, sexuality. Truth and reality are 'theoretical' values, morality, divinity, beauty, erotic lust are 'atheoretical' values. We saw before that Rickert viewed philosophy as a scientific discipline, which however, unlike the various (natural-scientific and cultural-scientific) disciplines which operate in the First Realm, operates in and from the Third Realm, connecting by meaning bestowing acts the First Realm of real facts and objects with the Second Realm of unreal values.

¹¹² 'Vermeiden aber wird er solche Einseitigkeiten mit Sicherheit nur wo er Fühlung mit der ganzen Breite des geschichtlichen Kulturlebens sucht.' *Idem*.

shape, structured by theoretical forms such as truth and reality, as is testified by the abundant use of phrases like 'this is true/false' and 'this is real/unreal'. In view of his critique of vitalism and phenomenology, this conclusion is, of course, quite remarkable.¹¹³

The systematic philosophy of values

Until now, we have discussed values, value-judgments and cultural goods at random. We must now place them in a systematic framework. But a warning is in order here. The search for a philosophical system, Rickert warns,¹¹⁴ is often driven by the desire to end philosophy once and for all. Hegel, and certainly many Hegelians, for example, believed that the Hegelian system meant the conclusion of all philosophical endeavors. After Hegel there was supposedly no need anymore for a systematic philosophy because his philosophy incorporated the definitive System. From then on it was only the history of philosophy that could be legitimately studied. Moreover, since it was believed that Hegel's dialectical system caught and represented the dialectics of history, it was also believed that with his philosophical system history itself had come to its conclusion.¹¹⁵ Rickert finds all this a vast exaggeration and reiterates his conviction that history and culture can never be concluded and closed, but will always remain open to change and development. He points out also that the closely related idea that the future can be spelled out by means of 'laws of development', is equally false. The laws of nature can be discovered but there are no laws of history and culture which enable us to fix future developments and changes. Without mentioning the name of its author he castigates the bestseller of his days, *The Decline of the West*, in which Spengler claims to be able to predict the future by means of a morphology of world history. He calls it 'a book borne by the mood of an old man'.¹¹⁶

But in his days there was, of course, a more serious opponent to systematic philosophy: vitalism (*Lebensphilosophie*). It adheres strongly, as we saw, to the evolutionist idea that nature and culture are in perpetual change and development. Particularly 'life' in all its manifestations should, according to this philosophical current, not be kept hostage in allegedly rigid systematic frames of reference. Philosophical systems, vitalists believe, are by definition closed systems which do not allow for change and development. According to this vitalistic belief ideas in systems resemble fossils stuck in ancient rock-formations. As we saw before, Rickert rejects this idea. Philosophy, from his point of view, is systematic or is

¹¹³ If Rickert had continued this thought he would have come close to the phenomenological methodology of Alfred Schutz. See my essay 'The Problem of Adequacy. Reflections on Alfred Schutz's Contribution to the Methodology of the Social Sciences', in: *Archives Européennes de la Sociologie*, 13:1 (1972), pp. 176-190.

¹¹⁴ This section is based on the first section of the first chapter and on the concluding, seventh chapter of Rickert's *Allgemeine Grundlegung der Philosophie*, pp. 1-14; 348-412. These sections go back to an earlier essay of Rickert, 'Vom System der Werte', (On the System of Values'), 1913, in: Heinrich Rickert, *Philosophische Aufsätze*, R. A. Bast, ed., (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1999), pp. 73-106.

¹¹⁵ A recent, popularized version of this Hegelian notion is Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, (New York: The Free Press, 1992). A Marxist specimen of this idea was formulated by the Hungarian philosopher Georg Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein*, 1923, *o.c.*

¹¹⁶ 'ein von greisenhafter Stimmung getragenes Buch über den Untergang des Abendlandes', Rickert, *o.c.*, p. 349. Oswald Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, 2 vols., 1922, (München: Oskar Beck Verlag, 1923, 44th ed.). As to Rickert's rejection of historicism, the contemporary reader is, of course, reminded of Karl R. Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism*, 1957, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969) with the main argument of which Rickert would have agreed.

nothing, which is not to say that a philosophical system need be closed and rigid. He is proponent of an open system in which the past is viewed as being unfinished and the future as being open. Yet, he realizes at the same time that the very idea of a system cannot be radically open, since it needs some degree of identity in the sense of demarcation (*Begrenztheit*) and rounding off (*Abrundung*). In a system the component parts are functionally related to each other, and do so in some sort of hierarchical structure. In this respect, as I have said earlier, Rickert adheres to a functionalist point of view.

He escapes this dilemma of a system which is nevertheless open and flexible by distinguishing once more between form and substance. He does so, however, in an argument which must strike one on first sight as being rather odd. Of course, he argues, culture is perennially subjected to substantial changes and developments. In this respect he can adopt the idea of evolution and its endemic change without hesitation. Yet, everything may be subjected to development, except development itself. It is senseless to say that development-as-form did once upon a time not exist, and then, gradually, i.e. developmentally, emerged and then evolved into what it apparently is today. Everything and everyone develops, except development itself. Historical substances perennially change according to a development as form, but development itself as form to which substances comply, remains fixed, unchanged, stable, and rather 'lifeless'. 'We acknowledge', he concludes, 'substantial evolutionism unconditionally. The evolutionism of form is rejected by us equally decidedly.'¹¹⁷

It stands to reason that his system of values will also be formal, not substantial. Substantially, values as they find expression (are 'objectified') in human value-judgments and in cultural goods like institutions, are non-systematic, always changing and developing and thus rather chaotic. In this respect vitalism is correct. However, there are meta-historical forms or structures according to which these cultural substances are molded, put into shape. These formal (transcendent) value-structures are systematic, and Rickert sets out to reconstruct these systematic structures. They present a kind of ahistorical, systematic matrix which puts the non-systematic, historical, chaotic values in a formal order. True to his heterological method he formulates this systematic structure in terms of three pairs of conceptual alternatives: (a) objects (*Sachen*) and persons, (b) activity and contemplation, (c) sociality and a sociality. However, as we shall see instantly, this is still not systematic enough since an overarching concept which puts these forms in a hierarchy and enables us to classify the values, value-judgments and cultural goods, is still missing. This concept, according to Rickert, is the idea of full-fulfillment (*Voll-Endung*). It is the concept which encompasses the three realms discussed above, as well as the formal conceptual alternatives (a), (b) and (c). As we shall see, we have then finally left the theoretical world of scientific philosophy and entered the super-real, yes *sur-real*, world of metaphysics. All this, of course, needs further explanation.

The formal matrix of value development

Irrespective of its historical substance each geographically and historically determined culture,¹¹⁸ which emerged once upon a time and eventually will perish

¹¹⁷ 'Den inhaltlichen Evolutionismus erkennen wir unbedingt an. Den Evolutionismus der Form lehnen wir ebenso entschieden ab.' *Ibid.*, p. 352.

¹¹⁸ Rickert uses the concept of culture in this section in a dual manner. In this sentence culture is similar to civilization. Cf. the idea of civilizations that come and go in world history. But culture is also used in

again, consists of three elements: (1) non-empirical, ‘unreal’ values which are or are not valid; (2) empirical, ‘real’ goods in which these unreal values are tangibly embodied; (3) living subjects (human beings) who actively evaluate in value-judgments the goods and the values. The juxtaposition of (3) vis-à-vis (1) and (2), i.e. the evaluating subject vis-à-vis the evaluated object, is a pivotal form in all cultures, irrespective of their substance and substantial evolution. Historical cultures change and differ among themselves, yet there will always be subjects who evaluate objective goods and values. In this relationship between subjects, objects and values, Rickert then distinguishes three alternatives which together represent a formal and systematic matrix: (a) objects (*Sachen*) and persons; (b) contemplation and activity; (c) the social and the non-social. We must briefly discuss them since they are the very nucleus of his philosophical system.

(a) *Objects and persons*

Rickert then discusses first the complex relationship between an evaluating subject and the evaluated objects. He starts by saying that the relationship between a subject and scientific or aesthetic objects differs logically from the relationship between a personality and an ethical ‘object’. In the latter case, as we shall see, there actually is no ‘object’.

He proposes to start with the relationship of the subject who makes a theoretical statement, or better: a theoretical judgment (*Urteil*). The crucial value is truth, or, for that matter, reality: is the statement true, does it cover reality adequately? In other words, a statement made in the First Realm is a theoretical and objective, empirical good, if it carries the value of truth/reality. But more important still, the act of the subject – the judgment he makes – is only true or theoretically valuable, if he has the intention to make (or to understand) a true statement. But this should not be interpreted psychologically. That is, the objective good (the statement made) radiates its theoretical (scientific) value, i.e. truth/reality, into the subject. The logical center, Rickert argues, lies in all circumstances in the statement as an objective good which in view of the subject contains a transcendent logical value, and constitutes a transcendent value-structure (*Wertgebilde*). It does not reside in the subject from where it would presumably radiate to the object. Although he does not say so expressly, Rickert obviously rejects here Brentano’s psychological focus on the intentionality of human behavior.¹¹⁹

Things are rather similar in the world of atheoretical, aesthetic goods, values and value-judgments. There is, on the one hand, the work of art, an aesthetic good which carries as its form an aesthetic, unreal value, comparable to the true sentence with its transcendent, formal, logical value. But there is, on the other hand, the evaluating behavior of the subject with his immanent aesthetic sense of beauty which, however, as in the case of the theoretical, logical judgment, is determined by the transcendent meaning of the object of art. Thus, in the worlds of science and the arts the objects are crucial as contents to which the values (truth, beauty) are attached as their forms. True sentences and beautiful pieces of art, i.e. scientific and aesthetic

terms of the totality of values and meanings in a given period of time. In the next chapter in which we discuss his idea of a *Kulturwissenschaft* (cultural science) vis-à-vis *Naturwissenschaft* (natural science) culture (*Kultur*) is employed as a non-psychological alternative for mind (*Geist* as in *Geisteswissenschaft*). Incidentally, the idea expressed by Rickert that civilizations will eventually perish comes close to the historicism of Spengler which he had just rejected. However, it does not play a pivotal role in his theory of value systems.

¹¹⁹ This is remarkable because we saw earlier that he adopted Brentano’s intentionality.

goods, are objects which carry their values (truth, beauty) as their forms, irrespective of the subjective experiences of the subjects. In fact, the truth of a sentence or the beauty of a work of art exists even if there were no persons to understand the sentence or behold the art object. They are indeed objects, things, *Sachen* which carry their transcendent meaning, while the subjects receive their immanent meaning from these objects.

This is, of course, a remarkable 'objectivism' on the part of Rickert. He would now reject the well-known cliché that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, as an unacceptable relativism, comparable to the statement that truth is dependent on the mind and the moods of the individual who hears or reads the scientific statement. After all, the objective goods (true statements, beautiful objects of arts) radiate their meaning (truth, beauty) to the subjects concerned. However, it then remains unclear what precisely the role of these subjects is. It seems obvious that there must be subjects who in meaning bestowing acts (*Aktsinn*) in the Third Realm impose these ('positive' as well as 'negative') theoretical and aesthetic values of the Second Realm as forms on the objects in the First Realm as contents, rendering the latter into true statements and beautiful objects of art. Consequently, the subjective sense of truth or beauty radiates from these meaning bestowing acts by the subject first, and from the true statement or beautiful art object next. Beauty may not be initially in the eye of the beholder, but it is, to begin with, in the act of beholding in terms of the a priori form 'beautiful' that there is beauty at all. And after this act the good, i.e. the object of art beheld, may then radiate its beauty to the beholder – and we may add sociologically, to people who follow the taste of this beholder. In any case, it is the beholder who initially 'imposes' the a priori form 'beauty' on the content beheld, transforming the latter into a beautiful and then also beauty-radiating piece of art. Rickert's fallacious 'objectivism' is, it seems to me, caused by his emphasis on aesthetic contemplation which will be discussed shortly. There is, in other words, an unsolved tension between his notion of *Aktsinn* and his emphasis upon contemplation.

The theoretical and aesthetic values and goods are compared next with the ethical values. Rickert sees an important difference here. To begin with, in ethics subjects ought to be autonomous and active subjects, i.e. personalities with a free will (free in the Kantian sense) who unlike the contemplative attitude of the theoretical or aesthetic subjects, are active. In fact, subjective action is the essence of ethics. (Once more, action is the essence also of the *Aktsinn* in the case of theoretical and aesthetic values!) In the case of a scientific statement or a piece of art, truth or beauty radiates to the subjects from these goods. However, the predicate 'moral' or 'ethical' refers at all times to the actions taken by the actor, and do not 'radiate' from his actions. The ethical good cannot be separated from the ethically acting subject, in contrast to the theoretical and aesthetic goods which could be and should be separated from the theoretical or aesthetic subjects. The will of a person is not called 'ethical' or 'moral', because he produces ethical goods, but it is the subjective intention (*Gesinnung*) that counts, irrespective of the outcome of the actions taken. This is, Rickert argues, the opposite of an 'ethic of results' (*Erfolgsethik*). It is an 'ethic of subjective intention' (*Gesinnungsethik*).¹²⁰ When a person, Rickert claims, tries to save someone's life, his action will not become more moral, when he succeeds, or less moral, when he fails. Not the result of an action is morally good, but the result willed is. He quotes Goethe's Mephistopheles who calls himself part of the power that always wants the bad and creates the good.¹²¹ He even formulates the difference in terms of a general 'law': 'Everywhere the value must be part of a good and must from here radiate into the behavior of the evaluating subject, or, the other way around, the value must be

¹²⁰ Rickert, *o. c.*, p. 361.

¹²¹ Rickert, *ibid.*, p. 359.

found in the behavior of the subject and from there transfer itself to the object or the good.’¹²²

Max Weber has a rather different view on both types of ethic which he labels *Gesinnungsethik*, usually translated as ‘ethic of ultimate ends’, and *Verantwortungsethik*, ‘ethic of responsibility’. He sees an ‘abysmal contrast’ between the two. The German *Gesinnung* is hard to translate. It is an emotional cast of mind, or fundamental attitude which in the end is rather irrational. Someone who acts in terms of ultimate ends, Weber argues, will always blame others: the world, the stupidity of other people, or the will of God who created him such. The person who acts in terms of an ethic of responsibility will take the average deficiencies of mankind and the world into account, and assume the full responsibility for the results of his own actions. The world and the others are not to be blamed when things go wrong. The only responsibility the *Gesinnungsethiker* feels is, according to Weber, to prevent the flame of his pure conviction from going out – the flame, for instance, Weber adds, of the protest against the injustice of the social order. It is his ultimate aim to light the flame time and again which is, if looked at from the perspective of its possible results, quite irrational.

Weber continues with the observation that no ethic can avoid the fact that for the realization of morally good ends often morally precarious or dangerous means have to be employed, or the fact that evil side effects may and often will occur. No ethic can determine, when and to which degree a morally good end would justify morally hazardous or dangerous means. Rickert refers here to *Gesinnung*: when an autonomous person acts in accordance with his will to perform his duty in life, he acts in a morally good way, irrespective of the means that are employed. Weber would not agree. It depends on the situation what the moral balance between ends and means ought to be. In politics the use of violence is such an ethical dilemma. In times of war or revolution the use of force or violence is a morally different act than in times of peace and tranquility. Weber observes incidentally that it often happens that adherents of the ethic of ultimate ends first propagate their ‘love against violence’ and next call for violence as the last violence which will end all violence.¹²³

Rickert who did not discuss the morally crucial distinction between ends and means, did at one point briefly touch on Weber’s position. People, he argues, should of course always tell the truth. The ethical duty of veracity is an essential personal value. However, it is possible that a conscientious person may in certain circumstances be morally urged to lie, for instance when he, in doing so, serves a socio-ethical objective, the realization of which he feels to be his duty or obligation. A theoretical ‘non-truth’ is not the same as a morally objectionable lie. A scientifically proven truth can never enlarge the value of a moral personality, nor can an untrue sentence degrade it. There is a distinct difference between a real theoretical truth and personal moral veracity.¹²⁴

What is the hallmark of a moral person? Of what, Rickert asks, ought the person to be conscious in order to be rightfully called a moral person? He gives a simple answer which comes close to the (incidentally often misinterpreted) ‘ethics of duty’ of Kant: we value a person as a moral person, when he wills and does what he deems to be correct, i.e. when he believes that he ought to do what he does. ‘Ought to’ – that is in German *Sollen*, i.e. *Pflicht*, duty. The notion of *Sollen* is thus a precondition for the moral *Wollen*, the moral Will. But he adds immediately, as he did before, that this is not Nietzschean Slave Morality, because the truly moral person is not a slave. He is autonomous. His will is free. In fact, freedom of the will is comparable to truth and beauty as formal values. Not the psychological act of willing which only carries it, but autonomy of the personality is the true object of ethics and its validity is the central problem of ethics. Thus, in the perennial philosophical dilemma between ‘determinism’ and ‘voluntarism’ Rickert opts for the latter.¹²⁵

¹²² ‘Überall muss der Wert entweder am Gut haften und von hier aus in das Verhalten des wertenden Subjekts hineinstrahlen, oder es muss umgekehrt der Wert im Verhalten des Subjekts zu finden sein und sich von da auf das Objekt oder das Gut übertragen.’ *Ibid.*, p. 360.

¹²³ Max Weber, ‘Politik als Beruf’, 1920, in: Max Weber, *Gesammelte Politische Schriften*, (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1958), pp. 549-554.

¹²⁴ Rickert, *o. c.*, p. 364.

¹²⁵ In this he finds Isaiah Berlin on his side. See Isaiah Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), in particular the Introduction, pp. IX – LXIII. Ernest Nagel

The remarkably ‘subjectivistic’ conclusion is that it is impossible to speak of an objective ethical good, existing in the First Realm like the true statement or the beautiful work of art. The nature of ethics is exclusively dependent on the duty conscious will of the free, autonomous personality. Actually, Rickert continues, a moral person wills an autonomous, free will. In a sense, the free will itself, or rather its autonomy, is a moral good. This is a remarkable state of affairs: ‘We want (*wollen*) [...] subjectively ethically something that is objectively ethical; that is, a will, that wants autonomy autonomously, is moral in a *dual* manner, i.e. he is morally motivated, he wills because of duty, and what he wills, is itself morality, namely freedom realized in a duty conscious willing.’¹²⁶

(b) *Contemplation and activity*

Closely related, yet logically quite different, is the next alternative in the relationship between subjects, objects and values. In contemplation as enacted in the theoretical spheres of science and logic as well as in the atheoretical, aesthetic spheres of the arts, the subject is distanced from the independent object. Mysticism may present an exception here, since the subject allegedly merges with the object. But then, Rickert remarks ironically, as the word indicates mysticism is a mystery and therefore philosophically not of any importance. Scientific research is a telling example of this distance between subject and object, because after all science renders everything it focuses on into an object!¹²⁷ Also in the aesthetic contemplation there is no room for an identification of the beholder of art and the object of art. One looks at a painting, or a sculpture, or a play on the stage, one listens to the performance of a piece of music.¹²⁸

Things are quite different in human activity since it works upon and affects objects. For instance, if we bestow meaning on objects we interfere with them, we in a sense draw them into our lives. That may even go so far that the distance between subject and object is altogether removed. This is definitely the case with ethical behavior. Before action is ethical, the demand (*das Gebot*, or *das Sollen*) stands as it

criticizes Berlin’s voluntarism in defense of a determinism which is based on a natural-scientifically oriented logic: Ernest Nagel, *The Structure of Science. Problems in the Logic of Scientific Explanation*, 1961, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974, 4th ed.), pp. 599-605. Nagel refers here to Berlin, *Historical Inevitability*, (London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1954).

¹²⁶ ‘Wir wollen [...] subjektiv ethisch etwas objektiv Ethisches, oder eine Wille, der autonom die Autonomie will, ist *zweifach* sittlich, d.h. einmal sittlich motiviert, er will aus Pflicht, und das, was er will, ist selbst das Sittliche: die Freiheit verwirklicht im pflichtbewussten Wollen.’ *Ibid.*, p. 361.

¹²⁷ Rickert does not refer at this point to intuitionist methodologies like *Verstehen* as empathy, as a kind of merging with the object of investigation. Phenomenological *Wesensschau* too comes close to such an obfuscation of the distance between the subject and the object. As we have seen in Chapter Two Rickert reckons all this to vitalism (*Lebensphilosophie*) and rejects it summarily.

¹²⁸ Here again there have been opposite opinions. The Russian actor and stage director Konstantin Stanislavski (1863-1938) who staged several plays of Anton Chekhov, professed naturalism and realism on the stage which should lead to empathy and even catharsis in the audiences. This was contested radically by the Marxist playwright Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) who called this ‘typically bourgeois’. In his plays he employed various ‘estrangement techniques’ (like banners above the stage with provocative texts) in order to force the audience to reflect on what it saw, and to learn from it. He laid the foundations for the educational theatre of the 1960’s and 1970’s. See his manifesto Bertolt Brecht, *Kleines Organon für das Theater*, (‘Small Organon for the Theatre’), 1948, (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1960). Incidentally, Rickert does not discuss the position of creative artists like painters, sculptors, composers, writers, which is the more remarkable since his wife was a professional sculptor. He would, it seems to me, categorize them in the active sphere where the subject acts upon the object and imposes forms on it.

were opposite to the will (*der Wille*, or *das Wollen*) as something strange or alien. Rickert does not give the following example, but it may be helpful to understand his theory. Living in a strange culture one will at first not understand its valid values and ruling norms. The demands will be alien and strange, cannot be absorbed into one's own free will. But the moment one begins to act morally, i.e. the moment one begins to bestow meaning on the moral values and norms, and the moment one applies them to one's actions as the autonomous personality one after all always is, the separation between will and demand is lifted. There is and always will be a tension between the will and the demand (between *Wollen* and *Sollen*), but the ultimate aim of moral behavior is the victory of the will over the demand, and next the fusion of the two.

This is, as we have seen, different in contemplation where the object maintains its distance towards the subject, where, in other words, the object remains a case (*Sache*), on which the (theoretical or aesthetic) values and meanings are bestowed. In moral behavior, on the contrary, the demand is being lifted up into the subject, into the moral personality.

Rickert adds the logical distinction between form and substance. Also in this respect there are differences to be taken into account, when we construct a systematic theory of values. For example, in the case of theoretical and aesthetic contemplation there are substances which are, as it were, molded into forms. Rickert formulates it as follows: 'the form can only *encircle* the substance as a vessel. There exists no work of art with an aesthetic meaning, in which *everything* is form, and which at the same time possesses autonomous aesthetic significance. A content shows itself always to be structured or formed in such a way that it works aesthetically also as a substance.'¹²⁹ In other words, in the case of a painting or sculpture form and substance are beheld as an unquestionable unity. Of course, Rickert adds, one can object by saying that in art forms are essential, and that they can or should be discussed and studied independently of substance, but that is a theoretical statement about the aesthetic meaning of art. It is not an aesthetic beholding of art. Pure, formal art does exist only as jewelry, not as an autonomous aesthetic phenomenon.¹³⁰ In logic and science, i.e. in the sphere of theoretical contemplation, form and substance are much more loosely connected. In the concepts and theories of the sciences there are, of course, substances which even in the case of mathematics are 'irrational', but they are encased by 'rational' forms which can be formulated and studied independently of the substance, as is done, for instance, in formal logic. This has led in mathematics to the opposition of 'rationalists' who think exclusively in terms of the rational forms, and 'irrationalists' (e.g. the 'intuitionists') who closely link the irrational substance to the rational forms.¹³¹

The relationship between form and substance is different in the sphere of activity. In moral behavior, for example, it is difficult to distinguish between the two, since the form is the *Sollen*, the demand, on the one hand, and the freedom, or

¹²⁹ 'die Form kann den Inhalt nur *umschliessen* wie ein Gefäss. Es gibt kein Kunstwerk mit ästhetischen Sinn, in dem *alles* Form ist, und das zugleich eine selbstständige ästhetische Bedeutung besitzt, sondern stets zeigt sich ein Inhalt so gestaltet oder geformt, dass er auch als Inhalt ästhetisch wirkt.' Rickert, *o. c.*, p. 366.

¹³⁰ The remark about jewelry may have been inspired by the education of his youngest son Franz Rickert at the Munich academy for design. He, of course, could not have knowledge of so-called 'conceptual art'. He probably would have denied its aesthetic significance and meaning.

¹³¹ Rickert discussed this in more detail in his essay *Das Eine, die Einheit und die Eins, o.c.* He probably refers here to the intuitionist mathematics of the Dutch mathematician L. E. J. Brouwer. Cf. The Dutch biography by Dirk van Dalen, *L.E.J. Brouwer, 1881-1966*, (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2002).

autonomy of the person on the other hand. The demand ought to merge completely with the free will of the moral personality. If there is still resistance to this merger, the will is not yet completely moral, and we may add, although Rickert did not draw this conclusion, the will is not free either. As to the latter, if the demand is blindly obeyed as a command, as in the dictum *Befehl ist Befehl* ('command is command'), it is imposed on the substance of the moral behavior, but the inner conviction, the *Gesinnung*, based on and formed by autonomy, is absent or forcefully silenced.

Rickert then juxtaposes theoretical contemplation and moral activity as follows: the former is the sphere of the theoretical reason (*theoretische Vernunft*) in which an independent object ('*Sache*') is molded by abstract forms; the latter is the sphere of the practical reason (*praktische Vernunft*) in which moral demands penetrate the actions and in which moral substance and moral forms merge within the autonomous, free personality. In a sense the *Persönlichkeit* (personality) is the *Sache* (object) here.

Contemplation and activity differ finally in one more aspect: the former is 'monistic', the latter 'pluralistic'. As to contemplation, there is actually nothing which cannot be observed, and quietly considered. Its 'material' is therefore inexhaustible. That demands unification, or even simplification. Rickert is somewhat cryptic here, but one could think of science as an example. The essential characteristic of science, it has been observed often, is the reduction of complexity, or as Mach formulated it: 'economy of thought' (*Denkökonomie*). The power of mathematics, Mach argued, is the avoidance of all unnecessary thoughts, the frugal use of thought operations. Numerals, he adds, present a system of beautiful simplicity and frugality.¹³² Rickert realizes that the concept 'monism' is, like 'pluralism', misleading but he cannot think of a better one. In any case, as to the complexity of contemplative material he argues that contemplative forms, like scientific concepts, or mathematical numerals, unify the material and reduce its complexity. This is quite different in activity, as is illustrated by moral behavior. In this case the moral personality is the center, but as we shall see in the next section, the moral personality is always embedded in a social context of other personalities and this plurality must be maintained, cannot be unified and reduced. Moral demands have to be absorbed by many individual personalities the individuality of whom may not be destroyed. Pluralism, in other words, is an essential hallmark of moral activity.

(c) *The non-social and the social*

The subject of ethical behavior is at all times and in all cultures always a human being which as an I (*Ich*) is related to a Thou (*Du*) as in a necessary, heterological correlation. Just as each subject needs an object in order to be a subject at all, each individual I needs at least one Thou in order to be a moral being. As in the case of the other alternatives we have discussed (contemplation-activity, object-personality, form-substance, monism-pluralism), the correlation I-Thou is metahistorical, universal, or in Kantian terminology 'pure' (*rein*). But there is more than one Thou. There are the others who together with the I constitute a social community. The concept social (and its heterological counterpart non-social) is meant in this broad sense. The moral I is in this respect a social personality, the bearer of social values.

¹³² Ernst Mach, 'Die ökonomische Natur der physikalischen Forschung', a lecture held in Vienna May 25, 1882. I used a Dutch translation in a volume of Mach's lectures: *Natuurkunde, wetenschap en filosofie*, ('Physics, Science and Philosophy'), (Amsterdam: Boom/Meppel, 1980), pp. 72-94.

This stands in contrast to the objects or goods of the theoretical and aesthetic contemplation which in their purity are non-social, since social connections are, at least with respect to their values and intrinsic meanings, irrelevant. Art and science do, of course, have social significance, but what is meant here is the fact that their respective theoretical and aesthetic significances do not depend on the social connection of persons. They rather possess their intrinsic values which in their purity (i.e. not always in reality) can be viewed as being non-social which is, of course, not the same as anti-social.

In the social relationship between the I and the Thou there is in fact no subject that stands vis-à-vis an independent and non-social object. The other is a subject too and in ethical behavior I do respect his individuality, yet view him as the other part of a 'we', of which I am a constitutive component also. Incidentally, this correlation between the I and the Thou is not exclusively one of friendship. Also a foe will come close to me and forge a social bond. In any case, I do not place the other as in a contemplative mood in front of me as an object, but we enter into a mutual (friendly or inimical) social bond. In fact, the moral form of personal autonomy and the moral form of the demand (*Sollen*) is implanted into this bond: I shall respect the other as an autonomous person, as an I, and I compel myself to meet and treat him as a Thou who is an intrinsic component of our social bond. If someone else, another I, just remains an object of contemplation with which I am not at all connected, not even in animosity, I will treat him with moral indifference, or even negation.¹³³

We now possess, Rickert claims, a 'net of metahistorical concepts'¹³⁴ which constitute the searched for system of goods and the values that are attached to them. He divided them in two groups which can be summarized as follows:

<p>A. Contemplation</p> <p>Non-social objects</p> <p>Forms which envelop objects</p> <p>Monism</p> <p>(Science, art)</p>	<p>B. Activity</p> <p>Social personalities</p> <p>Forms which penetrate into objects</p> <p>Pluralism</p> <p>(Ethical behavior)</p>
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Rickert believes to have thus caught the universal, metahistorical scheme for all expressions of human contemplation and activity and draws the following conclusion: 'In this way we transit from the relativity of history into the absolute, i.e. into what is valid for *every* historical culture.'¹³⁵ The conceptual system which we discussed in brief outlines above claims to offer an interpretive scheme which covers theoretically, beyond the different, specialized empirical sciences, the idea of reality-*in-toto*, i.e. the *Weltall*. Rickert admits that it is an empty scheme, but that is unavoidable since it consists of pure concepts, *reine Begriffe*. Only its application to distinct, substantial, empirical problems of historical cultures is able to demonstrate its fruitfulness and usefulness. 'In the philosophical science of the world totality the

¹³³ Rickert comes close here to the social psychology of George Herbert Mead (1863-1931) who developed a theory of social interaction in which the I and the Other play mutually reinforcing roles. Cf. my Dutch introductory text *De Theorie van het Symbolisch Interactionisme*, ('The Theory of Symbolic Interactionism'), (Amsterdam: Boom/Meppel, 1973), pp. 73-86. Also Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism. Perspective and Method*, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969).

¹³⁴ Rickert, *o. c.*, p. 372.

¹³⁵ 'So kommen wir überall aus dem Relativen der Geschichte ins Absolute, d.h. für *alle* geschichtliche Kultur Gültige.' *Idem*.

road leads necessarily from the general and the formally empty gradually towards the particular and substantially filled.’¹³⁶

Rickert’s philosophy of values professes to be systematic. The alternatives A and B provide an interpretive matrix, but is, of course, not yet systematic. What is lacking, is a successive order, a hierarchy of the values. The A-B matrix is in that respect not systematic enough. This leads us to the most abstract and difficult part of Rickert’s general philosophy.

*The metaphysical principle of full-fillment*¹³⁷

Searching for a ranking order of values one runs into the obvious problem that they are ‘unreal’ and thus too abstract to be placed in such a ranking order. However, as we saw before, values become ‘concrete’ and empirical in the cultural goods and the evaluations or value-judgments. Now goods, like scientific theories, works of art, or cultural institutions, are also hard to classify in a hierarchy, since they exist in a complex and chaotic multitude of countless particularities. However, it is possible to construct a ranking order in the evaluations, or value-judgments of the value-relating subjects.

But there is also an additional, though related, problem. Rickert’s systematic philosophy aims at the formation of a theory which enables us to grasp and understand reality-*in-toto*. The problem with the three realms is, of course, that it is an ontology which still compartmentalizes reality into three parts, the First, the Second and the Third Realm. Such an ontology does obviously not represent an encompassing, totalizing conceptualization! It is at this point that he introduces the concept of *full-fillment* which is no longer theoretical (scientific) and ontological, but metaphysical. It also represents the ‘top’ of the scale of values. Naturally, this presents him with a formidable problem, because how can one speak of and about a metaphysical reality without theoretical (scientific) concepts? Let us follow Rickert’s argumentation.

Of superior importance to us human beings are those values which are relevant to the explanation of the meaning of life (*Deutung des Lebenssinnes*). It is at this point that the concept of *Leben* which plays such a crucial (metaphysical) role in the philosophy of life, so much criticized by Rickert as we saw in Chapter Two, assumes an important position in his own philosophy of values. He adds immediately that the evaluating subject in search of the realization of ‘lively’ values (*die “lebendige” Wertverwirklichung*) is not the objectified I of psychology as a specialized, scientific discipline. It is the transcendental and thus metahistorical ideal I in the Third Realm who in the *Aktsinn* bestows meaning on values in the Second Realm, and relates them to goods and value-judgments in the First Realm. And it should be borne in mind also that the empirical, historical particularities of values and evaluations are disregarded here. The focus is on the general nature of the evaluating behavior that creates goods.

¹³⁶ ‘In der philosophischen Wissenschaft vom Weltganzen führt der Weg notwendig vom Allgemeinen und formal Leeren allmählich zum Besonderen und inhaltlich Erfüllten.’ *Ibid.*, p. 374.

¹³⁷ This section is a brief discussion of a chapter in which Rickert develops his ideas about a crucial concept in his philosophy, namely *Voll-Endung*. Cf. Rickert, *Allgemeine Grundlegung der Philosophie I, o. c.*, pp. 375-385. The correct spelling of the German word is *Vollendung*, meaning consummation. The hyphen in Rickert’s concept underlines the deeper philosophical meaning of the word which literally translated would mean something like ‘bringing to a full or complete end’, but that is of course awkward. I chose for the literal translation ‘full-fillment’ with the original hyphen. This, I think, comes closest to *Voll-Endung*. See also his *Die Logik des Prädikats und das Problem der Ontologie, o. c.*, pp. 185-198: ‘Das logische Problem der Metaphysik’, (‘The logical problem of metaphysics’).

Or, in other words, the focus is on the meaning of *all* evaluations and processes of goods creation.

It is a universal, ahistorical, formal fact that the subject who bestows meaning on values and links values to goods and value-judgments does not do so at random, but sets himself an aim. In other words, the *Aktsinn* is not an aimless activity but it is a goal-oriented ambition (*Streben*), the goal or end being the realization of the value called 'meaningful life'. This end, it is the ambition, should be realized fully, completely, without leaving empty spots – i.e. *voll-endlich*, 'full-filled'. After all, one does not want to have a life which is just a little bit meaningful. Yet, this ideal will never be completely realized, will always remain a tendency or ambition. If it were ever totally realized, all evaluation and all ambition of consummation would come to an end. (It would be, we may add, heaven-on-earth.) That is, of course, difficult to fathom in this world. It must remain an ideal in the Kantian meaning of the concept, i.e. a pure (transcendental) *possibility* rather than an empirical *reality*.

Now it is apparent that *Voll-Endung*, 'full-fulfillment' is in itself a theoretical, namely philosophical value according to which the other values (of group A and of group B) can be ranked. However, in order to be truly systematic one needs to juxtapose heterologically *voll-endlich*, 'full-filled' and *un-endlich*, 'endless'. There are, after all, goods which by definition can never reached the full-fulfillment of a truly meaningful life. There is the ambition to reach a totality, but this is but an 'endless' totality, or in other words: a totality which is never completed. A telling example of such a cultural good is presented by the sciences. They focus on all the components and dimensions of empirical reality, set out to describe and analyze them as completely as possible, but they never come to rest, never reach the final goal of a total totality. Likewise, the aim of explaining what the meaning of life is all about will never be fully reached. It is doomed to remain an endless totality.

But there is the heterological counterpart of this endless totality in the 'full-filled' particularity in which the ambition of 'full-fulfillment' focuses upon a finite part of the inexhaustible reality. In a sense, the full end is realized (e.g. the meaning of life is being experienced and expressed), yet this fulfillment remains restricted to a part or a component of reality only. As an empirical example of this domain of cultural goods one could refer to works of art which do represent 'full-fulfillment', i.e. the perfect work of art, yet it is a 'full-filled' particularity.¹³⁸

The thesis of 'endless' totality and the heterothesis of the 'full-filled' particularity can be bridged by a third principle: the 'full-filled' totality. This then is finally the most complete, but radically transcendent, i.e. metaphysical totality. An obvious example is presented by religion. In most empirical, historical religions one finds the ambition to present values that provide the definitive answer to the quest for the meaning of life. In mysticism, we may add, it is claimed that a 'full-filled' totality can be reached in a radical contemplation of Nothingness which puts an end to all evaluations and all ambitions. We may add aesthetic or erotic experiences as well, but the problem is that these are atheoretical realms, whereas Rickert's philosophy is in search for a theoretical (scientific) theory of reality-*in-toto*. In science we work with logically formal concepts and theories but they do not appertain to sur-reality of metaphysics. Science and metaphysics are two logically totally different realities and there is no heterology that could bridge the two.

¹³⁸ Fulfillment, it seems to me, is the equivalent of perfection. Perfection can never be reached in life *in toto* and in general, but a particular piece of art, or a particular scientific theory can in our evaluative judgment come close to it. We then exclaim: 'It's perfect!'.

Rickert then escapes the dilemma by introducing the notion that in metaphysics we rather think and theorize with symbols and symbolic theories which yield not a scientific but an allegorical knowledge. The meaning of life or the meaning of history belongs to a reality which lies beyond the three realms discussed. It is what in German is called *das Jenseits*, the Beyond which cannot be experienced by the senses and be known by means of rational concepts, categories and theories. The Beyond can only be suggested and intuitively, i.e. non-rationally, non-theoretically, be understood by means of symbols, allegories, similes. These metaphysical ‘concepts’ do yet not float around freely and arbitrarily. Metaphysics is always in need of an empirical reality which then is elevated symbolically to a Beyond which cannot be scientifically verified or falsified, but must be approached in faith or rejected in unbelief. This sur-reality is assumed as a philosophically (ontologically and epistemologically) unavoidable *postulate*.

Finally, Rickert adds, the goods of the ‘endless’ totality, like the scientific search for an complete explanation of reality, can never reach their goal, remain in eternal development and expectation, and can therefore be labeled ‘future goods’ (*Zukunftsgüter*). In the case of particularity, however, goods like the temporary realization of aesthetic or erotic ambitions, may reach their aim for the moment. They are, as it were, islands of rest in the stream of developments. Rickert calls them ‘goods of the present’ (*Gegenwartsgüter*). The relation to time of the metaphysical ‘full-filled’ totality, is characterized by eternity while they can only be thought of as being timeless. Rickert calls them ‘goods of eternity’ (*Ewigkeitsgüter*), adds however that this concept is problematic since nothing can be said theoretically about their real existence. They can only be intimated by symbols, similes and allegories which do not yield knowledge but are to be embraced in faith, or rejected in unbelief.

Conclusion

This then completes Rickert’s theory of the system of values. We should add to the two groups A and B the matrix of the three tendencies towards a full-filled totality (endless totality; full-filled particularity; full-filled totality), and place them in the time dimensions of future, present and eternity. It is, Rickert acknowledges, an abstract and empty schematism which however has the advantage that it transcends the relativity of historical and empirical values, evaluations and goods, and presents a metahistorical, universal and systematic, admittedly very formal, structure of interpretation. This empty framework must then, of course, be filled with empirical applications which may derive their material from the scientific disciplines in the First Realm, yet should autonomously operate from the Third Realm, constantly ‘molding’ the substance of the objects and events in the First Realm by the forms of the values and meanings of the Second Realm.

Rickert’s theory of values presents a vast panorama with quite original vistas on general philosophy, on epistemology in particular, but also on the various ontologies which were popular then and now. The most remarkable element in this theory is the pivotal role of the so-called *Aktsinn*, the meaning bestowing act by which the in itself chaotic and in that sense irrational objects and events in the First Realm are being transformed by the means of the formal values in the Second Realm into meaningful ‘sense-data’ (Russell). Scientific theories and statements, aesthetic works of art, moral acts and behavior, religious beliefs and rituals, etc. – they all are being transformed by the *Aktsinn* into meaningful components of culture, enabling us to

formulate a general cultural philosophy in search of the contours of reality *in toto* beyond the compartmentalized realities of the various scientific disciplines.

Two main questions remain open in my mind. As I observed above, there seems to be a conceptual rift and logical flaw in the two notions of contemplation and *Aktsinn*. It is, to begin with, questionable whether contemplation is that crucial in the worlds of science and the arts, as they demand hard work, even labor, on the part of professional scientists and artists, but certainly also on the part of the students of scientific research or the amateur beholders of art (in particular of modern art). But also the very idea of *Aktsinn*, of meaning bestowing acts, stands in sharp contrast to the notion of contemplation. The meaning bestowing act which is as important in the theoretical and aesthetic worlds, as it is in the worlds of religion, erotic love and politics, is in the end an activity, not a contemplation. Rickert correctly views the *Aktsinn* as a crucial component of the sciences and the arts, yet sees contemplation as being crucial to them simultaneously. It is a remarkable contradiction.

A second point of criticism refers to the fact that Rickert develops a rather comprehensive cultural philosophy which leaves the abstract abodes of his transcendental epistemology, but enters almost secretly into ontological and even metaphysical considerations and reflections. He enters into metaphysics even explicitly when he tries to complete his concept of reality-*in-toto* by the concept of *full-fillment* as a postulate which can no longer be formulated theoretically and scientifically, but must be intimated by means of symbols, similes and allegories. Both transitions present, it seems to me, a logically illegitimate *metabasis eis allos genos*, a change-over to a logically altogether different theoretical species, namely the world of what Rickert himself has defined as being atheoretical. Symbolic allegories, after all, belong to the atheoretical reality of the arts or of religion and mythology.

Moreover, the various sections of his general cultural philosophy come dangerously close to specific cultural sciences, such as history, sociology and in particular (social) psychology. That stands, of course, in contradiction to his thesis that philosophy should be an autonomous science alongside and distinguished from the specialized, natural and cultural sciences.

This then leads to the question what precisely the conceptual and logical nature is of the natural and the cultural sciences. And more importantly, how can they be demarcated? It is the old, 19th century debate about the differences of the *Naturwissenschaften* and the *Geisteswissenschaften* and their alleged inherent opposition. Here too Rickert came up, as we shall see in the following chapter, with some original and noteworthy points of view.