

Rickert's Echo
Applications, Amplifications and Amendments

*Aus den Irrtümern sonst bedeutender Gelehrter lernt
man oft mehr, als aus den Korrektheiten von Nullen.*

Max Weber.¹

Introduction

If we try to determine what the effect of Rickert's philosophy has been on the thoughts and publications of fellow philosophers and philosophically interested social scientists, we run into considerable problems. In fact, due to reasons given in the Introduction, there was little if any effect. However, it is also hard to find out what the impact of his writings were in the days of his widespread fame, i.e. the decades around 1900. The reason is that in those days scholars were not supposed to burden their publications with quotes of and references to fellow scholars. Apparently, the reader was supposed to be well read and to know without such references who was actually being discussed and, more indicatively, who was intentionally ignored.² Georg Simmel, for instance, does not refer to any fellow philosopher in his book on the logic and methodology of history in which he developed ideas which sometimes come very close to those of Windelband and Rickert, but also deviate from them significantly.³ The first edition was published in 1892, prior to Windelband's famous inaugural address and to Rickert's *Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung*.

¹ 'Often one learns more from the mistakes of important scholars, than from the correct ideas of nullities.' Max Weber, ' "Energetische" Kulturtheorien' (' "Energetic" Cultural Theories'), in: Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, 1922, (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1968), p. 425.

² An exception is the previously mentioned, small study by Sergius Hessen, *Individuelle Kausalität. Studien zum transzendentalen Empirismus*, ('Individual Causality. Studies on Transcendental Empirism'), (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1909) which can be read as a helpful introduction to Rickert's transcendentalism. As we have seen, Rickert was enamored by the label 'transcendental empirism' for his brand of philosophy. A more recent exception is presented by Guy Oakes, *Weber and Rickert. Concept Formation in the Cultural Sciences*, (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1988). This monograph is restricted though to the issue of 'cultural objectivity' and comes to the conclusion that both Rickert and Weber failed to present a sound theory of objectively valid values. Oakes in his turn, it seems to me, fails to understand the neo-Kantian distinction between absolute, formal, universal ('objective') values which in value-judgments are 'imposed' on contingent, concrete and particular contents. These judgments are 'subjective' but carry the relative objectivity of intersubjectivity. Incidentally, Oakes' presentation of Rickert's philosophy of values lacks lucidity and remains rather far removed from Rickert's texts.

³ Georg Simmel, *Die Probleme der Geschichtsphilosophie*, ('The Problems of the Philosophy of History'), 1892, (München, Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1923, 3rd ed.).

However, Simmel published a second edition of his book in 1905 after he had read *Die Grenzen*. Actually, he practically re-wrote the book, adjusting his ideas at several points to those of Rickert.⁴ But once more, Rickert is not mentioned at all, nor is Windelband.

In this concluding chapter we shall discuss in some broad outlines Rickert's impact on four disciplines: general philosophy (mainly Georg Simmel), legal philosophy (mainly Lask and Radbruch), history (mainly Huizinga) and sociology (mainly Weber and Mannheim). It is the purpose of this chapter to demonstrate the influence of Rickert's theories of knowledge, values and natural-scientific and cultural-scientific methods. However, as we shall see, this influence did not consist of an uncritical adoption of Rickertian ideas and theorems, but was rather the inspirational factor of a critical debate with his neo-Kantian standpoints. Rickert, so much has hopefully become clear in the former chapters, was not a kind of guru, like Hegel or Heidegger, who was viewed and adored as the founder of a school which would attract crowds of admirers and followers, who would propagate almost religiously his ideas and doctrines. Upon his death in 1936 he did not leave an ideological worldview which would warm the hearts and inspire the moods of faithful followers. On the contrary, like his colleague and friend Max Weber, he was rather the Socratic type of intellectual that invites one to think critically about our thinking and our thoughts, about our values and value-judgments, about our collective constructions of reality. Neither was Rickert a teacher who educated his students and readers by means of orderly composed, yet in the end platitudinous textbooks. In his lectures and in his books which, as we saw in the Introduction, were actually also lectures, he confronted his audiences with an ongoing process of thinking in the hope that they would join him in what he himself experienced as the demand and the joy of thinking. In philosophy, the social sciences, and the study of law, as we shall see in this chapter, his impact was often indirect. It had the character of an echo, rather than that of a loudspeaker. He triggered critical debates, rarely called forth emotional and thus uncritical cries of adulation and admiration.

The fact remains though that ever since roughly the First World War it has apparently not been fashionable to mention his name. If it comes to issues like the logical demarcations of the natural and the cultural sciences, or the logical differences of facts and values, *Sein* and *Sollen*, etc., philosophers and social scientists either disregard them, due to a neo-positivist, or an existentialist, or any other anti-epistemological worldview, or refer to Windelband and Weber rather than to Rickert. In any case, in the remainder of this chapter I shall try to indicate in some main outlines what Rickert's echo has been in various debates on epistemology, logic of the social sciences, and legal philosophy. It may be superfluous to remind the reader that the following sections will discuss the various theorists exclusively with respect to the impact Rickert had on their thinking and writing. This discussion will therefore not even come close to a true insight into their work.

General philosophy

Georg Simmel (1858-1918) was a personal friend of both Rickert and Max Weber, and admired by them for his intellectual brilliance and philosophical depth. It would be preposterous to assume an intellectual dependence of Simmel on the neo-Kantian philosophy of Windelband, Rickert, or on the methodological and sociological theories of Weber. In general philosophy, methodology, logic of the social sciences and sociology Simmel developed ideas and theories which were idiosyncratic and highly original.⁵ But he always

⁴ Cf. Anton M. Bevers, *Dynamik der Formen bei Georg Simmel*, ('Dynamics of Forms in Georg Simmel's Work'), 1982, translated from the Dutch original by F. E. Schrader, (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1985), p. 47f.

⁵ Simmel developed his methodology and logic mainly in his publications on the philosophy of history. See next to the previously quoted *Die Probleme der Geschichtsphilosophie* the following two essays: 'Das Problem der

maintained a close intellectual, though critical tie with the neo-Kantians of the South-West German School. Rickert and Weber in their turn were admirers of Simmel's publications, but also quite critical as to his continual sliding off into metaphysical speculations. Rickert in particular rejected Simmel's endeavor to reconcile neo-Kantian epistemology and logic on the one hand and vitalism (*Lebensphilosophie*) on the other.⁶

Indeed, the essence of Simmel's thinking is an ongoing attempt to reconcile Kant's critical epistemology, as it was elaborated in particular by Windelband and Rickert on the one hand, and the philosophy of life (vitalism), as it was formulated in particular by Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Bergson.⁷ Or, more precisely, Simmel rejects the realistic stance according to which concepts are allegedly 'pictures' (*Abbildungen*) of reality, emphasizing like Kant and the neo-Kantians the difference of and the distance between theory and reality. In his philosophy of history, for example, he emphatically rejects the ideology of historicism, as exemplified by Ranke's pretension that the historian ought to reconstruct the past 'as it has been'. Historicism is, according to Simmel, the counterpart of the positivistic ideology which claims that the natural sciences could provide a precise 'picture' of what nature would be all about. Yet, Simmel rejects also the Kantian 'construction of reality' by concepts as an unattractive and even fallacious intellectualism. Concepts – everyday life as well as scientific and philosophical concepts – are not a priori, 'pure' components of the mind, but themselves components of life, conceived of not by an abstract mind or consciousness but by a total

historischen Zeit' ('The Problem of Historical Time') and 'Vom Wesen des historischen Verstehens' ('On the Essence of Historical Understanding'), in: Georg Simmel, *Brücke und Tür* ('Bridge and Door'), essays on history, religion, art and society edited by M. Landmann, (Stuttgart: Koehler Verlag, 1957), pp. 43-59 and 59-86. I made gratefully use of Bevers previously quoted discussion and analysis of Simmel's work, especially of the second chapter, *o.c.*, pp. 47-77 which discusses Simmel's theory of knowledge against the background of Windelband and Rickert (*ibid.*, pp. 31-45). For Simmel's 'ahistorical sociology of forms' see *ibid.*, pp. 72-97 and his philosophy of life, *ibid.*, pp. 141-174. In chapter 5 Bevers gives a comparative analysis of Simmel's 'sociology of forms' and Weber's 'understanding sociology', *ibid.*, pp. 120-140. Rickert's influence in the philosophy of his days was, of course, larger than just in Simmel's publications. His thoughts and ideas penetrated often in special philosophical problems. An example is Sergius Hessen, *Individuelle Kausalität, o.c.* I restrict the present discussion to Simmel, since he was intellectually of the same stature as Rickert.

⁶ Simmel's metaphysical vitalism was very obvious in his *Lebensanschauung. Vier metaphysische Kapitel*, ('Vitalistic Worldview. Four Metaphysical Chapters'), (München, Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1922). Rickert, as we shall see, did subject Simmel's vitalistic ideas to a critical, yet rather sympathetic discussion in his *Die Philosophie des Lebens*. It is indicative though that he limited his discussion to this swan-song of Simmel which he wrote while he was dying of cancer of the liver. He ignored Simmel's less metaphysically loaded publications, which was, I think, a bit unfair. Weber was reported to abstain from any critical publications since he feared this would impede Simmel's professorial career in Germany. In fact, not only Simmel's unconventional philosophy but also anti-Semitic forces prevented a regular professorship in one of the major universities. It was not before 1914, four years before his death and at the start of the First World War, that he was appointed regular professor at the university of Strasburg – notably, in the centre of the Western front of the war! See for the anti-Semitic, academic opposition to an appointment of Simmel in Heidelberg, to a second professorship next to the one of Rickert: K. Gassen, M. Landmann (eds.), *Buch des Dankes an Georg Simmel. Briefe, Erinnerungen, Bibliographie*, ('Book of Gratitude. Letters, Recollections, Bibliography'), (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1958), *o.c.*, p. 26f.

⁷ Cf. Georg Simmel, *Schopenhauer und Nietzsche. Ein Vortragszyklus* ('Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. A Cycle of Lectures'), (München and Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1920). Schopenhauer, according to Simmel, is the philosopher of hopelessness, boredom, grey uniformity, aimlessness, whereas Nietzsche, on the contrary, represented a philosophy of meaningfulness, evolution of life, increasing inequality and vitalistic evolution as aim. Reading these four lectures it becomes clear why Simmel was such a successful lecturer. In the upper-class of Berlin the verb 'simmeln' was used for attending Simmel's public lectures at the university. He taught without notes, improvising and thinking aloud. His audiences did not know what he confessed to Rickert in a letter dated August 15, 1898. He was not happy that the percentage of women in his lecture hall had increased strongly since that disturbed the uniformity of the auditorium. 'Since I actually do not at all address the audience but rather speak to myself, I love it when the auditorium is as colourless and indifferent as possible.' K. Gassen, M. Landmann (eds.), *o.c.*, p. 96.

personality. Man is a thinking being, but he is so in conjunction with emotions and bodily experiences.

In addition he re-formulates the Kantian distinction between form and content in such a way that both become beyond epistemological and logical categories, components of reality which he principally defines in terms of 'life'. This is, for instance, elaborated impressively in his brand of sociology, called a 'sociology of forms'. In Simmel's sociology 'forms' are actually seen as functions in the ongoing process of society formation. Independent of their historical and actual differences of content, he analyzes phenomena like power relations as in super ordination and subordination, economic exchange relations, relations between man and wife, 'dyadic' and triadic' relations, conflict relations. But he discusses also micro-sociological and psychological 'forms' like coquetry, loyalty and gratitude, the secret and the secret society, the repast, the stranger, and even yodelling (allegedly as the transitional form between speaking and singing), as various transhistorical forms of human behavior.⁸

These sociological and psychological 'forms' are, in his view, not cognitive, or better epistemic 'forms' imposed on reality in order to acquire knowledge of reality, but realities in themselves, components of the ongoing process of life. Likewise, the Kantian forms of *Anschauung*, time and space, are according to Simmel indeed forms which mold contents, but as transhistorical as these forms are, they yet are constitutive components of life. It is here that both Rickert and Weber, remaining faithful to Kant's conceptual transcendentalism, object to Simmel's philosophy. Rickert in particular sticks to the Kantian position that thinking and living are philosophically two different realities, and should not be mashed into one, uniform reality, called 'life'.

A crucial element of Simmel's logic is the idea of a mutual influencing of phenomena and concepts. He calls it *Wechselwirkung*, reciprocity, and combines it with an approach which is very much akin to (and may well have been inspired by) Rickert's heterothesis and heterology. However, there is in this approach, which he called 'relationism', a strongly relativistic bias, since he cannot accept Rickert's notion of universal, formalistic values in the non-empirical world of validity. As we have seen, truth is according to Rickert a formal, empty value which becomes empirical and substantial only in value-judgments, in the imposing of this transcendental form on particular, historical contents. This is much too intellectualistic, Simmel believes. He views truth rather as an emerging quality in the juxtaposition of opposites. In his historical and sociological analyses Simmel argues consistently in terms of dualistic concepts referring to opposite phenomena, believing that truth is somewhere 'in the middle', somewhere between these opposites which in reality function in a perennial reciprocity. Truth, like the other values, is therefore never absolute as in the case of Rickert's transcendental philosophy of values, but always relative – i.e. in mutual relations, reciprocities, and opposites. Needless to add that Rickert sees the concept of 'relationism' as a sham play of words. In his view, Simmel has not avoided the logical mortal sin of relativism.

It is as if Simmel's conceptualization is in its essential elements a continuous and critical debate with Rickert's logic and philosophy of values. There is, for example, Rickert's

⁸ See Georg Simmel, *Soziologie. Untersuchungen über die Formen der Vergesellschaftung* ('Sociology. Investigations on the Forms of Society Formation'), 1908, (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1958), *passim*. For an English translation of portions of this book see Kurt H. Wolff (ed. and transl.), *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, 1950, (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964). Wolff wrote a helpful introduction to this volume: pp. xvii-lxiv. See also Georg Simmel, *Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliations*, K. Wolff, R. Bendix, translators, 1955, (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964). The most curious 'form' he analyzed was, I think, the handle: Georg Simmel, 'The Handle', in: Georg Simmel et. al., *Essays on Sociology, Philosophy & Aesthetics*, ed. by Kurt H. Wolff, 1959, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965), pp. 267-275. Bevers relates in a footnote that Simmel designed a simple questionnaire for his research on yodelling as the source of music which was published in the yearbook of a Swiss Alpine club in 1878/79. Cf. Bevers, *o.c.*, p. 220.

typically Kantian distinction of values and reality with which Simmel expressly disagrees. We saw in Chapter Four how Rickert tries to define the difference of facts and values. The negation of a fact, he argues, is nothingness, in the sense of non-existence, but the negation of a value is not nothingness but a counter-value. It can be proven that the unicorn does not exist. It may function as a symbol or a myth, but as an animal, a horse with a single pointed horn, the unicorn is non-existent. The denial of truth, however, is falsehood, of honesty is dishonesty, of a god is a devil, of beauty is ugliness, of lust is pain, etc. Simmel finds this problematic and in three different letters to Rickert he formulates his difficulty with this theorem which he labels 'the negation problem' (*Negationsfrage*). He repeats his objection formulated as a question three times with rather long intervals, which indicates that he did not receive a satisfactory answer while the issue keeps haunting him.⁹ In the first letter he formulates the negation problem as follows: 'The abrogation of something existing, you say, leaves behind a nothingness, but the negation of something valid, would result in a positive nonsense. Now if I did understand you correctly, the sentence "A does not exist", means so much as "the sentence that A exists is false; the existence of A must not be acknowledged". And indeed, how could a thought abrogate an *existence*? It can indeed only abrogate the *thought* of this existence, only the *judgment* that A exist.'¹⁰ In that case, Simmel continues, there are the following alternatives: (1) The judgment 'A exists' is indeed false. But then the only thing that happens is the simple fact that an error is corrected. If the judgment refers to something valid, i.e. to a value, the outcome is something non-valid and thus as non-existent as in the case of the judgment that A as a fact does not exist. (2) The judgment 'A exists' is in fact true. In that case its negation reaps the same nonsense as when we deny the truth of $2 + 2 = 4$. The same holds true for a statement about the truth of validity, i.e. of a value: its denial is nonsensical. Simmel then asks Rickert, if he made an error in calculation, and elaborates his argument in greater detail.¹¹

Rickert's reaction, if he wrote one, is not known but we may assume that he has pointed out that the denial of a true statement about a value, or its validity, would not be nonsensical but reap a counter-value. In any case, six years later Simmel returns to the 'problem of negation'. He had read *Gegenstand der Erkenntnis* and agrees now with Rickert, when he distinguishes being and value by saying that the abrogation of being results in nothingness, while the denial of value reaps a counter-value. Also that the abrogation of sense (*Sinn*), results not in nothingness but in nonsense (*Unsinn*). But then a new problem emerges: why would follow from this similarity of formal structure, that sense was a value? Could they not be two categories which act in an analogous manner without the one being subordinated to the other? Is it not impossible, Simmel asks, to draw conclusions about their mutual relationship, if two concepts demonstrate the same structure with regard to a third concept (in this case the denial, the abrogation)? Why would sense not be an autonomous phenomenon that has much in common with value, without being a kind of superior concept (*Oberbegriff*) which is superimposed on value? Please, he adds, enlighten me.

Apparently Rickert did and Simmel refers to his answer one year later. He begins by saying that on the negation issue still a lot could be said back and forth, but he doubts if that would be very fruitful. He nevertheless goes on saying once more that he does agree on the distinction of being and validity. Yet, he confesses that some explanations Rickert gave in an

⁹ See K. Gassen. M. Landmann (eds.), *o.c.*, 8.IV.10, pp. 104-106; 3.IV.16, p. 115f.; 15.IV.17, pp. 117-119.

¹⁰ 'Die Aufhebung einer Existenz, sagen Sie, hinterlasse ein Nichts, die eines Gültigen hinterliesse positiven Unsinn. Wenn ich Sie nun richtig verstanden habe, so bedeutet der Satz: A existiert nicht – soviel wie: der Satz, dass A nicht existiert, ist falsch, die Existenz von A soll nicht anerkannt werden. Und in der Tat, wie sollte auch ein Gedanke eine *Existenz* aufheben? Er kann allerdings nur den *Gedanken* dieser Existenz, nur das *Urteil*, dass A existiert, aufheben.' *Ibid.*, p. 104f.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 104-106.

answering letter are still not clear to him. Rickert has answered, and Simmel quotes him verbatim, that he had not doubted that the negation of sense *could* possibly lead to nothingness, but on the next page, Simmel goes on, he wrote that the connection with a meaningful configuration (*Sinngebilde*) results *never* in a mere nothingness, but leads to another meaningful configuration which does belong to something. Simmel does not want to engage in quibbling, but he is seized by the suspicion that Rickert is quite ambiguous in his use of the notion of negation (abrogation). It is as if the difference of the nothingness in the case of being and of something in the case of validity which the negation leaves behind in facts and values respectively, is not only determined by the negated (abrogated) content but also by the logical structure of the negation (abrogation) itself. It is as if negation (abrogation) in the one case is something else than in the other case. Regretfully, we do not know how Rickert responded to this question which, as abstract as it is, refers to a corner-stone of his philosophy of values. In fact, his definition of the difference of facts and values in terms of negation or abrogation, remains rather questionable.

Like Windelband and Rickert, Simmel is not in favor of psychologism and shares their and Weber's contempt of the historian and philosopher Karl Lamprecht who based the philosophy of history on psychology.¹² This notwithstanding Simmel too has a distinctly psychological view of the philosophy of history. He claims right at the start of his *Die Probleme der Geschichtswissenschaft* that history is the history of psychic processes, i.e. of impulses, voluntaristic acts and emotional reflexes, otherwise it is just a play of puppets. The object of history as a scientific discipline consists of the imagination, the will and the feeling of personalities. That is, the objects of history are souls.¹³ Even such historical studies of seemingly material objects, like the building of the Saint Peter's Cathedral or the construction of the Gotthard tunnel are only of interest to the historian as investments of psychic events, as passage points of human will, intellect and emotion.¹⁴ Rickert and certainly Weber would reject this exclusive position of psychology within the domain of the historical discipline, since it strongly smacks of psychologism. The building of a cathedral and the construction of a tunnel are, of course, as much economic processes, but it would be an inadmissible 'materialism' to found the history of these phenomena exclusively on economics. It would be inadmissible because it would be an unscientific metaphysics, as is illustrated by Marxist 'historical materialism'. Indeed, psychologism is as much metaphysical as is sociology or economism.

Simmel's psychological predisposition is also illustrated by his theory of understanding (*Verstehen*).¹⁵ He distinguishes three kinds of understanding: psychological, factual and historical. Psychological understanding is, according to Simmel, not a direct kind of empathy by which one projects one's own inner feelings and thoughts on the mind and soul of other human beings. This notion of understanding as projection is a variant of the representational logic (*Abbildungslogik*) which Simmel dismisses.¹⁶ Human beings are psychologically too complex and volatile, they are in addition too individually unique to be

¹² In a letter to Rickert, dated April 25, 1913, Simmel refers to an essay by Lamprecht and exclaims: 'One really puts one's head in one's hands and asks oneself, if such a thing is at all possible or just a bad dream.' ('Man fasst sich wirklich an den Kopf und fragt sich, ob so etwas überhaupt möglich oder ein böser Traum ist.'). K. Gassen, M. Landmann (eds.), *o.c.*, p. 111.

¹³ Georg Simmel, *Die Probleme der Geschichtsphilosophie* ('The Problems of the Philosophy of History'), *o.c.*, p. 1. This book which he re-wrote many times is extremely hard to read and to understand due to its very condensed and abstract style of arguing. It is my experience that the book gets obscurer and abstruser the more intensively and closer one reads and re-reads it.

¹⁴ Simmel, *ibid.*, p. 4f.

¹⁵ On Simmel's theory of *Verstehen*, see *ibid.*, pp. 35ff. I made use of Bever's lucid treatment of Simmel's theory of understanding: Bever, *o.c.*, pp. 56-62.

¹⁶ See Simmel, *o.c.*, p. 39f., 53 where he dismisses the 'naïve realism' of representational epistemology.

able to comprehend them adequately by means of such an empathic understanding. Moreover, experience learns that we are able to understand in others what we ourselves have not experienced. If this were not the case, history as a scientific discipline would not be possible. One does not have to be Caesar or Luther in order to understand Caesar and Luther.¹⁷ Simmel then argues that psychological understanding is only possible because we are able to experience ourselves and the others as coherent personalities. When we encounter someone else we are able to construct from fragmentary elements like a word, a gesture, an emotional expression, a coherent image of his or her personality. This image enables us to understand the other psychologically, although it may not be forgotten that the image is a construction, a type which does not cover the other as a unique individual. The interesting dimension of Simmel's psychological understanding by means of constructed types is the combination of Rickert's generalization and individualization, because the types represent general characteristics of personalities but enable the understanding of human beings as individuals. This also comes close to Weber's *ideal types*, although Weber stays closer to Rickert's logic than Simmel does, since he defines 'individual' not as 'individual human being' but as logical *individuum*. Rickert's and Weber's *individua* can be human beings, but are in principle all phenomena stripped of generality. Simmel's individuals in his theory of psychological understanding are historical, individual human beings. But he adds collectivities like political parties which, like the individual personalities, must demonstrate a psychic unity comparable to the personal psychic unity. He calls it the 'social soul' (*Sozialseele*) of groups, but hastens to add that the historian will use them as constructed types, as fictions which synthesize scattered realities. It is in this sense that Theodor Mommsen in his book on Roman history writes 'a cry of disturbance went through all of Italy', and 'the parties caught their breath'.¹⁸

Simmel discusses next factual understanding (*sachliches Verstehen*) and historical understanding as follows. If a person speaks, we understand not only the speaker as a person, but also factually the words he speaks. This factual understanding is not bound to person, place or time. We can understand the law of gravity or the 'chorus mysticus' in Goethe's 'Faust II' without having any knowledge or understanding of Newton, Goethe and the time and place they were living in. There is in this factual understanding a formidable complication, because there is an infinite range of interpretations of the facts concerned. We would only understand a natural-scientific law or a theatre play completely, if we comprehended all their objectively existing possibilities of interpretation. Asking for their content of truth, a simple answer like true or false cannot be given. The answer to this question depends on the comprehensibility of the various interpretations. Once more, Simmel comes close to relativism. As to historical understanding, it occurs when we not only understand factually the words of a speaker, but also his motives, when we not only understand the content of Goethe's 'Faust', but also the poet's motives which have led to the creation of this play. This comes close to psychological understanding. In historical understanding we search for certain psychological causes of historical phenomena. Or, in other words, we do not have to identify with Goethe as an individual in order to understand his 'Faust', but if we want to understand how this play came about we will have to arrive at an understanding of Goethe's motives which, of course, are embedded in the cultural environment he lived and worked in.

Thus, Simmel does not merely incorporate elements of Rickert's logic, methodology and philosophy of values, but rather seems to engage in an ongoing, critical debate with his

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 84. Weber uses the same sentence in his *Wissenschaftslehre*, *o.c.*, p. 100. Simmel, it seems to me, contradicts himself on this point when he claims earlier that someone who never loved someone, will never be able to understand a lover, that a choleric person will never understand a phlegmatic one, that a weakling will never understand a hero. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

¹⁸ Simmel, *ibid.*, p. 32.

intellectual and personal friend. The main differences between the two are (a) Rickert's dismissal of vitalism and its alleged irrationalism; Simmel's incorporation of vitalism in his philosophy and dismissal of the alleged intellectualism of the neo-Kantian logic; (b) Rickert's banishment of psychology from philosophy, defining it as one of the empirical sciences, methodologically determined by the Natural-Scientific approach to boot; Simmel's incorporation of psychology in his philosophy of history and theory of understanding; (c) both work with Kant's distinction of form and content, but to Rickert forms are non-empirical, transcendent 'realities'; to Simmel forms are empirical components of the content of 'life', as was demonstrated in his 'sociology of forms'. But there are distinct similarities also, two of which stand out in particular: (a) both Rickert and Simmel stress the logical difference of theoretical concepts and empirical reality, of thought and experience, of facts and values, and reject representational logic (although it seems to return through the backdoor in Simmel's philosophy); (b) there is a great similarity between Rickert's heterothesis and heterology on the one hand and Simmel's logic of reciprocity (*Wechselwirkung*) on the other.

Legal philosophy

The most gifted and in his days generally respected student of Windelband and Rickert was Emil Lask (1875-1915), who tragically fell in battle at the beginning of the First World War.¹⁹ He studied initially law and then philosophy in Freiburg (Rickert), Strasburg (Windelband) and Heidelberg (Windelband). Upon his *Habilitation* (1903-1904), supervised by Windelband he joined the seminars and inner-circle of Max Weber and became a friend of Gustav Radbruch. Weber and Radbruch inspired him in his thinking and writing on the philosophy of law. Windelband and especially Rickert had a decisive influence on his prolific writing.

According to Lask, *Rechtswissenschaft*, i.e. the scientific study of law, emancipated itself in the 19th century from the metaphysical speculations of former centuries, focusing primarily, and as it turned out too one-sidedly, on the study of empirical legal practices and institutions. It led to an empiristic and positivistic philosophy of law which presented a general theory of law, composed by compiling empirical data into an incoherent and unsystematic whole. If one dares to reject this approach and calls for a philosophical grounding of law in its absolute significance relating it to other absolute values, one is in danger of being accused of defending a metaphysical Natural Law position. Lask then claims that this accusation would be incorrect, if one were to base the philosophy of law upon the neo-Kantian, critical theory of values, in which the focus is on empirical and historical reality which at the same time is the scene or substratum of trans-empirical values and of generally valid significances. This is not, Lask hastens to add, a return to the Platonic two-worlds-theory. There is but one sort of law: the empirical, historically developing legal reality of legal practices and institutions. Yet, in view of the distinction of value and empirical value-substratum there is a two-dimensionality of perspectives, i.e. a dualism of a philosophical (value oriented) and an empirical (object oriented) method. There is, in other words, a duality of an empirical (if you want: empiristic) approach to the historical reality of law, which is free

¹⁹ Lask was Rickert's favorite student, whom he acknowledged as an inspiring colleague. See his exceptionally personal commemoration in the Preface of the third edition of *Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, o.c., p. Xf. Dated September 1915. In Lask, Rickert confesses, he had always seen his scientific heir apparent who would continue where he would have to leave off. He dedicates his book to the memory of his 'dear friend'. For the first of the three volumes of the collected works of Lask Rickert wrote a touching, yet not sentimental 'Personal Preface': Emil Lask, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ('Collected Papers'), vol. I, E. Herrigel, ed., (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1923), pp. V-XVI. In a letter dated July 12, 1915 Georg Simmel offers his condolences to Rickert, after he had learned that Lask had perished in the war. 'You will have the experience', he adds, 'that a considerable part of your harvest has been burned in the barn.' K. Gassen, M. Landmann (eds.), o.c., p. 113.

of philosophical speculation on the one hand, and a critical theory of legal values which does not engage in speculations about a trans-empirical (i.e. metaphysical) law, but focuses exclusively on the trans-empirical significance of the empirical, historical law, on the other hand. Thus, philosophy of law investigates the *Rechtswert* (the value of law), whereas the empirical study of law studies the *Rechtswirklichkeit* (the reality of law).

By embracing the neo-Kantian distinction between reality and value, Lask tries to avoid both a one-sided empiricism which neglects the trans-empirical reality of values and the metaphysics of Natural Law philosophies which hypostatizes (reifies) the values into an autonomous reality which subjects empirical reality to an authoritarian rationalism.²⁰ The influential Historical School that rejects one-sided empiricism too, is in Lask's view the exact opposite of Natural Law. It correctly castigated the adherents of Natural Law for their neglect of the inexhaustible richness of historical particularities with its contingencies and unpredictabilities, but it too slipped off into metaphysics, the metaphysics of Historicism: 'Natural Law wants to juggle the empirical substratum from the value absoluteness, while Historicism wants to conjure up the value absoluteness from the empirical substratum.'²¹ It next pretends to be able to issue value-judgments about empirical reality, allegedly presenting a true worldview (*Weltanschauung*). This, of course, Lask adds, is a misapprehension of the value-relevance and value-relatedness of law and lawyers. As Rickert pointed out, Lask argues, the focus on the values and cultural significance of a reality like the law is philosophically not a normative value-judgment, but a theoretical value-relation, a theoretically relating of reality to values. Also, Lask could have added here, Rickert's historical approach to reality is not a normative approach, belonging to a normative historicist worldview, but a (cultural-)scientific method in which there is no place for value-judgments.

When he turns to the methodology of legal science, Lask starts with the statement that it is a branch of the cultural sciences and follows Rickert by saying that the cultural-scientifically conceived world (to which law belongs) emerges by means of a purely theoretical relating of reality to values.²² He then expands on a theorem of Rickert, namely the fact that Kant's Copernican turn in which reality is 'constructed' by means of our categories, is not just restricted to scientific concepts, but can be observed outside the world of science in everyday life knowledge. Rickert calls it a 'pre-scientific conceptualization' which prepares scientific conceptualization. (We saw this before, when we discussed Rickert's ideas about the concepts of daily language.) Lask elaborates this idea, stating that the single cultural worlds in which we live can and should be seen as 'congealed theoretical reason' (*geronnene theoretische Vernunft*), as incorporations of pre-scientific conceptualizations. This, Lask concludes, thereby going beyond Rickert's methodological position, results in the fact that methodology may have a different object of investigation than the forms of the sciences, such as Natural Science and Cultural Science. In the case of cultural sciences, methodology will also need to focus directly on cultural reality itself, e.g. on the world of law. In doing so it will, even if it focuses on the same object, say the practice of law, yet differ from the empirical-scientific approach, say the sociology of law, since it is primarily interested in the problems of conceptualization, not in the results of empirical research.

Lask then draws the interesting conclusion that one may not separate the methodology of the pre-scientific from that of the scientific legal concepts.²³ However, he adds a further

²⁰ This is, of course, not the place to discuss Lask's analysis of Natural Law as a metaphysical approach rejected by neo-Kantian criticism. See Emil Lask, 'Rechtsphilosophie', 1905, in: *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. I, o.c., pp. 277-331. Also in: H.-L. Ollig (ed.), o.c., p. 186-189.

²¹ 'Das Naturrecht will aus der Absolutheit des Wertes das empirische Substrat, der Historismus aus dem empirischen Substrat die Absolutheit des Wertes hervorzaubern.' *Ibid.*, p. 197.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 209.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 213. It is interesting to relate this view to the cognate theory of Josef Esser, *Vorverständnis und Methodenwahl*, ('Pre-understanding and Choice of Methods'), 1970, (Frankfurt a.M.: Athenäum Fischer

observation: nowhere does the pre-scientific conceptualization play such a dominant role as in the legal area, because the legal norms laid down in formal laws and enacted in jurisprudence are derived from societal demands, unlike the norms of philosophy which spring from the world of formal values. It is in this sense that one ought to conceive of jurisprudence as a 'normative science', i.e. not as the opposite of the purely empirical sciences but as the science which derives its normative concepts from the pre-scientific norms of daily life.²⁴

The echoes of Windelband and in particular Rickert are obvious by now. Lask would deserve more attention than this, but let us transfer to the neo-Kantian tones and colors of the philosophy of law of his friend Radbruch.

The philosopher of law, state minister of justice during the Weimar Republic and university professor of criminal law and philosophy (twice at Heidelberg) Gustav Radbruch (1878-1946), was strongly influenced by the neo-Kantianism of the Baden School, in particular by Windelband, Rickert and Lask. He mentions these names in his posthumously reprinted *Rechtsphilosophie* (1950), but in particular Rickert's philosophy of values has had a heavier imprint on his ideas than a brief footnote justifies.²⁵

Radbruch opens the first chapter, headed 'Reality and Value', by the statement that in reality, i.e. the shapeless raw material of our experiences, reality and value are mixed up. We experience people and things that are tied to values or unvalues, but we are not aware of the fact that these values and unvalues stem from us the beholders, not from the things and people we behold. The first act of our mind is to separate our I from reality, to confront it and to separate it from values. We are able to confront reality without relating it to values which then present the realm of nature, because nature is nothing else than reality stripped of values. Inversely, reality can be valued and confronted by norms, which renders it into a realm of values. If value-blind behavior is exerted methodically it is natural-scientific thought, if it is a valuating attitude it can be characterized as a philosophy of values which consists of three branches: logic, ethics and aesthetics.²⁶

This is clearly an application of Rickert's theory of value-free nature and evaluative culture. Radbruch adds two more 'attitudes' to these two (the value-blind and the valuating): the value-relating (*wertbeziehende*) and the value-superseding (*wertüberwindende*) attitudes. The former is still part of Rickert's philosophy of values, but the latter is definitely not. As to the value-relating attitude, it is demonstrated by the scientist who searches for Truth, the artist who strives for Beauty, the moralist who aims at the Good, yet in reality this searching, striving and aiming will never be complete, because truth and error, taste and tastelessness,

Taschenbuch Verlag, 1972). Lask's view also reminds one of the phenomenological view of Alfred Schutz's methodology. See e.g. Alfred Schutz, 'Common-Sense and Scientific interpretation of Human Action, in: Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers I. The Problem of Social Reality*, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962), pp. 3-48.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 217. Two critical annotations seem in order here. Lask should have added at this point religion and theology as phenomena which are very similar to jurisprudence and law in that they too derive their normative values (and thus their significance) from empirical, pre-theological religious values and norms. Moreover, these pre-scientific legal and religious norms and values suggest strongly the existence of natural law and natural religion.

²⁵ Gustav Radbruch, *Rechtsphilosophie*, (Stuttgart: Koehler Verlag, 1950). This 4th edition was edited by Erik Wolf who wrote an informative introductory essay on Radbruch's life and work: 'Gustav Radbruchs Leben und Werk', *ibid.*, pp. 17-78. In law and criminology adequate causal imputation is, of course, a crucial issue. Radbruch wrote a brief monograph about it which influenced Max Weber's thinking about the subject. See Gustav Radbruch, *Die Lehre von der adäquaten Verursachung*, ('The Doctrine of Adequate Causal Imputation'), (Berlin: J. Guttentag, Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1902). Cf. Max Weber, 'Objektive Möglichkeit und adäquate Verursachung in der historischen Kausalbetrachtung', ('Objective Possibility and Adequate Causal Imputation in the Historical Observation of Causality'), in: Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, ('Collected Papers on the Logic of the Sciences'), 1920, (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1968, 3rd ed.), pp. 266-290.

²⁶ Radbruch, *Rechtsphilosophie*, o.c., p. 91f.

beauty and ugliness, moral humanitarianism and barbarism will be mixed. Culture, in other words, is a mixture of value-promotion and value-inhibition, value-realization and value-missing. Culture, Radbruch argues, is not the realization of culture, but the sort of reality which has the meaning, the sense to realize values. This is what the value-related attitude is all about. It is the methodical attitude of the cultural sciences.

This is, albeit in a different formulation, still very much akin to Rickert's idea of value-relatedness. However, Radbruch deviates from Rickert decisively, when he adds a fourth attitude which he calls the value-transcending or superseding attitude which is, he claims, the religious attitude. To Rickert, religion is one of the atheoretical forms of evaluation and value-relatedness, next to aestheticism, moralism and eroticism. It may be defined as transcendence but one then leaves the realm of empirical philosophy and enters the world of metaphysics. Radbruch reserves a special, autonomous place for it and defines it as 'the final approval of all being, a smiling positivism which pronounces his yes and amen about all things, love without consideration of the value or unvalue of the loved one, bliss beyond happiness and unhappiness, grace beyond guilt and innocence.'²⁷ He even claims that religion manages to surmount the unvalues and thereby also the values since they are intertwined. In religion everything is equally valuable or equally worthless. This means again that the distinction between reality and value disappears. In religion reality transforms from being into essence. This is, of course, theologically speaking quite a mystic, if not Gnostic, and therefore rather restricted conception of religion. Rickert would add that it is philosophically nonsensical, since it transforms the transcendental and a priori conception of religion into a metaphysical non-reality which is epistemologically useless.

Meanwhile, Radbruch returns to his neo-Kantian brand of philosophy of law. He defines law as a cultural phenomenon, i.e. as a value-related fact. More precisely, law is the reality whose meaning and sense it is to realize the value of law, the *Rechtsidee*, i.e. the idea of law. This idea cannot be anything else, he claims, than *justice*.²⁸ Methodologically, Radbruch employs in his philosophy of law two strategies which he called 'methodical dualism' and 'relativism'. The former is the neo-Kantian distinction between *Sein* and *Sollen* which means that statements about what one should do or ought to do cannot be derived from statements about facts but only deductively from other statements of what one should do or ought to do. This, however, Radbruch warns in line with Rickert's neo-Kantianism, is not an issue of causality but a logical issue. Of course, evaluations and value-judgments are influenced by facts. Radbruch refers to Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge in which the 'positional determination of knowledge (*die soziale Standortgebundenheit des Erkennens*) is explicated. Yes, knowledge, ideologies, value-judgments are embedded in and in this sense causally influenced by historically relative, social circumstances, but that is something else than being logically justified by them: 'It is not claimed that value-judgments cannot be *caused* by empirical facts, rather that they cannot by them be *justified*.'²⁹

It is at this point that Radbruch introduces the quite hazardous concept of relativism as a method rather than a worldview. The relativist method states that the correctness of a value-judgment is ascertained in relation to a certain view of the world and its values, but it is not

²⁷ 'letztendige Bejahung alles Seienden, lächelnder Positivismus, der über alle Dinge sein Ja und Amen spricht, Liebe ohne Rücksicht auf Wert oder Unwert des Geliebten, Seligkeit jenseits von Glück und Unglück, Gnade jenseits von Schuld und Unschuld.' *Ibid.* p. 93

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 123f. Although he claims to have constructed this theory in the spirit of Kant's philosophy, John Rawls does not mention Radbruch's crucial idea of justice in his *A Theory of Justice*, 1971, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1977).

²⁹ 'Nicht dies wird behauptet, dass Wertungen nicht durch Seinstatsachen *verursacht*, vielmehr dass sie aus ihnen nicht *begründet* werden können.' *Ibid.*, p. 99. Karl Mannheim, 'Historicism', in: Karl Mannheim, *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, translated by Paul Kecskemeti, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952), p. 125 and *passim*.

the task of this method to ascertain the correctness of this worldview and its values. In a footnote Radbruch adds the alternative concept of perspectivism which is, I think better, than relativism which in the history of philosophy carries a too negatively loaded connotation.³⁰ Relationism was coined by Mannheim as a felicitous alternative concept. A simple example – not given by Radbruch though – may illustrate this relativist (perspectivist, relationist) method. If a historian tries to reconstruct the ideology of a leading national-socialist in the 1930's and early 1940's he will locate his values and value-judgments within the context of National Socialism and draw conclusions as to their 'correctness'. This, however, does not mean that he expresses a positive or negative value-judgment about the national-socialist ideology as a whole. If he were to do so, he would transfer his arguments from history as an empirical cultural-science within the university to politics as a normative practice within the arena of power. This is, of course, identical with Rickert's vision.

History

The Dutch historian Johan Huizinga (1872-1945) studied initially Sanskrit and philology, wrote a PhD-thesis on the fool in classical Indian theatre,³¹ but transferred at the beginning of the 20th century to history. He was appointed professor of history at the University of Groningen in 1905 and ten years later into the same position at the University of Leiden. In his inaugural address of 1905, entitled 'The Aesthetic Component of Historical Imaginations',³² he presented his methodological view of the historical discipline. The neo-Kantian philosophies of history, as unfolded by Simmel, Windelband and in particular Rickert, functioned as a starting point. However, he used them in this lecture as well as in some other methodological treatises quite eclectically, adopting only those points of view that fitted his aesthetic, and sometimes quite romantic opinions about the historian's task.

He is in total agreement with his three colleagues in the rejection of what he labeled 'the suzerainty of natural science'³³ which, upon the successful developments of the natural sciences in the 19th century, had a heavy impact on the humanities, the historical discipline in the first place. He joins their criticism of Karl Lamprecht who, as we saw before, was the whipping boy of Simmel, Rickert and Weber. To their and Huizinga's dismay Lamprecht believed that history should be modeled after the exact natural sciences and be transformed into an experimental social psychology. If historical research could not yield general concepts in which everything particular and individual is being neutralized, it would not be worthy, Lamprecht thought, to be called 'science' and rather be categorized as art.³⁴ As the title of his inaugural address indicates, Huizinga is quite averse to abstract conceptualizations, and as a historian rather driven by a more aesthetic than logical preference for imaginations and expressive images. Rickert would strongly take exception to this aesthetic approach, but one must admit that his arguments in some instances did lead up to it. Huizinga is an illustration of that.

³⁰ Radbruch, *o.c.*, p. 102.

³¹ Johan Huizinga, *De Vidusaka in het Indisch Tooneel*, (Groningen: Noordhoff, 1897). Cf. my *Reality in a Looking-Glass. Rationality through an Analysis of Traditional Folly*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), p. 151.

³² Johan Huizinga, 'Het aesthetische bestanddeel van geschiedkundige voorstellingen', in: Johan Huizinga, *Verzamelde Werken VII*, ('Collected Works, vol. VII'), pp. 3-18.

³³ Johan Huizinga, 'De taak der cultuurgeschiedenis', (*'The Task of Cultural History'*), *ibid.*, pp. 35-95.

Quotation on p. 69.

³⁴ Cf. his short but very critical review of Karl Lamprecht, *Einführung in das historische Denken*, ('Introduction to Historical Thought'), (Leipzig: Voigtländer, 1912), in: *Ibid.*, p. 233f. He sees Lamprecht as the representative of the opinion that history ought to be vindicated by the suzerainty of natural science which claims that its norms of exactness represent the only test of true science. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

He is particularly fond of the following passage from Rickert's theory of historical concept formation which indeed seems to nourish aesthetic and even vitalistic desires: 'The historian [therefore] tries to *represent* for us in a graphic manner the past in its individuality. He can only do so, if he enables us in a sense to *re-live* the unique event in its individual course. Sure enough, in his presentation he is, as is the case with all sciences, dependent on words with *general* meanings. Through them there will never emerge a direct, graphic *picture* of reality. But he will indeed sometimes call upon the listener or the reader to imagine something by means of his power of imagination.'³⁵ In quoting these sentences, Huizinga omits the two sentences about the words (i.e. concepts) which carry general meanings and are not suitable to forge aesthetic images of reality.³⁶ He would probably range this under the concept of 'concepticity'.³⁷ Moreover, Huizinga does obviously not notice the little word *bisweilen*, i.e. at times, or sometimes. This indicates that it is sometimes unavoidable for the historian to call upon the power of imagination of his audience, but he should not make a habit out of it.

Huizinga then elaborates his idea of imagination and calls it quite romantically 'historical sensation' or 'historical contact'.³⁸ It is a kind of emotional connection with the past, a sentiment which is similar to but not identical to the enjoyment of art, or a religious experience, or a shiveriness in nature, or a metaphysical sensation. The object of this historical sensation does not consist of human figures, or human lives, or human thoughts which one believes to perceive. There are no clear pictures, everything is vague. Streets, houses, fields, sounds and colors, moving and moved people – it can all be summoned in this historical sensation. This contact with the past is accompanied by an absolute conviction of truth and authenticity. It can be aroused 'by a line from a charter or a chronicle, by an engraving, some sounds from an old song. It is not an element which the author deposits in his work by distinct words. It lies behind not within the history book. The reader carries it towards the author, it is his response to his call.'³⁹ Huizinga then comes close to aesthetic impressionism when he concludes that the historical sensation is carried out 'in the sphere of the dream, a seeing of elusive figures, a hearing of words half understood.'⁴⁰ Rickert would label all this 'intuition' and, as we have seen, he was not averse to it, but rather saw it as a precondition instead of, as Huizinga seems to view it, as an essential component of the historian's methodology.

But then, suddenly, Huizinga turns around and returns to a more Rickertian style and content of thinking and writing. He admits that historical imagination and sensation are just parts of historical understanding and knowing. The aim of the historian, he writes, is 'not subjecting to moods, but making understandable connections.'⁴¹ He formulates it as in a programme: 'Each work of history constructs connections, designs forms in which reality of the past can be understood. History creates the sense of understanding mainly through the meaningful arrangement of facticity, and only in a very restricted sense by the determination

³⁵ 'Der Historiker sucht daher die Vergangenheit in ihrer Individualität uns anschaulich wieder zu vergegenwärtigen, und das kann er nur dadurch tun, dass er es uns ermöglicht, das einmalige Geschehen in seinem individuellen Verlauf gewissermassen nachzuerleben. Zwar ist er bei seiner Darstellung, wie alle Wissenschaft, auf Worte angewiesen, die allgemeine Bedeutungen haben, und durch die daher niemals direkt ein anschauliches Bild der Wirklichkeit entsteht. Aber er wird in der Tat den Hörer oder Leser bisweilen auffordern, durch seine Einbildungskraft sich etwas anschaulich vorzustellen.' Rickert, *Kulturwissenschaft und Naturwissenschaft*, o.c., p. 95.

³⁶ Huizinga, *l.c.*, p. 70.

³⁷ This is also in Dutch a neologism: *begrippelijkheid*. Cf. Huizinga, *ibid.*, p. 73.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 71f.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

of strict causalities. The knowledge it brings about gives answer to questions as “what?” and “how?” and only exceptionally to questions as “through what?” and “why?”.⁴² History then is, according to him, always the designing of the past, and at the same time a comprehending and understanding of a meaning which one searches in the past. But then, he adds, history itself is like philosophy, or literature, or law, or natural science a spiritual form by means of which we try to understand the world. The main difference with the other spiritual forms is its focus on the past. It tries to understand the world *in* and *by* the past.⁴³ He then formulates his famous definition of history: ‘History is the spiritual form by which a culture takes stock of its past.’⁴⁴

The distinction of form and content is constitutive to Kant’s philosophy and to the philosophy of Rickert. Without referring to this source, Huizinga too applies it to the study of history. In order to understand the past, he argues, the historian must try to see its *forms* and its *functions*.⁴⁵ He does not refer to him at this point, but his theory of historical design by means of a continuous focus on forms and functions (which he not very felicitously calls ‘morphology’) reminds one strongly also of Georg Simmel. Each event, Huizinga argues, which is conceived of by the historian presupposes ‘a certain design of the material of the past, a cognitive summarizing of some data from the chaotic reality into a conception.’⁴⁶ Just like Rickert, he grounds these conceptions in everyday life experience: ‘Historical thought is but a continuation of the general thought-life itself.’⁴⁷ It leads him to an anti-nominalistic conclusion: each pristine reflection about history applies ideas which in fact shape the past. The historian can from the start possess vernacular concepts like ‘parliament’, ‘world war’, ‘capitalism’, ‘religious faith’, etc.

Cultural history in particular is in possession of such formal concepts, and the great cultural historians have, often unconsciously, always been great historical ‘morphologists’. Huizinga mentions Burckhardt as an example. His celebrated study of Renaissance culture, Huizinga comments, may have been too vague, simply because Renaissance cannot be understood as a clear form, but the single forms which he discussed and analyzed, such as fame, mockery, wittiness, family life, etc. maintain the value of a masterpiece beyond praise. It testifies to ‘an unequalled sense of Forms’.⁴⁸ His own famous study of the waning of the Middle Ages has in the meantime equaled the fame of Burckhardt’s book on Renaissance culture. It testifies to the very same sense of forms, which, incidentally, is expressed explicitly by its subtitle.⁴⁹

Thus, there is not a direct and substantial impact of Rickert’s philosophy on Huizinga’s methodological reflections. Their aestheticism is alien to Rickert’s transcendentalism and reminds one more of Benedetto Croce’s philosophy of history than of Rickert’s highly rational ideas. Yet, Huizinga’s ideas do reverberate with several of Rickert’s methodological conceptions and of those of Windelband and Simmel as well. But then, Huizinga does not excel in logical and methodological virtuosity, to phrase it mildly, and at some points he distinctly misunderstands and misinterprets Rickert’s philosophy. This is the case, as we saw, when he injects vitalistic and romantic notions in Rickert’s texts. In a book review, to give another example, he remarks en passant, that Rickert defends a cleavage

⁴² *Idem*.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

⁴⁵ This is elaborated on *ibid.*, pp. 75-78, 98-103.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁴⁷ *Idem*.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

⁴⁹ Johan Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages. A study in the Forms of Life and Thought and Art in France and the Netherlands in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, 1929, transl by F. Hopman, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1954).

between the natural and the cultural sciences which in the mean time has allegedly been bridged.⁵⁰ This misinterprets the logically constructed and reciprocal (heterological) nature of Natural Science and Cultural Science. As we have seen in the former chapter the two types of scientific conceptualization function in Rickert's view as the heterologically correlated extremes of an analytic continuum. This is not a cleavage at all. On the contrary, Rickert opens a way out of the fruitless opposition of *Naturwissenschaft* and *Geisteswissenschaft* and its equally fruitless methodological quarrel.

Sociology

Karl Mannheim (1893-1947) acquired fame as one of the founders of the sociology of knowledge,⁵¹ but was, certainly in his younger days in Budapest, also a general philosopher who was mainly interested in the role of values and in epistemological, logical and methodological problems. As a young man he belonged to a group of philosophers around Georg Lukács (1885-1971) who to the surprise of his friends changed in December 1918 in one week from a rather conservative, Hegelian Saul into a radical Marxist Paul.⁵² He even served in 1919 as people's commissar for education in the soviet republic of Bela Kun (1886-1939) which was only in power for three months. The group around Lukács met monthly before the Kun-revolution, discussing mainly issues of culture and cultural sciences. They were mockingly called *Szellemkek* which literally means 'Spirits'. This referred to their focus on *Geist* and *Geisteswissenschaft*, in opposition to the neo-positivistic sociologists who rather put nature and the natural sciences on a pedestal.⁵³ After all, Lukács studied in Heidelberg and belonged to the inner-circle of Max Weber. But also as a Marxist and politician Lukács believed that culture was the aim and politics its means of realization. In other words, he was and remained an avid defender of the autonomy of the super-structure (*Ueberbau*) and rejected the 'vulgar-Marxist' position of the causal predominance of the infra-structure (*Unterbau*).⁵⁴

Although Mannheim was not a Marxist or member of the communist party, once in power Lukács saw to it that he, despite his youth of just 25 years, was appointed professor of

⁵⁰ Johan Huizinga, 'Boekbesprekingen' ('Book Reviews'), *ibid.*, p. 233.

⁵¹ See for a systematic treatment of this part of Mannheim's theories A. P. Simonds, *Karl Mannheim's Sociology of Knowledge*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978). It contains a helpful bibliography which registers the English translations of his publications: *ibid.*, pp. 188-192.

⁵² See David Kettler, *Marxismus und Kultur. Mannheim und Lukács in den ungarischen Revolutionen 1918/19*, ('Marxism and Culture. Mannheim and Lukács in the Hungarian Revolutions 1918/19'), (Neuwied, Berlin: Luchterhand, 1967), p. 64.

⁵³ Lukács and his small band of followers, including Mannheim, founded the 'Free School for the Humanities' ('Freie Schule für Geisteswissenschaften') which provided free courses for students and laymen and functioned as a kind of Folk College ('Volkshochschule'). See the concise but very informative account of David Kettler, *o.c.* The motto of Kettler's book is a statement by Lukács: 'Die Politik ist bloss Mittel, die Kultur ist das Ziel.' ('Politics ist just a means, culture is the aim.'). Kettler, *ibid.*, p. 5 and p. 43. It explains, Kettler argues, Lukács's on first sight strange cross-over from a rather conservative Hegelian and partly neo-Kantian position to a radical Marxism. In their conservatism the 'Spirits' rejected the capitalist culture of the bourgeoisie they belonged to by origin.

⁵⁴ This standpoint, remarkable for a politically rather orthodox Marxist, was in all probability inspired by Max Weber who in his *Wissenschaftslehre* once called Marx a 'great thinker' ('den grossen Denker'), but the model of an infra-structure versus a dependent super-structure 'this fundamentally wrong and scientifically completely worthless analogy' ('diese grundschiefe und wissenschaftlich ganz wertlose Analogie'). Max Weber, *Wissenschaftslehre*, p. 204 and p. 316. See also p. 253. Politically, this emphasis upon culture is not without danger, in particular when it is linked to the culture of an historical culture. As we have seen in the Introduction, Rickert claimed in 1934 that after World War I Germany's entire culture was 'once more' in danger and that therefore no German who wanted to work within Germany's culture, should resist the main direction of the 'national-political cultural aims'. Cf. Heinrich Rickert, *Grundprobleme der Philosophie, o.c.*, pp. 222-224.

philosophy at the university in Budapest. After the early end of the Bela Kun regime, on the first day of August 1919, Lukács fled to Vienna and from there to Moscow. Mannheim took off to Frankfurt a.M., where he engaged in further sociological studies and was appointed professor of philosophy ten years later.⁵⁵ As a Jew he had to flee again in 1933, ending his life in intellectual loneliness in London January 9, 1947.

Although this has, as far as I know, not been documented, we may assume that Mannheim got thoroughly acquainted in Heidelberg with the neo-Kantian theories of Windelband and Rickert. In fact, the neo-Kantianism of Windelband and Rickert, and at times also the philosophy of Simmel, recur in his philosophical writings. However, as we shall see, he deviated strongly and argumentatively from Rickert's methodological demand to abstain from normative, evaluative judgments.

In a review of a book in which Rickert's demarcation of the natural and cultural sciences was attacked fiercely, Mannheim discusses the question how the various sciences can be classified adequately.⁵⁶ One always classifies objects by means of a certain point of view, or perspective – a methodological standpoint which is, of course, in concordance with Rickert's thesis of value-relevance or value-relatedness. But such a perspective, the reviewed author argues, is only adequate, if it is grounded ontologically in the inner structuring of the objective reality. There is, in other words, an inherent, ontological order in reality, a structured essence. This point, the author argues, is missed or consciously neglected by Kant and the neo-Kantians who stick to the idea that the thing-in-itself cannot be known and therefore is 'irrational' and 'chaotic'. Order, the neo-Kantian epistemologists believe, is in the end imposed by human reason and its a priori categories. However, Mannheim's reviewed philosopher admits, there is not just one but a plurality of perspectives and this must, of course, result in various conflicting classifications. These conflicts cannot be resolved epistemologically by formal logic. One must mentally enter into the objective reality, arrive at an inner understanding of its structured essence and from there determine which perspective is more and which is less adequately equipped to classify the objects. In short, as to classification in general and to the demarcation of the natural sciences and the humanities in particular, ontology has a primacy over epistemology and logic. In other words, Mannheim summarizes, if one believes that the adequacy or inadequacy of various viewpoints is ontologically based in objective reality, one must necessarily also believe that the essence of the reality which one wants to classify is somehow given by a direct mental act (i.e. 'intuition') before we approach reality cognitively, logically and methodologically by means of abstract concepts.

Mannheim then raises a question which Rickert would have formulated as a statement. If we allowed the idea that the essence of reality can be determined directly through an intrusive act of the mind, we would still have to acknowledge that this essence can only be caught *theoretically* from one or the other point of view. This, Mannheim points out, is not insignificant. After all, 'if one realizes that the classification must take place on the theoretical level, we can never comprehend theoretically the essence in its alleged ontological

⁵⁵ In view of Mannheim's rejection of the separation of science and value-judgments of the neo-Kantians and his project to unify socio-political, socio-ethical and sociological studies which he further elaborated in Frankfurt, it is safe to see him as one of the founding fathers of the 'Frankfurt School', next to Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno.

⁵⁶ Erich Becher, *Geisteswissenschaften und Naturwissenschaften*, ('Sciences of the Mind and Natural Sciences'), (München, Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1921). Karl Mannheim, 'Zum Problem einer Klassifikation der Wissenschaften', ('On the Problem of a Classification of Sciences'), in: Karl Mannheim, *Wissenssoziologie. Auswahl aus dem Werk*, ('Sociology of Knowledge. Selection from his Work'), Kurt. H. Wolff, ed., (Berlin, Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1964, pp. 155-165.

directness and totality, but always only from a certain point of view.’⁵⁷ What Mannheim says is, of course, that in the business of knowing reality epistemology has always a primacy over ontology, which is, of course, precisely Rickert’s position.

However, Mannheim has a strong reservation with regard to Rickert’s epistemologically determined methodology and its, in his view, rather formalistic standpoint regarding the demarcation of the two main groups of sciences, the natural and the cultural ones. Rickert starts, Mannheim points out, this classification on the level of conceptualization and methodology, and thereby transfers the essence of science from research and the comprehension of objective reality to the level of the methodical representation and formation of what has been epistemologically comprehended. Mannheim calls it an ‘extremely formalistic methodologism’ which must end up in relativism, since it is unable to establish a hierarchy of standpoints or perspectives.⁵⁸ This invites one, he continues, to embrace again the pre-theoretical, ontological approach which he, however, dismissed before. It is, I think, indicative that he cannot solve this dilemma, and chooses for an acceptance of both. He proposes, namely, to reject the position which denies the importance of methodology by defending the intuitive connection to the essence of objective reality, yet to allow still for ‘a minimum of ontological relevance’, since we have to admit that in the end the adequacy of theoretical work, in particular that of classification, depends on something non-theoretical, something ontological which stands over against us, outside us.⁵⁹ This, of course, would be fiercely (and probably ironically) criticized and rejected by Rickert. Indeed, does Mannheim not try to have his cake and eat it?⁶⁰

How then does the philosopher under review classify the sciences and how does this classification differ from Rickert’s? He aspires, of course, to an ontological classification, i.e. one that starts with alleged ontological essences, not as Rickert does with logical and methodological points of view. He too arrives at a dual classification, namely ideal and real sciences, which actually concurs with the traditional distinction of *Geistes-* and *Naturwissenschaften*. Mannheim discusses the ontological definition of the humanities (*Geisteswissenschaften*). What is, from this point of view, the ontological foundation of the humanities? The author under review believes that the ontological ground of the humanities is the human soul (*Seele*) plus the spiritual content which is intended by the soul. This spiritual content is, the author explicates, intended meaning (*Sinn*). This leads, Mannheim argues, to a considerable problem because both Husserl and Rickert have demonstrated that any mental or spiritual content, e.g. the content of a theoretical statement which is its intended meaning, differs essentially from the psychological act which intends it. In other words, *Seele* and *Sinn* are two different phenomena. The psychological act of intention occurs in an experiential stream within a specific moment of time, but the result of this act, the intended content or meaning, is meta-psychological and transcends the experiential and temporal stream. Mannheim does not phrase it this way, but what he means is, of course, that the intended

⁵⁷ ‘wenn man bedenkt, dass die Klassifikation sich in der theoretischen Ebene abzuspielden hat, dass wir also das Wesen niemals in seiner angenommenen ontischen Unmittelbarkeit und Totalität, sondern stets nur von einem gewissen Gesichtspunkte aus theoretisch erfassen können.’ Mannheim, *ibid.*, p. 157.

⁵⁸ ‘extrem formalistische Methodologismus’, *ibid.*, p. 159.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 159f.

⁶⁰ Mannheim, nevertheless, tries to defend Rickert’s methodological approach against the fierce ontological attack of the philosopher under review. Even if the methodological classification of sciences by Rickert is false, we should remember, he says, that also inadequate classifications can still have a positive function in the process of knowledge acquisition. In fact, he continues, this is true of all inadequate knowledge, as it can foster new insights. Moreover, is not the specific fullness of theoretical comprehension a constant circling around pre-theoretical objects from different conceptual levels, a moving back-and-forth and transiting from one level to the other by the different points of view? Consequently, Mannheim concludes, there cannot be any absolute cognitive adequacy, but only a larger or smaller kind of adequacy. *Ibid.*, p. 160f. This, of course, is a return to Rickert’s alleged relativism!

meaning is non-empirical and transcendent in the neo-Kantian sense of the word. The author under review, Mannheim notes with some irritation, tries to get out of this logical problem by simply stating that intended meaning is just the abstract side of the psyche and its processes. It is, he believes, an inherent component of the objective, psychic reality because it becomes only empirically apparent in psychic realities. This 'abstract side of', Mannheim counters, is a word play which the author uses in order to avoid the real ontological differences between 'soul' and 'meaning'. Moreover, if content of meaning were just the abstract side of the soul, then one must conclude also that soul is an abstract side of the body which would demolish the ontological classification of bodily and psychic objects which again is the basis for the classification of the sciences in *Natur-* and *Geisteswissenschaften*. And indeed, Mannheim concludes, the leap which separates soul and body is not at all smaller than the one which separates the psychic act from the mental content, the meaning, intended by this act.⁶¹ He comes to the conclusion once more that the ontological primacy in matters of cognition in general and classification in particular cannot be maintained as radically as the reviewed opponent of Rickert pretends.

In general Mannheim's theory of knowledge remains in accordance with Rickert's philosophy. However, there is one component of Rickert's philosophy of values and methodology of the cultural sciences with which Weber, as we shall see instantly, agrees but Mannheim strongly and expressedly disagrees. That is the doctrine of the freedom from normative value-judgments (*Wertungsfreiheit*) which is explicated in particular in his theory of ideology and utopia,⁶² but of course also in his social-political and social-ethical works, respectively the monumental *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* (1935) and *Diagnosis of Our Time* (1943).⁶³ In this normative approach to sociology Mannheim was definitely influenced by Lukács who in this respect exerted a greater and stronger influence on him than Max Weber or Heinrich Rickert whose thinking he had absorbed as a student in Heidelberg. However, it is my contention that the quality of his philosophical and in particular his epistemological and methodological thinking declined in inverse proportion to the rise of his socio-political and socio-ethical theories.

In contrast to Max Weber who has emphasized the professional, non-political function of the sciences in general and sociology in particular,⁶⁴ Mannheim assigned an almost prophetic task to this discipline. He phrased this lucidly in his introductory course of sociology at the London School of Economics, 1934-1935. What are values? he starts one lecture on 'the philosophical and sociological interpretation of values'. Both the idealist philosopher and the man in the street believe values 'present themselves as eternal qualities, as gifts or commands from Heaven, as transcendental forces.'⁶⁵ But the sociologist sees them rather as functions of society, not as abstract entities which would exist independent of the valuating subject or the group in which they function. There is a deep resistance to this sociological view of values since we are used to believing that they are eternal, presented by

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 153f.

⁶² Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia. An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, translated and edited by Louis Wirth and Edward Shils, 1936, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World. A Harvest Book, n.d.). The book was first published in German in 1929, but the English edition of 1936 was substantially enlarged by Mannheim with the assistance of Wirth and Shils.

⁶³ Karl Mannheim, *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction. Studies in Modern Social Structure*, 1940, transl. by Edward Shils, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960, 10th ed.). This is an enlarged edition of an earlier German one, published in Holland in 1935. It should be noted that the reconstruction referred to in the title pertains to the period after World War I. Karl Mannheim, *Diagnosis of Our Time. Wartime Essays of a Sociologist*, 1943, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1947).

⁶⁴ See in particular his lecture 'Wissenschaft als Beruf' ('Science as a Profession'), 1919, in: Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre, o.c.*, pp. 582-613.

⁶⁵ Karl Mannheim, *Systematic Sociology. An Introduction to the Study of Society*, J. S. Erös, W. A. C. Stewart, eds., (New York: Grove Press, 1957), pp. 131-135.

some sort of superhuman or super historical power.’ We hesitate to leave this habitual attitude, Mannheim continues, because we fear ‘the relativism which may follow the realization that values are created by society and vary in different societies, and that our own values are also dependent on our social system.’⁶⁶ It is as in the Copernican change which had to break the thought habit that the sun turned around the earth, even though it endangered the religious and moral order of those days. We must today accept the sociological fact that values are socially generated which is not to say that their relevance is diminished. On the contrary, ‘they are not dictated by some transcendental command, but by our rational insight in the needs of our social order’. It sounds like an echo of Auguste Comte, when he states that ‘the theological and philosophical obligation will be replaced by a sociological one.’⁶⁷ Mannheim adds a political dimension to this. The traditional theological and philosophical legitimations of values appealed to the thought habits of people who were accustomed to act under authority, whereas the sociological approach to values is a democratic one since the social obligation can now be reasonably tested. An additional advantage is that the sociological conception opens the door to reforms, while the traditional absolute and authoritarian conception hampers reform.⁶⁸

It stands to reason that regarding social policy and social ethics Mannheim feels intellectually more at home in Marx’s philosophy than in Rickert’s and Weber’s neo-Kantian logic and methodology. In his view there is a double advantage to the Marxian view of man and society. First, it places knowledge and reality in historical dimensions, and second, it posits, as a methodological a priori, the unity of theory and praxis, i.e. of science and politics. Although Mannheim never ‘converted’ to Marxism and his political convictions gradually developed in the direction of a liberal type of social democracy, as is documented among others by *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction*, his sociology of knowledge departed gradually from a neo-Kantian to a Marxist position. This was apparent in particular in his well-known doctrine of the *Seinsverbundenheit des Wissens* which meant the basing of all knowledge in the surrounding social circumstances and groups of men. They are, in a sense, the infra-structure to which the super-structure of knowledge is causally related.⁶⁹ He added to this social determination of knowledge the ongoing influence of history, calling for a historicist interpretation of history and society.⁷⁰ Needless to add that it is a long way from Rickert’s methodological *Wertverbundenheit* to Mannheim’s sociological *Seinsverbundenheit*.

A corner stone of his sociology of knowledge is the dynamics of two types of worldview which he labeled *ideology* and *utopia*. In (Western) history these two thought-

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

⁶⁷ *Idem.*

⁶⁸ *Idem.*

⁶⁹ It is probably a remnant of the preoccupation with mind and culture of the Budapest group around Lukács, when Mannheim defines the infra-structure of knowledge, c.q. culture, primarily in sociological not in economic terms.

⁷⁰ Cf. Karl Mannheim, ‘Historicism’, 1924, transl. by P. Keckskemati, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952), pp. 84-133. Mannheim’s historicism was criticized by Karl R. Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism*, 1957, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969). He singled out Mannheim’s alleged holism regarding societal reform by means of utopian planning, opposing it by his own anti-holistic idea of ‘piecemeal engineering’. Cf. ‘Piecemeal versus Utopian Engineering’: *ibid.*, p. 64-70. For a sociological critique see Robert K. Merton, ‘Karl Mannheim and the Sociology of Knowledge’, in: Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure*, 1949, (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe; London: Collier-Macmillan, 1964, 9th ed.), pp. 489-508. He remarks with some latent irritation that Mannheim never clarifies how this determining relationship between ‘knowledge’ and ‘social structure’ ought to be conceived precisely. And he adds: ‘This lacuna leads to vagueness and obscurity at the very heart of his central thesis concerning the “existential determination of knowledge”.’ Merton, *ibid.*, p. 498. This is, of course, not the place to elaborate all this in more details. See my *De relativiteit van kennis en werkelijkheid, Inleiding tot de kennissociologie*, (‘The Relativity of Knowledge and Reality. An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge’), (Amsterdam: Boom Meppel, 1974), pp. 145-150.

systems which are not just methodological (ideal-typical) constructions but hypostasized (ontologized) ways of acting, thinking and feeling, function as in a reciprocal relationship. Both of them are conscious distortions of reality, of the facts, of an existing *status quo*, the former in order to maintain the existing power structure, the other, on the contrary, to ‘burst asunder the bonds of the existing order’. That is, ideology is ‘conservative’, if not reactionary, utopia is ‘progressive’ and the motor of reform or revolutionary change.⁷¹ This juxtaposition has a manicheistic, dualistic character: ideologies represent the dark sides of human knowledge, utopias the forces of light. In any case, the status quo is in Mannheim’s view ‘a functional social order, which does not exist only in the imagination of certain individuals but according to which people really act.’⁷² Rickert and Weber would observe that this is a remarkably positivistic and ontological, or even metaphysical point of view, because it seems to contend that there exists independent of common and sociological interpretations of human behavior and social reality an ‘objectively’ social reality ‘according to which people *really* act’. This opinion may well be true, the problem however is that it remains unclear how and what ‘objective’ reality, this so-called ‘functioning order’, *is* apart from interpretations which in the terms of Mannheim’s sociology of knowledge are in their turn historical and socially determined and thus non-objective in the positivistic and ontological/metaphysical sense of this word. Once more, Mannheim wavers between the epistemological and ontological primacy of common and scientific knowledge.

What then is the role of sociology in the dynamics of ideology and utopia? Briefly formulated, it is the separating of the wheat of utopias from the chaff of ideologies. In historical and empirical reality, ideological and utopian ideas will be mixed and only rarely occur blatantly in the social and political structure. He singles out, for example the medieval chiliastic movements as an example of utopia, and the Nazi movement as a specimen of ideology, but emphasizes that elements of the opposite worldview are present in such movements. It is the task of the historically educated sociologist to search for the utopian components of knowledge systems, even in the case of authoritarian and dictatorial systems predominated by a totalitarian ideology, and to synthesize them into a progressive, future oriented new worldview. This task, Mannheim believes, is essential in an age of reconstruction in which there is a dire need for a utopian planning, which he defined as a ‘planning for freedom’.⁷³ This task can, of course, only be performed by people who themselves are not completely committed to a utopian or an ideological worldview. In his view the intelligentsia, consisting of academics, artists, journalists, and other people who are not directly bound by the political and economic interests of one or the other group, are the ideal persons to perform this critical role. He labeled them the relatively (!) socially and politically free intelligentsia. They embody an ethos which is, Mannheim believes, crucial for a democratic system because it contains rules of the socio-political game in which people act as ‘honnêtes hommes’ who are prepared to give way to reasonableness above private or collective interests.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, o.c., p. 194.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 194.

⁷³ Mannheim, *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction*, Part V: ‘Planning for Freedom’, o.c. pp. 239-368.

⁷⁴ See my *De relativiteit van kennis en werkelijkheid*, o.c., pp. 143-155, where I also discuss Theodor Geiger’s impressive critique as laid down in his *Aufgaben und Stellung der Intelligenz in der Gesellschaft*, (‘Tasks and Position of the Intelligentsia in Society’), (Stuttgart: Enke Verlag, 1949), chapter three: ‘The social task of the intelligentsia’. The Polish-American sociologist Florian Znaniecki takes exception to Mannheim’s ‘relatively socially free-floating intelligentsia’ by arguing that intellectuals are only freed from productive labor because they cater ideas and theoretical reflections to specific social circles which are willing to support them. In other words, they play social roles which in society are considered to be relevant. See his *The Social Role of the Man of Knowledge*, 1940, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1968).

In conclusion, Mannheim drifts away from his initial philosophical position which is still influenced by the rational neo-Kantianism of Windelband and Rickert, to a rather irrational sociology of knowledge which aims at a merger and integration of science, politics and ethics. It is what logicians call a *metabasis eis allo genos*, a transition to a different sort, namely an admittedly impressive social philosophy which is, however, based upon scores of ontological and metaphysical presuppositions. In the terms of Rickert's philosophy, this type of sociology of knowledge remains strictly speaking – and Rickert's philosophy aims at a very strict way of arguing and judging – neither logically, nor epistemologically and methodologically sound. As we shall see below, Max Weber manages to avoid at least the metaphysical pitfall, and remains within the borders of science and scientific philosophy. His dependence on Rickert is, at least in his logic of the social sciences, strong, yet at decisive points, particularly in his celebrated theory of the *ideal types*, he testifies to the power of his own philosophical imagination.

Of the philosophers and social scientists discussed in this chapter Max Weber (1864-1920) was personally and intellectually closest to Rickert. The latter's philosophy of values and his logical and methodological demarcation of Natural Science and Cultural Science exerted a decisive impact on Weber's methodological essays, but also on his cultural-sociological studies in the area of the sociology of religion, the sociology of law, and economic history. At the same time, Weber definitely managed to both modify and amplify Rickert's philosophy and methodology. He certainly was not a passive receptor of the ideas of his friend and colleague.

It is not the intention of this last section to present an integral discussion of Weber's methodology, substantial sociology and socio-economic history. This has been done by others in an exemplary manner.⁷⁵ It is not even the aim to analyze in details the similarities and differences of the theories of Rickert and Weber. This has also been done by others.⁷⁶ Moreover, the literature on Weber has meanwhile grown into an ocean of books and articles which cannot be covered in a small section as the present one.

However, Weber, a trained legal scholar, a dominant figure in economic history, an autodidact in philosophy and the comparative study of religion, and above all the inventor of an idiosyncratic sociology which he called *verstehende Soziologie*, was, as is well known, a towering figure in the socio-cultural sciences of Germany at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. It stands to reason that there is also an echo of his work in the thinking and writing of Rickert.

Six years after Weber's death, the first publication of Weber's collected works and Marianne Weber's biography of her husband⁷⁷, Rickert publishes an article in which he first tells about his personal and intellectual friendship with Weber, and then points out that Weber was not and never pretended to be a philosopher. Weber was both a scientific specialist and a politician, and never managed to unify the scientific theoretician and the political practitioner in his impressive personality. In fact, Rickert argues, he kept these two talents apart consciously and systematically. That would not have satisfied him, if he had been a philosopher, because a philosopher wants to arrive in the end at an integrated *Weltanschauung*, i.e. at an overall and systematic view of

⁷⁵ An early and well-nigh classic survey is Alexander von Schelting, *Max Webers Wissenschaftslehre*, (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1934). Cf. Talcott Parsons's 'Review of Alexander von Schelting's "Max Webers Wissenschaftslehre"', in: *American Sociological Review*, 1 (1936), pp. 675-681. Also Thomas Burger, *Max Weber's Theory of Concept Formation. History, Laws, and Ideal Types*, (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1976).

⁷⁶ Cf. Guy Oakes, *Weber and Rickert. Concept Formation in the Cultural Sciences*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1988). Peter-Ulrich Merz, *Max Weber und Heinrich Rickert*, (Königshausen: Neumann, 1997).

⁷⁷ Marianne Weber, *Max Weber. Ein Lebensbild*, ('Max Weber. A Picture of his Life'), (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1926). She relates that in Heildelberg she was Rickert's 'diligent student' and kept her husband abreast of the things she had learned from Rickert: *ibid.*, p. 216.

the world-*in-toto*. Weber, Rickert claims, never had any such truly philosophical urge. His emphasis on the combination of value-relevance and the conscious abstention from value-judgments was correct, but his solution to distinguish theoretical contemplation and political activity is philosophically unsatisfactory.⁷⁸

In other words, Rickert is not prepared to acknowledge the philosophical status of his friend, despite his philosophically very profound and complex essays in the logic of the social sciences.⁷⁹ He assigns to him the dual status of theoretical scientific specialist (legal scholar, social and economic historian, sociologist, researcher of comparative religion) and active politician. The latter is rather questionable. Weber was a political theoretician and commentator as is demonstrated by the collected political papers, but not at any time in his life a practicing politician.⁸⁰ He engaged in normative-political value-judgments and participated as an adviser in the German delegation to the peace conference at Versailles after World War I. Yet, this was still not really political practice. After the war Weber was allegedly asked to be a candidate for the election of the national president of the Weimar Republic, but he refused because he felt he should stick to his scientific work at the university. One may also not forget that Weber was academically trained as a lawyer, law being of course a normative science. But his endeavors in the field of law too were primarily theoretical and scientific. He only once practised as a barrister, helping a lady friend who had an extra-marital affair with an anarchist from Northern Italy who was incarcerated in Zürich.⁸¹ That is, of course, not enough to call him a practicing lawyer. Yet he was an accomplished legal scholar and did make use of legal arguments, particularly in his political papers.

Moreover, in two public lectures Weber used the concept *Beruf*, applying it to science and to politics.⁸² This concept – vocation – has a double meaning which Weber used consciously. It means profession but also calling. Weber emphasized a double precondition for both vocations: it demands training, hard, ascetic work, and the ability to obey what Goethe had called ‘the demand of the day’ (*die Forderung des Tages*). But it also needs passion and pathos, i.e. being driven by the irrational demon which for each of us holds the fibers of our lives together.⁸³ In view of this conception of vocation it is strange that Rickert criticizes Weber’s lecture for its allegedly rather gloomy vision of scientific work. He praises Weber when he decidedly dismissed contemporary fashionable follies, such as the preoccupation with sensation and personality and scores of romantic feelings. They are inimical to serious scientific work. In science only he has personality, Weber told his students in his last lecture ‘Science as a Vocation’, who serves the business of science, and he added that if one wants to experience visions, one should go to the cinema, not to the university. But he warned them in addition that engulfing oneself in science will have a disenchanting effect. The enchantments of the past and the present lose their attraction and legitimacy. Disenchantment of the world is the fate of everyone who seriously sets out to do scientific research, to eat from the tree of knowledge. Rickert objects to this idea because it is, he thinks, cheerless and gloomy. What about the joy and, yes in a sense the enchantment too, of the Platonic mania, the

⁷⁸ Heinrich Rickert, ‘Max Weber und seine Stellung zur Wissenschaft’, in: *Logos*, 15 (1926), pp. 222-237.

⁷⁹ Rickert disagreed with Karl Jaspers who after Weber’s death had referred to him as a great philosopher. They had a rather unpleasant exchange of words about this over the phone. Jaspers allegedly concluded their squabble, which was not the first nor the last one, by telling Rickert that he would in the future at the most be remembered in footnotes of studies on Weber’s work. Cf. Hermann Glockner, *Heidelberger Bilderbuch*, (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1969), p. 103f. ; Hans Saner, *Jaspers*, 1970, (Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1984), p. 36f, 140f. ; Guy Oakes, *o.c.*, p. 9f. Oakes, American translator of (portions of) the *Grenzen*, agrees with Jaspers’s harsh judgment which meanwhile may be quite wrong in view of the fact that the recently erected ‘Rickert Research Institute’ at the University of Düsseldorf is in the process of publishing Rickert’s collected works in fifteen volumes. For Jasper’s view of Weber see his elegantly written *Max Weber. Politiker. Forscher. Philosoph*, (‘Max Weber. Politician. Researcher. Philosopher’), (München: Piper, 1958). See also Gustav Ramming, *Karl Jaspers und Heinrich Rickert. Existenzialismus und Wertphilosophie*, (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1948). See in particular Rickert’s sound and fair critique of Jasper’s book on the psychology of worldviews: *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen und Philosophie der Werte*, (‘Psychology of Worldviews and Philosophy of Values’), 1920, in: Hans Saner, ed., *Karl Jaspers in der Diskussion*, (‘The Discussion about Karl Jaspers’), (München: Piper Verlag, 1973), pp. 35-70.

⁸⁰ Max Weber, *Gesammelte Politische Schriften*, (‘Collected Political Papers’), 1958, (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1971).

⁸¹ Marianne Weber, *o.c.*, pp. 494-502. See also on this legal affair Arthur Mitzman, *The Iron Cage. An Historical Interpretation of Max Weber*, (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1970), pp.287-290 which is, however, based on Marianne Weber’s account.

⁸² Max Weber, ‘Politik als Beruf’, 1918, *ibid.*, pp. 505-560; ‘Wissenschaft als Beruf’, *Wissenschaftslehre*, pp. 582-613. See ‘Politics as a Vocation’ and ‘Science as a Vocation’, in: H.H.Gerth, C. Wright Mills, translators and editors, *From Max Weber. Essays in Sociology*, 1946, (New York: Oxford University Press. A Galaxy Book, 1962), pp. 77-156.

⁸³ This is a paraphrase of the exceptionally rare metaphysical exclamation in the last sentence of Weber’s swansong ‘Science as a Vocation’, *l. c.*, p. 613.

Socratic *Logosfreudigkeit*, i.e. the joy of discovering concepts which help us to understand the world around us? Sure enough, Rickert admits, Weber knew this joy of discovering heuristic concepts and he was certainly driven by the Platonic mania which causes a restless search for truth. But he repressed them, framed them in the awareness of duty, of the demand of the day. Rickert does obviously not realize this, but we, of course, encounter here Weber's Puritanical ethos, whose rationality stands intrinsically in opposition to any mania or joy.

Rickert's commemorative article on Weber's position regarding science throws an interesting light on his own scientific ethos. As abstract and at times even warped as his ideas and theories have been, Rickert's philosophy lacks indeed the melancholy of Weber's writings of the period shortly before his death in 1920. In the mirror of Weber's picture Rickert provides a rare insight into his own essence as a philosopher. Equally remarkable is the emotional tone with which he writes about their friendship. As the sons of befriended liberal politicians in Berlin they were friends in their early youth, although their encounters were rare due to the considerable distance between the two houses. But Rickert tells the touching story of 'the young, healthy, cheerful Max Weber'⁸⁴ who possessed a large collection of coins and possessed such a comprehensive historical knowledge about them that it almost frightened him. Later, during their days together at the university, Weber impressed his friend with his extremely wide range of interests and knowledge. Rickert already realized then that Weber would achieve extraordinary things in the future, particularly in the field of history. After an interval of several years, they met again as teachers at the University of Freiburg, where Weber, just thirty years old, was appointed professor of economics, and Rickert functioned as a philosophical *Privatdozent*, which is comparable to a guest professorship. Their contacts were then and later in Heidelberg regular and intensive. Rickert saw his friend primarily as researcher and politician, not as philosopher. Yet, he claims, this double talent compelled Weber to engage in logical issues and they brought him into the center of his own interests: the logical structure of the historical science.⁸⁵ This is, of course, an interesting and very questionable conclusion: Weber was not a philosopher, but he was compelled to engage in *Wissenschaftslehre*, resulting in a large volume of different essays, because he had to clarify logically his double talent of being both a politician and a specialized, mainly historical researcher.

This is not a convincing explanation of Weber's rather intensive exertions in the logic and methodology of the social sciences, nor does it explain the obvious duality in his substantive sociological studies. The essays in the sociology of religion, namely, are distinctively based on an individualizing Cultural-Scientific mode of conceptualization, whereas the chapters of the unfinished General Sociology, as compiled posthumously in the two volumes of *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* were intended as exercises in a generalizing, ahistorical Natural-Scientific mode of concept formation. Rickert misses this point, and refers recurrently to Weber as the representative of a generalizing Natural-Scientific sociology, as if he were a kind of German Comte. Moreover, as I shall argue below, Weber provides a considerable addition to Rickert's logic, when he introduces the ideal types (*Idealtypen*) as generalizing (Natural-Scientific) concepts as a means to arrive at an understanding and causal explanation of historical, meaningful social interactions and institutions. That is, on Rickert's continuum Weber operates not just at the Natural-Scientific, generalizing pole, but also at the Cultural-Scientific, individualizing one. In his sociology, *Kulturwissenschaft* and *Naturwissenschaft*, a heterological dualism which Weber adopted from Rickert, are successfully and impressively integrated.

Weber, as is well known, adopts Rickert's distinction of value-relevance, or value-relatedness (*Wertbeziehung, Wertbezogenheit*) and the scientific norm to abstain from normative value-judgments (*Werturteile*). He puts it in position in his famous essay on the meaning of the so-called 'value-freedom' of sociology and economics, which actually means 'abstaining from value-judgments'.⁸⁶ Consequently, both Rickert and Weber do in their philosophy and methodology leave no room for a normative worldview (*Weltanschauung*). Rickert emphatically defines his own systemic philosophy of values, aiming at a theoretical

⁸⁴ 'den jungen, gesunden und frohen Max Weber', Rickert, *ibid.*, p. 225.

⁸⁵ See *ibid.*, p. 226

⁸⁶ Max Weber, 'Der Sinn der "Wertfreiheit" der soziologischen und ökonomischen Wissenschaften', ('The Meaning of the "Value-freedom" of the Sociological and Economical Sciences'), : *Wissenschaftslehre, o.c.*, pp. 475-526. The concept *Wertfreiheit* ('value-freedom'), which is put between quotation marks, means in fact *Wertungsfreiheit*, i.e. conscious abstaining from normative value-judgments. It is unfortunate that Weber used 'value-freedom' in the title of this essay, because it has led to numerous, yet unnecessary misunderstandings. Again, the cultural sciences are, due to the fact of value-relevance, never free from values. But given this fact it is, in Weber's and Rickert's view, a scientific norm (and thus value!) to abstain from normative value-judgments for the duration of one's scientific research and teaching.

(scientific) conceptualization of reality-*in-toto*, *not* as a worldview but rather as a worldview *theory* (*Weltanschauungslehre*). The equivalent of the latter is, in Weber's methodology, the value-analysis (*Wertanalyse*) which is a theoretical analysis of the values to which the scientist is related. Yet, both realize that human beings do live – think, feel and act – in terms of a normative worldview, or in vernacular terms 'a personal philosophy of life' (*Lebensanschauung*) which must have a pre-scientific impact on their thinking and writing. It is my contention that this implicit view of life and the world can be reconstructed more easily from Weber's writings than from Rickert's. The reason for that is that Rickert has, as we saw in Chapter Two, a stronger aversion to vitalism (*Lebensphilosophie*) than Max Weber. On the other hand, as we saw also, Rickert does object to vitalism philosophically, but obviously in a sense also sympathizes with it. He would, in all probability, have agreed with his friend's implicit worldview, although he might have deemed it too gloomy in its tragic conception.

Epistemologically, Weber is in many respects a neo-Kantian and is as averse to easy metaphysical reflections as Rickert. However, there is in Weber, stronger than in Rickert, an implicit influence of Nietzsche's vitalistic and tragic worldview.⁸⁷ As is well known, Nietzsche viewed life primarily as an irrational, directionless, absurd stream in which human beings try to create some sense and order by means of reason and consciousness. It is a tragic worldview which however is, unlike Schopenhauer's view of life and the world, not gloomy and fatalistic, but light-hearted, though at times rather cynical. There is no hope in life since history and the universe are aimlessly driven by biologically-blind impulses which embody a fate which the ancient Greeks called *Moirai*.

Weber is too rational and level-headed to participate in Nietzsche's pathos, but stands in closer connection to Nietzsche's worldview than Rickert does. One Nietzschean element in particular recurs in his methodological and sociological theories: human history and life in all their complexities – i.e. culture – constitute, if measured by the standards of scientific rationality, an irrational chaos of convictions, emotions, subjective experiences of meaning, subjective values and norms. It is, as if he assigns to culture the characteristics of Kant's thing-in-itself. But he combines it with Rickert's definition of cultural significance in terms of particularity, or better individuality. At times, he even slips off into quite dramatic reflections, for example when he writes: 'The stream of immeasurable events rolls endlessly towards eternity. The cultural problems which move men, form themselves always anew and in different colors. Because of that, the area remains liquid which renders "historically individual" everything that acquires for us, from that always similarly endless stream, individual sense and meaning. The interrelations between thoughts by which this "historical individual" is being contemplated and scientifically conceived, alternate. The starting points of the cultural sciences remain thereby changeable into the limitless future, as long as Chinese petrification of intellectual life weans humanity from posing new questions to the always equally inexhaustible life.'⁸⁸ Reading these words, Rickert must undoubtedly have wrinkled his brow!

⁸⁷ In what follows now I make use of an earlier, Dutch publication: *De relativiteit van kennis en werkelijkheid. Inleiding tot de kennissociologie*, ('The Relativity of Knowledge and Reality. Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge'), (Amsterdam: Boom Meppel, 1973), pp. 120-126.

⁸⁸ 'Endlos wälzt sich der Strom des unermesslichen Geschehens der Ewigkeit entgegen. Immer neu und anders gefärbt bilden sich die Kulturprobleme, welche die Menschen bewegen, flüssig bleibt damit der Umkreis dessen, was aus jenem stets gleich unendlichen Strome des Individuellen Sinn und Bedeutung für uns enthält, "historisches Individuum" wird. Es wechseln die Gedankenzusammenhänge, unter denen es betrachtet und wissenschaftlich erfasst wird. Die Ausgangspunkte der Kulturwissenschaften bleiben damit wandelbar in die grenzenlose Zukunft hinein, solange nicht chinesische Erstarrung des Geistesleben die Menschheit entwöhnt neue Fragen an das immer gleich unerschöpfliche Leben zu stellen.' *Ibid.*, p. 184. English translation by E. A. Shils, H. A. Finch: Max Weber, *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, (New York: The Free Press, 1949), p. 84f. This volume, which contains only three essays from Weber's *Wissenschaftslehre*, should be used with care,

The echo of Rickert's philosophy of values resounds in Weber's accounts of 'culture', 'meaning', 'evaluations', etc. Yet, his implicit worldview is far more vitalistic and even romantic. Men search for 'objective' meaning, for existential truth and redemption. This is, according to him, an a priori for each cultural science, namely 'not that we roughly deem a distinct or one or the other "culture" *valuable*, but that we are cultural men, gifted with the ability and desire to adopt a conscious *position* with regard to it and to provide it with *meaning*.'⁸⁹ Rickert can agree with this, but then follows a relativistic reflection which he could not have accepted. Defining 'culture' not just as valuable, but also in the light of values as meaningful is, according to Weber, in the end a tragic enterprise, because in the realm of values the eternal 'war of the gods', reigns a well-nigh Wagnerian *Kampf der Götter*, which could only be solved by a superior, absolute value, if at all. But such an absolute value, i.e. superior God, no longer exists. (Here we hear, of course, the echo of Nietzsche's 'death of God'.) We saw how Rickert too formulates the logical rule that the denial of a value would not result in nothingness but in a counter-value, and how he thinks to be able to avoid relativism by positing the formal, transcendent values, like Truth, Beauty, Justice, Lust, etc. They are ahistorical and eternal but become 'real', 'empirical' and 'pluralistic' in judgments which apply these forms to the contents (substances) of empirical, experienced reality. There is therefore no insoluble 'war of the gods' in the transcendent realm of absolute and formal values. But Weber cannot operate at this abstract level and sticks in his implicit worldview to the empirical disciplines of sociology and history.

The tragedy of the 'war of the gods' is, Weber continues, the most apparent in Western culture where due to rationalization and 'disenchantment' each hierarchy of values is being debated and thereby rendered implausible. There is, in other words, in Weber's implicit worldview no room for 'objective' truth or 'objective' meaning. There is only 'subjectively intended meaning' in a context of 'subjectively' adhered to values and norms. Beyond that there is only the 'war of the gods' in which men participate because they are consciously interpreting and searching individuals. But this 'culture war' can not be solved because 'fate and definitely not science rules over these gods and in their war.'⁹⁰ Rickert would never have surrendered in this relativistic manner to *Moirai*. But Weber goes one step further still, when he argues that man chooses from all the possible values those he deems relevant in given circumstances and he does so from an inexplicable, irrational and subjective source – i.e. the demon which holds the threads of his life together.⁹¹ Equally ambiguous and even somewhat mysterious is what he says about scientific truth. It is applicable to each truth: 'Scientific truth is just what *wants* to be valid for all, who *want* the truth.'⁹² Rickert, needless to add, would see in such a 'definition' of truth a clear evidence of his opinion that Weber is not really a philosopher. A true philosopher would never, he would say, come up with such a voluntaristic and relativistic description of the outstanding theoretical value Truth!

Yet, Weber does not capitulate in this 'war of the gods', as Nietzsche in his nihilism and Schopenhauer in his pessimism have done. He must have realized, among other things, that the resigned acceptance of the absurdity of life may well end up in pathetic and unheroic lamentations. A distinct part of his worldview was an almost Prussian sense of honor and

as its translations are not always correct. In a few instances printing errors distort the arguments, as in those instances, where 'causal' is printed as 'casual'.

⁸⁹ 'nicht etwas, dass wir eine bestimmte oder überhaupt irgend eine "Kultur" *wertvoll* finden, sondern dass wir Kulturmenschen sind, begabt mit der Fähigkeit und dem Willen, bewusst zur Welt *Stellung* zu nehmen und ihr einen *Sinn* zu verleihen.' Weber, *ibid.*, p. 180.

⁹⁰ 'über diesen Götter und in ihrem Kampf waltet das Schicksal, aber ganz gewiss keine "Wissenschaft".' *Ibid.*, p. 604.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 613.

⁹² 'Denn wissenschaftliche Wahrheit ist nur, was für alle gelten *will*, die Wahrheit *wollen*.' *Ibid.*, p. 184. Italics by MW.

dignity which he apparently inherited from his father. It was closely connected to an equally deep-seated Protestant rationality which he probably adopted from his mother.⁹³ Both elements of Weber's view of life and the world keep him from embracing the Nietzschean or Schopenhauerian philosophy. Referring to Schopenhauer and Nietzsche William James once remarked: 'The sallies of the two German authors remind one, half the time, of the sick shrieking of two dying rats.'⁹⁴ Weber would have agreed with James, albeit that he probably would have remarked that James underestimated Nietzsche's humor and heroic cynicism. But Weber realizes, as James did, that religion has in principle the ability to transcend the tragic worldview, although he knows that he himself has eaten too much of the tree of knowledge, and is as a result too much of a 'disenchanted' agnostic, to be able to surrender to one or the other religion of salvation. He calls himself 'religiously unmusical' but is fascinated by the phenomenon of religion, as is testified by his voluminous studies in the sociology of religion. Thus, although he objects to relativism as a worldview, in particular in its 19th century appearance as historicism, his view of life and values was, unlike Rickert's, deeply relativistic. It is an heroic kind of relativism which dares to face the absurdity of life, the insoluble conflict of values, the subjectivity of sense and meaning, yet keeps trying to draw rational lines through irrationality by the help of constructed concepts, called *ideal types*. These rational conceptual lines or structures create a conceptual order which cannot compete with metaphysical or religious orders, but remain strictly analytical and framed by scientific insights and theories. But as meager as this rationality may be, if one compares it to metaphysical worldviews like Marxism, or vitalism, or existentialism, it is in principle able to avoid both cynical resignation and religious surrender. It is on purpose a minimal worldview.

This minimal worldview comes closest to scientism, although it lacks the self-confident attitude of most scientists. After all, Weber believes that science and scientific concept formation constitute the appropriate forms of knowledge for such a minimal worldview. Science is unable to provide 'objective' meaning and can never promise to arrive at the definitive truth about 'objective' reality. Actually science itself is not a worldview or prophecy, but a profession. It can not tell us how to live, what to think, what to do and what to feel. It can also not tell us, as for instance Marxism does, what the good direction of history could be. Weber would not believe in Mannheim's utopia and planning for freedom. But science can help us to master irrationality by means of analytical concepts and empirical research, creating an analytical order and a logical meaning. What is needed are not utopian visions or prophetic statements but a pragmatic vocational ethos. It sounds like Kant's *kategorischer Imperativ*, combined with the Puritanical *Berufsethik* and Goethe's *Forderung des Tages* ('Demand of the Day'): 'We want to draw the following lesson: that yearning and awaiting alone leads to nothing, and that we do it differently: go to work and do justice to the 'Demand of the Day' – humanly as well as vocationally.'⁹⁵

Finally, in Weber's concept formation the category of *chance* or *possibility* plays a dominant role. Sociological phenomena are often defined in terms of 'the chance that'. Power, for example, is the chance some person or group of persons can realize his or its own will, if need be against the will of others.⁹⁶ It is not improbable that he applies such a probabilism

⁹³ See for such 'psychoanalytic' conclusions which, of course, ought to be used with great care, Arthur Mitzman, *The Iron Cage. An Historical Interpretation of Max Weber*, (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1970). Mitzman's arguments are in fact more psychological and psychoanalytical than historical.

⁹⁴ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 1900, (New York: Collier Books, 1961), p. 47.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 613.

⁹⁶ Cf. Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundriss der verstehenden Soziologie*, ('Economy and Society. Outline of the Understanding Sociology'), chapter III, 'Typen der Herrschaft' ('Types of Rule'), 1956, J. Winkelmann, ed., (Köln. Berlin: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1964), vol. I, pp. 157-222. Definition first sentence on p. 157.

also to his philosophical thought. There is no text which can prove this, but it is quite feasible that Weber consciously or unconsciously believes or hopes that the rational, scientific order imposed on the irrationality of reality – that is the order of the artificial, constructed ideal types – approaches *possibly* an ‘objective’ and ‘absolute’ order and truth. Or, is it, after all, not possible that there exists an ‘elective affinity’ (*Wahlverwandtschaft*) between this transcendental Order and Truth on the one hand and the humanly constructed, rational, analytical order and truth of science? Weber, it must be noted, does not argue in Platonic terms and consequently will not view empirical truths and orders as emanations of a metaphysical Truth and Order. In any case, he remains loyal to the philosophy of Kant, who after all viewed the categories ‘God’, ‘freedom’ and ‘immortality of the soul’ as *possibilities* and chances, as *ideas* rather than metaphysical *realities*.

Weber is in agreement with Rickert (and Simmel) when he rejects the realism (or naturalism) of the so-called representational logic (*Abbildlogik*) which measures the adequacy or truth of concepts and theories by their capacity to provide a picture which resembles reality. Weber in particular emphasizes the fact that it is the business of science to understand and explain reality by means of rational concepts. Scientific rationality stands in opposition to the irrationality of reality. If the scientific concepts represented irrational realities they would be irrational which is unscientific. However, it is obvious that common-sense experience indicates that reality – the thoughts, emotions, actions and interactions, the institutions and organizations – is not totally irrational. This piece of ontology is important in order to understand the logic of Weber’s ideal types. Reality is, ontologically speaking, a mixture of rationality and irrationality, a kind of ball of wool in which the rational and irrational threads are entangled. A simple introspection can illustrate this point: our thoughts and emotions are often indissolubly entangled. It is the purpose of science to disentangle the rational and the irrational threads. Weber introduces for that purpose his well-known (and often misunderstood) idea of the *Idealtypen*, the ideal types, or *reine Typen*, the pure types, which are ‘ideal’ in the Kantian sense of ‘pure’, i.e. analytic, rationally constructed, if one wants ‘artificial’. They are, to formulate it somewhat bluntly, not pictures of reality, but conscious distortions of it. Yet, they are not the ideological or utopian distortions of Mannheim because these are normative concepts, whereas Weber’s ideal types are analytical concepts. The basic idea of which is that ideal types are constructed by (over)emphasizing certain dimensions of empirical reality (human interactions, institutions) and omitting from the ideal types other dimensions. This is done with the help of the (Rickertean) value-relevance which assists in deciding what is relevant and what is irrelevant. Now the crux of this methodology is that empirical reality as it is experienced in daily life is to be compared with these ideal types. By doing this one can separate in reality the rational from the irrational. The rational elements of reality will, as it were, slide into the one-sidedly rational ideal types. This is a partial representation. But the epistemologically important thing is that the irrational components of reality, now being separated from the rational ones, become *rationally understandable* because of their deviation from the ideal types!

Ideal types are therefore methodological means towards an epistemological end, namely rational understanding. In other words, Weber’s *Verstehen* as the result of the comparison of ideal types and reality is neither an irrational intuition, nor a method.⁹⁷ The analytical ideal types and their comparison with empirical reality are the method, *Verstehen* is the hoped for result which due to this comparison may emerge as a sort of *Aha-Erlebnis*, i.e. as the sense that one suddenly understands reality. That leads to another conclusion still. The

⁹⁷ Weber distinguishes ‘rational evidential *Verstehen*’ (‘rational evidentes *Verstehen*’) and ‘intuitive experiential *Verstehen*’ (‘*einfühlend nacherlebendes Verstehen*’): ‘Begriff der Soziologie und des “Sinns” sozialen Handelns’, (‘Concept of Sociology and of the “Meaning” of social action’), in: *Wissenschaftslehre, o.c.*, p. 543f. This is not the place to elaborate more extensively on Weber’s conception of *Verstehen*.

adequacy, let alone the truth of ideal types consists of their *heuristic profit*, not by their eventual verification or falsification.

If he had had intimate knowledge of Weber's theory of ideal types, Karl Popper would certainly have castigated it on this point, since he sees falsification as the proper test for the scientific content of a theory. But the interesting thing is that he comes quite close to Weber's theory at the end of his book on the poverty of historicism. For instance when he says: 'For in most social situations, if not in all, there is an element of *rationality*. Admittedly, human beings hardly ever act quite rationally (...), but they act, none the less, more or less rationally; and this makes it possible to construct comparatively simple models of their actions and interactions, and to use these models as approximations.'⁹⁸ Despite his well-known emphasis upon the unity of the scientific method which does not allow for a distinction between Natural Science and Cultural Science, Popper introduces surprisingly a methodological difference which is very similar to the one Rickert introduced and Weber adopted. There are important differences between the natural and the social sciences, Popper argues, such as the difficulty to conduct experiments or apply quantitative methods, but they are only differences of degree rather than of kind. He then suddenly introduces an important difference, referring 'to the possibility of adopting, in the social sciences, what may be called the method of logical or rational construction, or perhaps the "zero method". By this I mean the method of constructing a model on the assumption of complete rationality (...) on the part of all the individuals concerned, and of estimating the deviation of the actual behavior of people from the model behavior, using the latter as a kind of zero co-ordinate.'⁹⁹ Popper does not mention Weber, although his formulation would be identical to that of Weber, if one substituted 'ideal type' for 'zero method'. Rickert and Weber would also be happy to learn that Popper emphasizes 'that neither the principle of methodological individualism, nor that of the zero method of constructing rational models, implies in my opinion the adoption of a psychological method. On the contrary, I believe that these principles can be combined with the view that the social sciences are comparatively independent of psychological assumptions, and that psychology can be treated, not as the basis of all social sciences, but as one social science among others.'¹⁰⁰ And: 'The "zero method" of constructing rational models is *not* a psychological but rather a logical method.'¹⁰¹

Popper then also comes close to the neo-Kantian position of Windelband and Rickert regarding the difference between generalizing sciences and individualizing history, when he writes: "I wish to defend the view, so often attacked as old-fashioned by historicists, that *history is characterized by its interests in actual, singular, or specific events, rather than in laws or generalizations*. (...) The situation is simply this: while the theoretical sciences (what are meant are sociology, economic theory, political theory as distinct from social, economic and political history, ACZ) are mainly interested in finding and testing universal laws, the historical sciences take all kinds of universal laws for granted and are mainly interested in finding and testing singular statements.'¹⁰² Like Rickert, but unlike Weber, Popper identifies sociology and economics with ahistorical Natural Science, and fails to see that these and other social sciences can also be conducted historically as Cultural Sciences. Cultural sociology is not social history, nor is cultural (institutional) economics economic history.

Ideal types are, of course, abstract, ahistorical generalizations and therefore in the terms of Rickert's continuum Natural-Scientific concepts. But the interesting thing is that according to Weber, the ideal typical concept formation enables the sociologist, or economist, or historian to separate not only the rational from the irrational, but also in socio-economic reality the general from the individual! To phrase it in a somewhat blunt manner, ideal types enable the social scientist to focus on the empirical and historical Cultural-Scientific dimensions of reality by means of artificial and ahistorical Natural-Scientific concepts. In

⁹⁸ Karl R. Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism*, 1957, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 140f. The last point, Popper continues without referring to Weber, indicates that there is, despite his emphasis upon 'the unity of method', a difference between the natural and the social sciences. Popper apparently had read Weber's *Wissenschaftslehre*, since he mentions the book in a footnote on p. 145. It is therefore the more remarkable that he does not refer to Weber's theory of the idealtypes at all.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 158. See for Popper's anti-psychologism also his *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, 2 vols., 1945, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966), vol. 2, chapter 14, 'The Autonomy of Sociology', pp. 89-99.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 143f. Italics by KP. For a comparison of Popper, Rickert and Weber see Malachi Haim Hacohen, *Karl Popper. The Formative Years 1902-1945*, 2000, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 471-476.

addition Weber thus integrates what remains separate in Rickert's (and Simmel's) methodology, namely meaningful understanding (*sinnhaftes Verstehen*) and causal explanation (*kausales Erklären*). Weber, for example, defines sociology as follows: 'Sociology (...) should mean: a science which wants to understand social action interpretatively and thereby explain it causally in its course and workings.'¹⁰³ All this demonstrates that Weber's *verstehende* sociology does full justice to the Rickertean idea of the gliding scale or continuum between the two (ideal typical) poles of Natural Science and Cultural Science, because it moves back and forth on the continuum, sometimes closer to the Natural Scientific end of the continuum, as in the chapters of *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, then closer to the Cultural Scientific pole, as in the essays on the sociology of religion, sometimes integrating the two as in his definition of sociology as an heuristically understanding and causally explaining discipline. This is in agreement with Rickert who in his book on the demarcation of ahistorical Natural Science and historical Cultural Science writes: 'Individualizing or historical social science is certainly also possible as generalizing or natural-scientific social science.'¹⁰⁴ But he adds, as we have seen before, that a Natural-Scientific history (historical science) is impossible, which we criticized, since the continuum would logically leave room for such a history, as paradoxical as a ahistorical history may be. We mentioned *cliometrics* as an example of such a Natural-Scientific historical endeavor.

Although Rickert mentioned Weber's sociology several times as an example of a generalizing, natural-scientific discipline, he suddenly retreats from that position in a footnote and acknowledges the double logical nature of Weber's approach. He sees Weber's essays on the sociology of religion as examples of an individualizing, historical sociology which differ logically from the generalizing, ahistorical chapters in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*:

'The economy and the societal institutions and powers are presented (in 'Economy and Society', ACZ) on purpose not historically but in a generalizing manner. (...) The same scholar thus presents scientifically the same material in logically different ways. In that respect Max Weber's sociological work demonstrates in its *totality* the conceivably best confirmation of our methodology. Not only Weber's methodological investigations which consciously link up with my book (i.e. *die Grenzen*, ACZ), but also the factual treatment of societal life demonstrates, why only along the road which we have followed, an insight into the logical structure of the really existing empirical sciences can be acquired. If one starts from factual distinctions in the material, or if one sticks to the distinction of "nature" and "mind", one will never come to terms with the logical problems of the social sciences.'¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Max Weber, *o.c.*, p. 542. He continues this definition by defining action as human behavior which carries a subjectively intended meaning. It is social action when it is related to the behavior of others. One may draw the conclusion that Weber views *verstehende* sociology as 'Symbolic Interactionism'. There are indeed similarities between Weber and George-Herbert Mead. Cf. my *De theorie van het Symbolisch Interactionisme, o.c.*, pp. 172-219. It is in this context also interesting to pay attention to the 'humanistic coefficient' of Florian Znaniecki: *On Humanistic Sociology. Selected Papers*, edited by R. Bierstedt, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), p.135-171. Rickert's value-relevance also plays a dominant role in Znaniecki's theorem of the 'humanistic coefficient'. See also my *De theorie van het symbolisch interactionisme, o.c.*, pp. 96-98.

¹⁰⁴ 'Individualisierende oder historische Gesellschaftswissenschaft ist um nichts weniger möglich wie generalisierende oder naturwissenschaftliche.' *Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung, o.c.*, p. 263.

¹⁰⁵ 'Die Wirtschaft und die gesellschaftlichen Ordnungen und Mächte werden darin, der Absicht nach, nicht geschichtlich, sondern generalisierend dargestellt. (...) Derselbe Forscher bringt also denselben Stoff in logisch verschiedener Weise zur wissenschaftlichen Darstellung. Insofern bildet das soziologische Werk Max Webers in seiner *Gesamtheit* die denkbar beste Bestätigung für unsere Wissenschaftslehre. Nicht allein die methodologischen Untersuchungen Webers, die sich bewusst an mein Buch anschliessen, sondern auch seine sachliche Behandlung des Gesellschaftslebens zeigt, warum allein auf dem von uns eingeschlagenen Wege ein Einblick in die logische Struktur der wirklich vorhandenen empirischen Wissenschaften zu gewinnen ist. Geht man von sachlichen Unterschieden im Material aus, oder bleibt man gar bei "Natur" und "Geist" stehen, so bekommt man die logischen Probleme der Gesellschaftswissenschaft überhaupt nicht zu Gesicht.' *Ibid.*, p. 263. See also *ibid.*, p. 267.

Once more, the conclusion is clearly that there is no logical reason for a conflict of methods, a *Methodenstreit* in which natural sciences are played off against cultural sciences, and vice versa. There is indeed a unity of sciences, albeit in a logically dualistic manner. Rickert's continuum presents a logical space in which scientists, social scientists in the first place, can operate in an open and flexible manner, sometimes closer to the Natural Scientific pole, at other times closer to the Cultural Scientific end of the continuum, depending on the problem at hand that needs investigation, interpretation and explanation. Max Weber's substantive sociology was a perfect example of this logical and methodological flexibility.