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978-0-521-31015-4 - The Limits of Concept Formation in Natural Science: A Logical Introduction to the Historical Sciences, (Abridged Edition)

Heinrich Rickert

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TEXTS IN GERMAN PHILOSOPHY

The Limits of Concept Formation in Natural Science

Heinrich Rickert (1863–1936) was one of the leading neo-Kantian philosophers in Germany and a crucial figure in discussions of the foundations of the social sciences in the early years of this century. His views were extremely influential, most significantly on Max Weber.

The Limits of Concept Formation in Natural Science, Rickert's most important work, is here translated into English for the first time. In attempting to answer the question of how historical knowledge of contingent and individual phenomena is possible, it develops a systematic theory of knowledge and philosophy of science. Rickert provides an account of the limits of concept formation in natural science, a criterion to demarcate the natural and the human sciences, and an account of objective value, which underpins the objectivity of historical knowledge.

Rickert's views, which he works out in contrast to those of Dilthey, the positivists, Idealists, and early phenomenologists, are of great intrinsic interest and considerable historical importance. Working from the fifth German edition, Professor Oakes has prepared an abridgment that effectively brings out those arguments and displays their significance. He has also provided his translation with an illuminating introduction to the content and context of the work.

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The purpose of this series is to make available, in English, central works of German philosophy from Kant to the present. Although there is rapidly growing interest in the English-speaking world in different aspects of the German philosophical tradition as an extremely fertile source of study and inspiration, many of its crucial texts are not available in English or exist only in inadequate or dated translations. The series is intended to remedy that situation, and the translations where appropriate will be accompanied by historical and philosophical introductions and notes. Single works, selections from a single author, and anthologies will all be represented.

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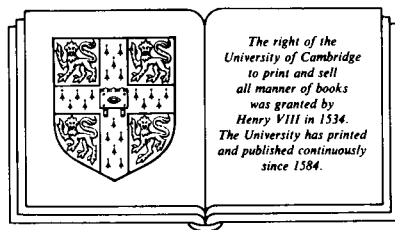
HEINRICH RICKERT

The Limits of Concept Formation in Natural Science

A Logical Introduction to the Historical Sciences
(abridged edition)

Edited and Translated by
Guy Oakes

MONMOUTH COLLEGE AND NEW SCHOOL
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Introduction: Rickert's Theory of Historical Knowledge

"I have just finished Rickert," Max Weber wrote to his wife from Florence in the spring of 1902. "He is *very* good."¹ This referred, of course, to the philosopher Heinrich Rickert, Weber's friend from his Freiburg period,² and the book Weber had just finished was to become the major work of Rickert's career: *Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung*, an attempt to develop a philosophy of history independent of both positivism and neo-Hegelian idealism along lines already sketched by his teacher Wilhelm Windelband in the 1890s. In a note of uncharacteristic modesty, Rickert admits that the main thesis of *Die Grenzen* had already been clearly articulated by Windelband in "History and Natural Science," his famous inaugural lecture as rector of Strassburg University in 1894. Rickert even suggests that the reader who had thought his way through the consequences of Windelband's lecture may find parts of his own

For advice on this work, thanks are due to Thomas Burger, Wolfgang Schluchter, and Gerhard Wagner. Support was provided by a grant from Monmouth College, New Jersey.

¹Marianne Weber, *Max Weber: A Biography*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Wiley, 1975), p. 260.

²Rickert (1863–1936) and Weber (1864–1920) had been colleagues since the time of Weber's professorship at Freiburg (1894–7), where Rickert was a privatdocent in philosophy. Rickert completed his doctoral studies under Wilhelm Windelband in 1888 with a monograph on the logic of definition (*Zur Lehre der Definition*). He then moved to Freiburg for his *Habilitation*, the work that qualified him for university teaching. Completed in 1891, this was a general introduction to the problems of the theory of knowledge from a neo-Kantian perspective (*Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*). When a professorship in philosophy at Freiburg fell vacant upon Alois Riehl's departure for Kiel, Weber successfully supported Rickert's candidacy. In the year that followed this letter to his wife, Weber characterized his first and most ambitious methodological study as, in part, an attempt to test the value of Rickert's ideas for his own methodological purposes. See Max Weber, *Roscher and Knies: The Logical Problems of Historical Economics*, trans. Guy Oakes (New York: Free Press, 1975), p. 213 n. 9. For the influence of Rickert on Weber's methodology, see Thomas Burger, *Max Weber's Theory of Concept Formation* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1976).

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treatise superfluous.³ During the twenty years of his Strassburg period, Windelband became the leader of the Baden, or Southwest German, school of neo-Kantianism, thus named because its leading figures held appointments at southwest German universities: Windelband at Strassburg and later at Heidelberg; Rickert at Freiburg and then at Heidelberg; and Emil Lask – Rickert's student at Freiburg and subsequently Windelband's postdoctoral student at Heidelberg – at Heidelberg as well.

The principal philosophical contribution of the Southwest German school lies in its development of a theory of historical knowledge or an epistemology of the cultural sciences. Its basic outlines may be sketched as follows. First, Windelband formulated the ideal of a historical science the distinctive interest of which lies in knowledge of individual or concrete reality. This is the methodological ideal of idiographic knowledge, which Rickert later analyzes more precisely as knowledge of the historical individual. Second, Lask's account of the analytic and emanationist theories of concept formation and his discussion of the *hiatus irrationalis* between concept and reality provide an analysis of the conditions under which knowledge of the historical individual is possible. Third, Rickert's theory of historical knowledge provides an account of the conceptualization of individual entities that undertakes to show how the problem of the *hiatus irrationalis* can be solved—not by surmounting the gap between concept and reality, however, but rather by employing it as an essential premise for the development of a theory of historical concept formation. Rickert's account, therefore, can be conceived as an attempt to show that the

³Heinrich Rickert, *Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1902), p. 302. Windelband (1848–1915) received his doctorate in philosophy at Berlin in 1870 and completed his *Habilitation* at Leipzig in 1873. Studies with Kuno Fischer at Jena and Rudolf Hermann Lotze at Göttingen were the principal influences on his conception of the aims and limits of philosophy. For an account of the genesis of the neo-Kantian movement that focuses on the development from Kant through Fichte and Lotze to the immediate prehistory of neo-Kantianism in the 1850s and 1860s, see Gerhard Lehmann, "Kant im Späidealismus und die Anfänge der neukantischen Bewegung," *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 10 (1963): 438–56. Hans-Ludwig Ollig provides a good general account of the two main tendencies of the movement, the Marburg school and the Southwest German school. See his introduction, pp. 5–52 in Hans-Ludwig Ollig, ed., *Neukantianismus* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1982). One of the best recent accounts of neo-Kantianism is contained in the introductory materials with which Werner Flach and Helmut Holzhey preface their anthology on neo-Kantian logic and epistemology, *Erkenntnistheorie und Logik im Neukantianismus* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1980). See especially pp. 10–13 and 35–9. For a general account of the neo-Kantian movement in English, see Thomas E. Willey, *Back to Kant* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1978).

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conditions for the possibility of knowledge of the historical individual are satisfied.⁴

WINDELBAND: THE METHODOLOGICAL IDEAL OF
IDIOPHIC KNOWLEDGE

In one of his last critical appreciations of Kant's importance for modern philosophy, Windelband introduces some observations on Kant's conception of historical knowledge and thereby reaffirms one of the main doctrines of his own philosophical program: To understand Kant is to go beyond him.⁵ Kant conceived the scope of science as limited to the enterprise of Newtonian natural philosophy: the attempt to discover the necessary and universally valid laws that account for the properties of the phenomenal world. Historical claims to knowledge, on the other hand, are particular and contingent. In the final analysis, history has an inferior cognitive status because it fails to qualify as a science according to the criteria for scientific knowledge that Kant elaborates in his *Critique of Pure Reason*: Historical propositions lack the necessity and general validity that would qualify them as possible objects of scientific knowledge. Windelband argues that this is the point on which the Kantian theory of knowledge is most in need of revision.⁶ Arguing against Kant thirteen years earlier in "History and Natural Science," Windelband held that the possibility of history as a science rests on three premises: an individualistic conception of value, a nomological or nomothetic conception of the limits of natural science, and an individualistic or idiographic conception of historical science.

Windelband claimed that values can be ascribed only to phenomena that are unique and incomparable in their individuality. This thesis is ultimately grounded in the individualistic conception of value introduced by Christian theology in its polemic against the axiological universalism of Greek philosophy. The Christian idea that values can be ascribed only to individual phenomena has its origins in the conception of the Creation, the Fall, and the events of the life of Christ as unique events endowed with unprecedented significance.

⁴Since the basic elements of Rickert's theory of historical knowledge were in place long before Lask's dissertation, the above analysis is obviously not a genetic account of how the philosophy of history of the Southwest German school was in fact developed. It is rather a reconstruction of the logic on which its solution to the problem of historical knowledge is based.

⁵"Ueber die gegenwärtige Lage und Aufgabe der Philosophie," in *Präludien: Aufsätze und Reden zur Philosophie und ihrer Geschichte*, 2 vol. II, 9th ed. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1924), vol. II, pp. 1–23.

⁶*Präludien*, vol. II, pp. 13–14.

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Windelband argued that this idea represents the first powerful insight into what he called the inalienable metaphysical right of historiography: its interest in reality as unique and unrepeatable.⁷ According to this conception of value, we lose interest in an object if we discover that it is nothing more than a representative case of a general phenomenon. Consider the horror produced by the idea of the *Doppelgänger*, the revulsion inspired by the idea of the eternal recurrence of all things, and the inability of an object to engage our emotions if it is merely one among innumerable others of the same sort. According to Windelband, these considerations all confirm the individuality of values: The attribution of values must always have a concrete and singular referent. The source of our interest in knowledge of individual phenomena lies in this basic fact of philosophical anthropology: that we ascribe values exclusively to individuals.

This theoretical interest cannot be satisfied by natural science, which abstracts from the unique and qualitatively distinctive properties of real phenomena in order to disclose the laws on which they depend. This is the sense in which natural science is nomothetic. It has no intrinsic interest in the individual events of concrete reality. On the contrary, the individual datum is relevant to natural science only to the extent that it can be represented as a type, an instance of a generic concept, or a case that can be subsumed under a general law. This is a consequence of the ultimate theoretical purpose of natural science, which is to produce a system of maximally abstract and general laws, nomological regularities that govern all events. Nomothetic knowledge, therefore, represents the triumph of abstract thought over our perception of concrete reality.

The interest of historical science, on the other hand, is idiographic. Here the purpose of knowledge is to comprehend the distinctive properties of the unique event itself. History is interested in a phenomenon not because of what it shares with other phenomena but, rather, because of its own definitive qualities. Unlike the natural scientist, the historian attempts to establish knowledge of the concrete and singular features of reality. Therefore, it is historical science that will realize the theoretical ideal generated by our interest in knowledge of individual phenomena.

Windelband stressed the purely formal or logical character of this theoretical ideal. The criterion for the distinction between natural science and historical science lies in the “formal property of the theoretical or cognitive objectives of the science in question.”⁸ Because

⁷“History and Natural Science,” trans. Guy Oakes, *History and Theory* xix (1980): 182.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 175.

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Windelband did not investigate the properties of history as a mode of existence, he did not inquire into the conditions that would have to be satisfied by the kind of being to which a historical existence can be ascribed. On the contrary, his purpose was to raise the question of the “subjective” conditions for the possibility of a certain kind of knowledge. This is the respect in which he saw his own investigation as following the transcendental and critical method of Kant, even if it did not agree with Kant’s assumptions about historical knowledge and his conclusions about the possibility of history as a science. Windelband’s analysis is an attempt to identify the conditions that must be satisfied by the historical subject, the agent of historical knowledge, which he conceived as a transcendental or epistemological consciousness. Windelband called it a normative consciousness (*Normalbewusstsein*) because its norms constitute conditions under which knowledge is possible. Thus Windelband’s problem concerns the subjective presuppositions on which a certain kind of science is based rather than the subject matter or object of that science.

Windelband’s taxonomy of the sciences classifies scientific disciplines on the basis of their theoretical purposes or cognitive interests. He identified three consequences that the formal character of this methodological taxonomy entails for his philosophy of history. First, we should not expect this taxonomy to conform to the division of labor between the different fields of science as they actually exist in university faculties or academies of science. In these cases, the classification is governed not by methodological criteria but by practical pedagogical considerations and extrascientific historical contingencies. Second, it is clear that the same object can be a datum of both natural science and historical science. Because Windelband’s distinction between the nomothetic and the idiographic characterizes different forms of knowledge or modes of investigation and not the subject matter or content of knowledge, it follows that no phenomenon lies essentially or intrinsically within the domain of either nature or history. Finally, there is a sense in which the distinction between the nomothetic and the idiographic is ultimately relative. From the perspective of the natural science of biology, for example, the domain of organisms is conceived as a part of nature, and thus as a field governed by the operation of general laws. From the perspective of natural history, on the other hand, this same domain of organisms is conceived as a unique process of evolutionary history. The same phenomenon represented nomothetically by natural science may also be represented idiographically by historical science. There is, of course, another sense in which Windelband’s taxonomy is not relative. Because the nomothetic/idiographic dichotomy marks an absolute

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distinction between mutually exclusive modes of investigation, the same inquiry cannot qualify as both nomothetic and idiographic. But this consideration does not entail that the same datum cannot be investigated by both nomothetic and idiographic disciplines.

In view of this relativity of the distinction between the nomothetic and the idiographic and the fact that no datum necessarily falls into the domain of either nature or history, it is clear that Windelband's dichotomy of natural science and historical science cannot be ontologically grounded. In other words, it cannot be established by making a substantive distinction between two mutually exclusive domains of reality such as nature and mind, a distinction that implies that cognitive access to nature is based on observation or external perception and cognitive access to the mind is grounded in a special faculty of intuition or inner perception. In addition, Windelband rejected an ontological solution to the problem of the possibility of historical knowledge on three other grounds. First, there is no reason to suppose that knowledge of historical facts is possible solely on the basis of a faculty of inner perception. Second, the legitimacy of this alleged faculty of inner perception is in doubt. It is not clear that an inner and purely private mode of intuition, understanding, or empathy can qualify as knowledge.⁹ Finally, psychology is an anomaly and an embarrassment for the ontological solution because it cannot be unambiguously classified as either a natural science or a historical science. As regards its subject matter, it falls in the former domain. As regards its method of investigation, however, it falls in the latter.¹⁰

The main theses of "History and Natural Science" – the individualistic conception of value, the nomothetic conception of the limits of natural science, the methodological ideal of idiographic knowledge, the formal strategy by which the distinction between natural science and historical science is drawn, and the rejection of the ontological

⁹On this point, the neo-Kantian attack by Windelband, Rickert, and Weber on the private cognitive faculties postulated by Dilthey, *Lebensphilosophie*, and early phenomenology anticipates Wittgenstein's more radical critique of private knowledge in the 1930s and 1940s. See especially Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (New York: Macmillan, 1953), part I. In addition to the texts by Windelband and Rickert discussed in this essay, see Weber's *Roscher and Knies*.

¹⁰For the neo-Kantians the most important advocate of the ontological solution was Wilhelm Dilthey, who had become a whipping boy for Windelband and Rickert by the mid-1890s. Gregor Schöllgen makes a case for minimizing the differences between Dilthey's conception of human science [*Geisteswissenschaft*] and Rickert's conception of cultural science [*Kulturwissenschaft*]. See his *Handlungsfreiheit und Zweckrationalität: Max Weber und die Tradition praktischer Philosophie* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1984), pp. 48–55.

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solution – are also major doctrines in Rickert's philosophy of history. In addition, the basic problem generated by the arguments of "History and Natural Science" also becomes the fundamental question Rickert attempts to solve in *Die Grenzen*.¹¹

Windelband alluded to this problem in the final paragraphs of the lecture. The occurrence of individual events cannot be explained by general laws. Put another way, there is no set of nomological statements, regardless of how exhaustive and precise, from which any description of an individual event can be deduced. This is why our theoretical interest in individual phenomena cannot be satisfied by natural science. As Windelband claimed, nomothetic and idiographic cognitive interests are independent and juxtaposed to one another: The law and the event remain as the "ultimate, incommensurable entities of our world view."¹² But if natural science cannot establish knowledge of individual phenomena, how is such knowledge possible? In response to this problem, Windelband offered nothing more than a few obscure metaphorical suggestions.¹³ At the end of the lecture, we are left with the conclusion that the individual historical datum represents a "residuum of incomprehensible, brute fact." It is an "inexpressible and indefinable phenomenon."¹⁴

¹¹Rickert adopted certain other positions from Windelband that can be characterized as the definitive doctrines of the Southwest German school: the rejection of epistemological realism and the correspondence theory of truth; the distinction between the genetic method of the empirical sciences, which are concerned with the causation of phenomena, and the critical method of philosophy, which is concerned with the validity of values; the consequent rejection of any epistemological naturalism, such as psychologism or historicism, which reduces philosophical questions to empirical problems; the transcendental turn in philosophical thought, which includes both the use of transcendental modes of argumentation and the crucial status ascribed to a transcendental subjectivity or a normative epistemological consciousness; the axiological turn in philosophical thought, in which this normative consciousness is defined by objective or generally valid values that are necessary presuppositions of theoretical, practical, and aesthetic judgments; and the doctrine that in the final analysis, going back to Kant requires going beyond Kant. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the exigencies of Rickert's career required that he stress the differences between his own position and Windelband's in order to make a case for his own philosophical originality. For a recent account of the relationship between Windelband and Rickert, see Herbert Schnädelbach, *Geschichtsphilosophie nach Hegel: Die Probleme des Historismus* (Freiburg/Munich: Karl Alber, 1974), pp. 137–59, and also his *Philosophy in Germany 1831–1933*, trans. Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 58, 129–34, 180–5.

¹²"History and Natural Science," p. 185.

¹³For example, we are told that the historian breathes new life into the past. In this respect, history is said to resemble the creativity of the fine arts. See "History and Natural Science," p. 178.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 184.

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[More information](#)LASK'S ANALYSIS OF CONCEPT FORMATION AND
THE IRRATIONALITY OF CONCRETE REALITY

Although the purpose of historical science is knowledge of individual phenomena, such phenomena are incomprehensible. In the work of the Southwest German school, the most careful and exhaustive exposition of the issues this problem poses for the theory of historical knowledge is set out in Emil Lask's precociously brilliant doctoral dissertation on Fichte's philosophy of history.¹⁵

For the Southwest German school, epistemological questions are concerned with the formation of concepts. The conditions for the possibility of knowledge of an object are conditions for the possibility of forming concepts of that object. An item becomes an object of knowledge when it is brought under concepts, or when concepts are formed that represent the item. Valid concept formation, therefore, constitutes knowledge. It follows that the problem of historical knowledge is the problem of individual concept formation: the question of the conditions under which concrete reality can be conceptualized, or represented by means of concepts. This relationship between knowledge and concept formation in the epistemology of the Southwest German school explains why Lask attacks the problem of historical knowledge by analyzing theories of concept formation.

Lask claims that all theories of the concept fall into one of two main groups. One theory, typified by the work of Kant, he calls an analytic logic of concepts. The other, consummated by Hegel, he calls an emanationist logic.

The analytic theory holds that the concrete object of immediate experience is the sole reality, the basis from which all concept formation begins. Reality itself, however, cannot be conceptualized. Individual existence, which is unique and unfathomable, marks the limit of concept formation. The concept itself is an artificially abstracted part or aspect of reality, produced by analyzing elements that actually exist together in a diffuse or inchoate fashion. Because of its abstract character, the concept is general, articulating what is common to a plurality of phenomena. This is the sense in which concept formation qualifies as an analysis of what is immediately given. The concept recasts the reality it represents in such a way that this reality is conceived as an instance of the application of the concept itself. As

¹⁵*Fichtes Idealismus und die Geschichte*, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. I (Tübingen: Mohr, 1923). Lask (1875–1915) studied with Rickert in Freiburg (1894–6, 1898–1901) and with Windelband in Strassburg (1896–8). *Fichtes Idealismus* was completed under Rickert's supervision in 1901.

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a result, the relationship between the concept and its object is not one of real dependence. It is a purely logical relationship, established by thought and with no ontological foundation. Because the concept is an artificial intellectual construct, reality is ontologically richer than the concept. Indeed, the more abstract and general the concept, the more remote from reality it becomes. Thus even though concrete reality falls under concepts, it cannot be derived from them. This is because concepts – as ontologically empty products of intellectual abstraction – cannot contain reality itself. Because concrete reality cannot be conceptualized, it is “irrational”; that is, it is not a possible object of knowledge.

The definitive theses of the analytic theory of concept formation can be summarized as follows: (1) Concept formation represents an analytic abstraction from reality. (2) This is responsible for the substantive poverty or the ontological emptiness of the concept. (3) As a result, there is a dualism of concept and reality. The concept is what can be comprehended or known, even though it has no ontological status. Individual existence, on the other hand, is not a possible object of conceptualization, even though it is the sole reality. (4) Thus reality is irrational in the sense that it is inaccessible to conceptualization.¹⁶

The emanationist theory rejects each of these theses. The concept is not an abstracted aspect or part of reality. On the contrary, individual existence realizes or embodies the content of the concept, from which it emanates. It follows that concrete events can be deduced from concepts, which are ontologically richer than these events and in this sense represent a “higher reality.” As a result, not only does individual existence fall under concepts, but its content is also included in the content of concepts. Thus the purely logical relation between concept and reality maintained by the analytic theory becomes an ontological relationship in the emanationist theory. The dialectical or logical process of thought becomes a *Weltprozess*, a universal or cosmic process of real events. This means that “logic is also a metaphysics and an ontology.”¹⁷ Because the concept is fully real and individuality, which emanates from the concept, is fully rational, the dualism of concept and reality collapses. Thus the irrationality of reality is nullified as well. Because the content of individual reality can be exhaustively derived from concepts, what is real is rational and what is rational is real.

Although Lask admits that the logic of the emanationist theory is sound, he cannot accept the main premises that generate the theory:

¹⁶*Fichtes Idealismus*, pp. 30–1, 43–4.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 67. See also pp. 30, 66, 72, 88.

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Hegel's account of the concept and the Hegelian thesis that concepts are more real than individual existence.¹⁸ As a student of Rickert and Windelband, Lask also regards concepts as artificial intellectual constructs that abstract from reality. This means that in returning to Kant in order to confront the problem of historical knowledge, the Southwest German school is committed to the analytic theory. And yet this theory entails a consequence that seems to preclude conceptualization of the individual: the dualism of concept and reality and the irrationality of individual existence.

Borrowing an expression from Fichte, Lask claims that the contingent, arbitrary, and anomic character of individual existence represents a *hiatus irrationalis* between thought and reality. This is a result of the absolute dualism of concept and reality.¹⁹ There is a hiatus because reality cannot be derived from concepts. And it is irrational because reality can be rationalized only by conceptualizing it, which according to the analytic theory is impossible. Thus, as Windelband notes in the conclusion of his lecture, concrete reality simply must be accepted as an incomprehensible brute fact. Even though individual existence falls under laws, it cannot be deduced from them; and even though it follows laws, it does not follow from them. Therefore, the law and reality, or concepts and reality, are "incommensurable quantities."²⁰

In summary, Lask's analysis of theories of concept formation entails that historical knowledge is possible only if the problem of the *hiatus irrationalis* can be solved, either by surmounting the *hiatus irrationalis* and closing the gap between concept and reality or by developing a strategy that will show that historical knowledge is possible in spite of – or perhaps even because of – the *hiatus irrationalis*. Hegel and the partisans of the emanationist theory take the former course. Rickert takes the latter. By employing the *hiatus irrationalis* as a premise of his philosophy of history, he attempts to show how historical knowledge depends on the irrationality of reality. In Rickert's thought, therefore, the *hiatus irrationalis* is not a radical problem or an obstacle that seems to preclude historical knowledge. It is, rather, an essential condition for the possibility of historical knowledge.

RICKERT'S PROJECT

Rickert's main purpose in *Die Grenzen* is to solve the problem posed by the *hiatus irrationalis*. There are five links in the chain of reasoning

¹⁸Ibid., p. 72.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 63, 117–18, 144–5.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 173–4.

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that leads him to a solution: a phenomenology of reality, a critique of epistemological realism, a theory of cognitive interests and a theory of concepts, an analysis of the limits of concept formation in natural science, and a demarcation criterion for distinguishing natural science from historical or cultural science.

The Phenomenology of Reality. Reality as an object of experience is an infinite manifold of single events and processes that has no identifiable temporal beginning or end and no discernible spatial limits. Moreover, it appears in an infinite number of combinations. There are two respects in which reality as a whole is infinite. It is *unendlich*, or endless in the sense that it cannot be exhaustively incorporated into experience. And it is *unübersehbar*, or without limits in the sense that it is impossible to survey reality in toto. Rickert calls this the extensive infinity of reality. In addition, each event and process within this extensively infinite manifold of experience is also infinitely complex in two respects: First, the number of parts into which any event can be divided or analyzed, or the number of elements that compose it, is also unlimited in principle. Second, every such event and its parts can be said to possess an infinite number of aspects. Put another way, every event can be described in terms of properties each of which exhibits an indeterminate number of aspects. Rickert calls this the intensive infinity of reality. Thus reality as a whole is irrational in the sense that there is no criterion that can specify what would qualify as knowledge of this totality. And every element of reality is irrational in the sense that there is no criterion that can specify what would constitute a complete description of its aspects.

Rickert stresses that this conception of the irrationality of reality is not a thesis about the nature of existence itself but, rather, a statement of fact about our experience of what exists. In other words, it is a phenomenological claim, not an ontological doctrine. In Rickert's view, therefore, it would be a mistake to suggest that his solution to the problem of historical knowledge rests on an ontology according to which reality is ultimately irrational.²¹

The Critique of Epistemological Realism. The second link in Rickert's reasoning is the inference he draws from this phenomenology of reality: a refutation of epistemological realism. The idea of epistemological realism is employed quite informally in *Die Grenzen*, and Rickert never subjects it to a careful analysis. But his remarks on the

²¹*Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung*, 5th ed. rev. and enlarged (Tübingen: Mohr, 1929), chapter 1, section I.

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idea indicate that he conceives it as a thesis concerning the nature of both knowledge and truth. According to this view, the purpose of knowledge is to reproduce reality as we actually experience it. A proposition qualifies as a valid cognitive claim insofar as it faithfully reproduces the properties of its object. Such a theory of knowledge requires a correspondence theory of truth. A proposition is true if it corresponds to the facts it represents – in other words, insofar as it reproduces these facts. It is false to the extent that it constitutes a defective reproduction.

In light of the irrationality of reality and the impossibility of cognitively reproducing not only reality as a whole but also any of its aspects, it is not surprising that Rickert finds epistemological realism unacceptable. Reality as we experience it cannot be reproduced in any sense, either extensively or intensively.

The rejection of epistemological realism is required by two constituents of Rickert's theory of knowledge. First, he defends a theory of concept formation that holds that knowledge cannot qualify as a reproduction. Thus the only purpose of concept formation can be knowledge of reality based on a criterion of what is deemed important or essential. Such a criterion amounts to a principle of "selection" that makes possible the conceptualization, but not the reproduction, of selected aspects of reality from the standpoint of specific cognitive interests.²² Second, Rickert defends a theory of truth that holds that the idea of a correspondence between any set of propositions and reality is incoherent. A proposition is not true because it corresponds with reality. On the contrary, it is true because what is asserted by the proposition – its "ideal," "unreal" theoretical content or import – holds validly for reality. The Southwest German school conceives truth as a value. The domain of values is not existence but validity. Therefore, existence or nonexistence cannot be ascribed to values; only validity or invalidity can. This is because values are ideal, not real: unreal (*unwirklich*) or nonreal (*irreal*). Because the properties of what is real cannot be ascribed to values, there can be no relation of correspondence between values and reality. This means that what is true cannot be said to exist. It can only be said to hold validly. Thus a true proposition does not reproduce the properties of its object. Because it does not have the properties of what exists but rather the properties of what holds validly, truth cannot constitute a relationship of correspondence between knowledge and reality.²³

²²Ibid., pp. 214–15.²³Ibid., pp. 214–16.

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Rickert's Epistemology: A Theory of Cognitive Interests and a Theory of Concepts. Is there an adequate theory of knowledge that can take the place of epistemological realism? Rickert's answer to this question has two parts. First, he provides an account of the essential aims of knowledge, or an analysis of cognitive interests. This account might also be called a teleology of cognitive discourse, which in the face of the infinite complexity of reality, identifies specific aspects of reality that fall under our cognitive interests. Second, in light of the essential values we expect knowledge to realize, Rickert provides an account of the indispensable means, instruments, or methods for establishing the type of knowledge in question. This account might be called a methodology of cognitive discourse. "Concepts" is the name Rickert reserves for these essential instruments of knowledge. Given the irrationality of reality, knowledge is possible only by means of concepts that simplify, recast, and transform reality on the basis of the interests these concepts are intended to fulfill. Rickert calls the product of the conceptualization of some aspect of reality a representation (*Darstellung*) of that aspect. Rickertian concepts are not mere ideas or facts of mental life. On the contrary, they are logical constructs that realize a certain cognitive purpose. The question of methodology is the problem of how concepts are to be formed in order to realize the cognitive interests they are expected to serve. Rickert's theory of method, therefore, is a theory of concept formation.²⁴

²⁴Rickert makes a distinction between methodology and epistemology. This is based on a distinction between constitutive and methodological forms. Constitutive forms are the general categories necessary to define a given material as objective reality or as an object of knowledge in general. Methodological forms are more specialized and are required for the analysis of reality as the data of a specific kind of scientific knowledge. Causality, for example, is a constitutive form because a material cannot be represented as objective reality without this category. Nomological regularity or the concept of a law of science, on the other hand, is a methodological form: Although it is required for the analysis of reality by natural science, it is not necessarily essential to any other kind of scientific knowledge. Constitutive and methodological forms are distinguished by reference to both generality and logical priority. The former are more general than the latter. In addition, the analysis of material by means of methodological forms presupposes that it is defined as reality on the basis of constitutive forms. The development and systematization of constitutive forms are the domain of epistemology or the theory of knowledge in general [*Erkenntnistheorie*]. The development and systematization of methodological forms are the domain of methodology or the theory of scientific knowledge [*Wissenschaftslehre*]. See Rickert, *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, 3rd ed. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1915), pp. 403–36.

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The Limits of Concept Formation in Natural Science. Following Windelband, Rickert claims that our interest in most facts of reality is determined by what they have in common with others. From the perspective of this interest, phenomena are conceptualized as nature: Reality insofar as what we want to know about it is exhausted by its general properties, those it shares with other phenomena. The definitive theoretical purpose of knowledge of nature, or natural science, is to establish laws of nature: general propositions that identify features common to phenomena that otherwise may be quite different. This is the fourth link in the reasoning that leads Rickert to a solution to the problem of the *hiatus irrationalis*: his theory of natural science and its limits.

Natural science solves the problem of both the extensive and the intensive infinity of reality by means of its distinctive conceptual instrument, the law of nature. A natural law does not designate entities that have a unique spatiotemporal location. Rather it holds validly for all members of a certain class of such entities. Nor does the law of nature constitute a representation of the perceptual manifold of reality. This is why Rickert emphasizes that concepts in natural science should not be confused with those of classical Greek philosophy, for example, the forms in Plato's theory of ideas. Concepts in natural science are not ideas of things or images of reality. On the contrary, they recast and transform reality in such a way that its complexity is reduced and simplified in the interest of systematic comprehensibility. This holds true both for the spatiotemporal limits of reality, or its extensive complexity, and for the elements that compose it, or its intensive complexity. Knowledge of reality as nature is possible because what Rickert calls *die Anschaulichkeit der Wirklichkeit* – the concrete perceptuality of reality, the distinctive feature of reality that is responsible for its irrationality – is irrelevant to natural science. The concepts of natural science are not attempts to reproduce the concrete perceptuality of reality. On the contrary, they are attempts to abstract universal features from its perceptual qualities. Precisely because they are universal, these features are not perceptual; and because they are not perceptual, they are not real.²⁵

Abstraction from the perceptuality of reality is a condition for the possibility of natural science.²⁶ Indeed, the progress of natural science is defined by this process of abstraction. As laws of nature become more general, explanations become more powerful, and thus natural science advances. But as laws become more general, their concepts

²⁵ *Die Grenzen*, chapter 1, section vi.²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 192, 196.

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also become more abstract. This means that they also become increasingly devoid of perceptual content and therefore increasingly remote from reality.

The perceptual properties of a real entity, however, are also its individual properties: the properties of the entity as we experience it, its spatiotemporally unique and nonrepeatable qualities that differentiate it from every other real entity. Thus the same reasoning that holds for the perceptual properties of reality also applies to its individual properties. By means of abstraction, concept formation in natural science brackets the unique and nonrepeatable properties of reality as well.²⁷ Since reality is constituted by its perceptual and individual qualities, Rickert's conclusion is hardly surprising. It is reality itself that disappears from the conceptual abstractions of natural science. These considerations establish that there is a limit to concept formation in natural science, and they also show what that limit is: empirical reality itself as defined by its individual and perceptual qualities.²⁸

This reasoning shows why it is systematically necessary for Rickert to refute epistemological realism. Put another way, it shows why the rejection of this thesis is essential to his own theory of knowledge. If epistemological realism were sound, then Rickert's thesis concerning the limits of natural science would be false. These limits would not be defined by the individual and perceptual properties of reality. On the contrary, the purpose of natural science would be the reproduction of these properties.²⁹

The Demarcation Criterion. There is another reason why Rickert is obliged to disavow epistemological realism. One of the main objectives of his philosophical project is to develop a taxonomy of the sciences that differentiates natural science from historical or cultural science in such a way that an independent province of theoretical discourse can be staked out for the latter. In other words, one of his basic intentions is to refute a positivist theory of historical knowledge. Following Karl Popper, this kind of issue is generally called a demarcation problem.³⁰

Rickert sees that epistemological realism entails a solution of the demarcation problem that he cannot accept. One consequence of epistemological realism is a doctrine that might be called methodolog-

²⁷Ibid., pp. 197–8.²⁸Ibid., pp. 199–200.²⁹Ibid., p. 214.³⁰Karl R. Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (New York: Basic Books, 1959), chapter 1.

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ical monism: If the reproduction of reality is the aim of science, ultimately only one such reproduction can qualify as knowledge. In that case, there can be only one scientifically valid conceptualization of reality. This, of course, rules out the solution of the demarcation problem Rickert proposed to defend, a solution that establishes a distinctive domain of inquiry for historical science. Thus Rickert's solution of the demarcation problem depends on a refutation of epistemological realism.

Rickert's criterion for demarcating natural science from historical science is the fifth and final link in the chain of reasoning that leads him to a solution of the problem of historical knowledge. This demarcation criterion is not ontological. In other words, Rickert does not follow Wilhelm Dilthey in arguing that the difference between natural science and historical science is ultimately grounded in differences between two kinds of material or modes of existence. Rickert does not deny that such differences can be identified. He claims only that they are irrelevant for a valid taxonomy of the sciences. The criterion is rather determined by Rickert's theory of cognitive interests and his methodology, or theory of concept formation. In the final analysis, it can be said that the criterion is axiological: Natural science and historical science are differentiated on the basis of two irreducibly different theoretical values that require corresponding differences in the conceptualization of reality.

Natural science conceptualizes reality on the basis of an interest in abstract generalizations that become increasingly remote from the individual and perceptual qualities of reality. Put another way, natural science is anchored not in an interest in reality itself but in an interest in the general laws that hold validly for reality. It is our interest in the individual and perceptual qualities of reality, the value we ascribe to knowledge of its distinctive features, that differentiates natural science from historical science.³¹

In consequence, natural science is a *Begriffswissenschaft*, a science of concepts in the sense that its goal is knowledge of the conceptual relations that govern reality. History, on the other hand, is a *Wirklichkeitswissenschaft*, a science of reality in the sense that its goal is knowledge of reality itself. The distinction between *Begriffswissenschaft* and *Wirklichkeitswissenschaft* is borrowed from Georg Simmel's theory of historical knowledge.³² It is based on two considerations. First,

³¹See *Die Grenzen*, pp. 218, 222, 224–5, 227.

³²The distinction originally appears in Georg Simmel, *Die Probleme der Geschichtsphilosophie* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1892), p. 34. For an English translation of the second edition (1905) of this book, see *The Problems of the Philosophy of History*, trans. Guy Oakes (New York: Free Press, 1977).

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although both kinds of science employ concepts, the validity of concepts in natural science depends on the extent to which they abstract from reality. This does not hold true for historical science, in which there is a more proximate relationship between concept and reality. Second, natural science is interested in the validity of concepts, not in the existence of the concrete entities to which these concepts ultimately refer. Historical science, on the other hand, is interested in the real existence of individual entities.

THE PROBLEM OF CONCEPT FORMATION IN HISTORY

In light of the *hiatus irrationalis* between concept and reality, Rickert's demarcation criterion clearly poses serious problems for the possibility of historical science. The doctrine of the irrationality of reality entails that the reproduction of its individual and perceptual content is not a possible ideal for any science. Thus the historical interest in reality cannot be satisfied by knowledge of reality itself, for this sort of knowledge is impossible. If reality as such is irrational, it is not a possible object of knowledge in any sense. Rickert claims, however, that "individuality" also designates the irrational content of reality. Thus it seems that the doctrine of the *hiatus irrationalis*, together with Rickert's demarcation criterion, entails that the interest in knowledge of the individual content of reality cannot be satisfied. Historical knowledge as Rickert conceives it appears to be impossible. Or is there some sense in which the apparently absurd undertaking of conceptualizing the irrationality of reality is possible? Can reality be rationalized in such a way that its individuality remains a possible object of knowledge? In view of the *hiatus irrationalis*, is there any strategy by means of which knowledge of the individual content of reality is possible?

The answers to these questions lie in Rickert's theory of individual or historical concept formation. This theory is generated by the following problem: Given the *hiatus irrationalis* and our interest in knowledge of the individuality of reality, is it possible to distinguish the concrete perceptuality of reality from its individuality in such a way that the latter can be defined as an object of historical knowledge? Like natural science, historical science is unable to reproduce the concrete perceptuality of reality. Therefore, it also requires what Rickert calls a principle of selection on the basis of which the essential aspects of reality – those that matter to us because knowledge of these aspects satisfies our theoretical interests – can be distinguished from its inessential aspects. Unlike natural science, the theoretical interest of historical science is anchored in the value we ascribe to the individual.

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It follows that this principle of selection must identify some sense in which the individuality of reality can become a possible object of knowledge. It must discriminate or select certain individually defined aspects of reality that qualify as important in relation to our values. The search for this principle is the primary objective of Rickert's philosophy of history and the main issue of *Die Grenzen*. He calls it the problem of historical concept formation.

The reasoning that leads Rickert to a solution begins with the attempt to establish the sort of distinction he needs. The concrete perceptuality of reality can be distinguished from its individuality by differentiating two kinds of individuality. The premises crucial to Rickert's reasoning can be outlined as follows: (1) Individuals in the most general sense – discrete, independently identifiable phenomena – are all unique. (2) However, we do not regard all such phenomena as irreplaceable. On the contrary, if their uniqueness is of no interest to us, they become objects of knowledge only because they fall under some general concept. This is the sense of individuality in which concrete perceptuality is equivalent to individuality, and all reality qualifies as individual. (3) There is another kind of individuality that cannot be ascribed to a phenomenon simply because it is unique in this most general sense. Rickert calls it “in-dividuality,” and the objects to which it is ascribed are called “in-dividuals.” A phenomenon qualifies as an in-dividual when it is constituted by a coherence and an indivisibility that it possesses in virtue of its uniqueness. (4) This individuality, however, is not defined by reference to all the properties of the phenomenon. Because of the intensive infinity of reality, this is obviously impossible. It obtains only by virtue of specific properties that we regard as indispensable because we see them as responsible for the coherence and indivisibility of the phenomenon. (5) Precisely for this reason – because we regard phenomena constituted in this way as irreplaceable – their uniqueness is of interest to us.

How is the distinction between individuality and in-dividuality made? How does the in-dividuality of a diamond differ from the individuality of a lump of coal? Clearly, the coherence and indivisibility characteristic of the uniqueness of the former have a significance for us that the latter lacks, a meaning that is determined by the values we attach to it. In other words, the in-dividuality of a phenomenon is due to the value we ascribe to the singular coherence and indivisibility that are responsible for its uniqueness.

The ultimate basis of Rickert's individuality–in-dividuality dichotomy is neither metaphysical nor epistemological. On the contrary, it is grounded in a general fact about human experience that lies within

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what might be called the universal pragmatics of human life. Human beings establish certain values, act on them, and attempt to realize them. It is impossible, however, for everything in the domain of human experience to have the status of an in-dividual. This is because action is possible only on the basis of an orientation to generalizations or general rules of experience.³³ The possibility of ascribing values to certain objects presupposes other objects for which this is not possible. Or, to employ Rickert's language, the possibility of in-dividuals presupposes individuals, entities that fall within the domain of our experience and interest us only as instances of general concepts. Thus the praxeology of human life entails that experience cannot exclusively comprise in-dividuals. On the other hand, the fact that we ascribe values to individuals by virtue of their distinctive properties shows that there must be some individuals. If all individuals were nothing more than representative cases of general concepts, we would have no basis for differentiating one such case from any other, and thus no basis for an interest in any given individual. Therefore, it is because human beings ascribe values to certain things that some individuals become in-dividuals.

The in-dividual is constituted as a historical individual, and thus as a possible object of historical science, by reference to what Rickert calls the purely theoretical value relation (*Wertbeziehung*). Put another way, an in-dividual can be conceptualized as a historical individual only if it falls under some value relation. Because of the connection between value relations and the constitution of historical individuals, Rickert claims that the elimination of value relations from historical science would also eliminate the object of cognitive interest in history, and thus the possibility of historical knowledge as well. The doctrine of value relevance is Rickert's solution to the problem of individual or historical concept formation.

This doctrine is constituted by four theses, each of which places constraints on the values that define historical individuals. In other words, each thesis states certain conditions that must be satisfied by the values to which historical individuals are related. The first thesis holds that a commitment on these values must be made by the historical actors whose conduct is the ultimate datum of a historical investigation, and thus the ultimate object of historical concept formation. In Rickert's language, the "historical centers" of a historical investigation must take a position on these values. The second thesis holds that these values cannot be purely personal or private. They must express the general concerns of a culture. In Rickert's

³³ *Die Grenzen*, p. 319.

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language, they must be “cultural values.” The third thesis holds that these values must be objective in the sense that an unconditionally general validity can be ascribed to them. They are not merely empirical values to which all the members of a society are in fact committed. Nor are they merely normatively valid values commitment to which is required by a social norm that all the members of a society in fact acknowledge. On the contrary, they are unconditionally general values: Their validity or binding force represents a categorical commitment that is independent of both empirical maxims and hypothetical imperatives. The fourth thesis holds that the historical investigation itself cannot take a position on these values. Rather, it must relate them to the historical individual in a purely theoretical fashion.

The first thesis rests on the distinction between the investigator’s values and the values of the historical actor, or between the values of the historian and those of the historical center. In Rickert’s terminology, this is also the distinction between the values of the historical subject and those of the historical object. This thesis is explained in Rickert’s discussion of the concept of the historical center in Chapter 4, sections 7–9. The second thesis rests on the distinction between personal, or private, values and general cultural values. It is explained in Rickert’s discussion of culture as the content of the concept of history in Chapter 4 sections 8 and 9. The third thesis rests on the distinction between subjective and objective values and is explained in Rickert’s various attempts in Chapter 5 to prove that the objectivity of historical science is not inferior to that of natural science.

The fourth thesis rests on the distinction between a valuation, or value judgment, and a purely theoretical value relation. Rickert claims that “insofar as the value perspective is decisive for history, this concept of the ‘value relation’ – in opposition to ‘valuation’ – is actually *the* essential criterion for history as a pure science.”³⁴ In his attempt to clarify the importance of this distinction, Rickert considers the methodological status of a history of religion that is based on confessional assumptions. Such a history, he claims, is not grounded in a purely theoretical value relation. For this reason it cannot possess scientific objectivity. Why is this so?

Consider two different confessional biographies of Martin Luther, a Roman Catholic account and a Protestant account. Because they are committed to rival subjective valuations, Rickert claims that it is impossible to resolve the conflicts between them. Historical accounts of this sort can never be regarded as purely scientific, because their

³⁴Ibid., p. 329.

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valuations will never be valid for all scientists. According to Rickert, this is one sense in which the domain of values is irrational: There is no principle by means of which the conflicts between such rival valuations can be resolved. It follows that if the domain of values were exhausted by valuations, historical science would be impossible. The purpose of the value/valuation dichotomy is to avoid this consequence by showing that there is a sphere of purely theoretical value relations that is independent of valuations.

Suppose the two biographies of Luther are not grounded in the confessional commitments of Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. Suppose the historian simply defines Luther's individuality by reference to religious values in general and does not take any stand on their validity. In that case, the issue of value irrationality – the question of whether there is a principle on the basis of which conflicts between value judgments can be resolved – does not arise. If the conceptualization of Luther's individuality is based exclusively on such value relations, the problem of historical knowledge of Luther can be solved, or so Rickert claims. Because the purely theoretical value relation that defines religious values will be valid for both Roman Catholics and Protestants, the same aspects of the individual that we identify as "Luther" will also prove essential for historians of both persuasions. Thus these aspects will be synthesized to form the same historical concept. In other words, they will constitute the historical individual "Luther" as an object of historical knowledge in the same way. As a result, the value/valuation dichotomy preserves the objectivity of historical knowledge from the consequences of the irrationality of subjective valuations.

In summary, the doctrine of value relevance may be formulated in the following terms. Consider an entity, *I*, that is an individual and a value, *V*, that satisfies the following conditions: *V* is a general cultural value on which the historical actors of a given society take a position, and it is also unconditionally valid. If *V* is linked to *I* in a purely theoretical fashion, *I* qualifies as a historical individual and thus an object of historical concept formation. To link *I* to *V* in this fashion is to conceptualize it historically, as a result of which it becomes an object of historical knowledge. It should be noted that the doctrine of value relevance does not attempt to solve the problem of conceptualizing the individual by surmounting the *hiatus irrationalis*, or closing the gap between concept and reality. On the contrary, the dualism of concept and reality is presupposed by this solution. If reality could be exhaustively derived from concepts, there would be no grounds for the claim that any one individual aspect of reality is more significant than another. In that case, the ultimate basis for the doctrine of value

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relevance – the distinction between individuals and in-dividuals – would collapse.

A NOTE ON THE ABRIDGMENT

The text employed for this translation is *Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung: eine logische Einleitung in die historischen Wissenschaften*, fifth edition, revised and enlarged (Tübingen: Mohr, 1929). Breaks in the translation produced by deleting material from the German text are noted by means of ellipses (. . .).

The material translated from the prefaces is taken from *Die Grenzen*, pages vii–viii, ix, and xix–xxvi. The material translated from the Introduction is taken from pages 1–25. The material translated from Chapter 3 is taken from pages 188–92, 196–203, 214–34, and 237. The material translated from Chapter 4 is taken from pages 277–87, 292–302, 303–6, 308–9, 314–25, 328–41, 342–7, 357–62, 364–6, 432–3, 438–9, 442–3, 473–5, 479–83, 503–23, 533–44, 544–6, 548–67, 572–3, 574–8, 588–91, and 610–11. The material translated from Chapter 5 is taken from pages 623–67 and 673–96.

Die Grenzen was originally published in two installments. The first three chapters (“Conceptual Knowledge of the Corporeal World,” “Nature and Spirit,” and “Nature and History”), consisting of more than three hundred pages, appeared in 1896. Rickert completed Chapters 4 and 5 in 1901; and the entire first edition, comprising all five chapters, was published in 1902. A second edition followed in 1913 and a third and fourth in 1921.

Rickert attempts to clarify his language in each successive edition. He also tries to sharpen the focus of his arguments, which are frequently quite lengthy and somewhat muddled in their purpose. These efforts, however, are sometimes compromised by the introduction of digressions, which are often quite peripheral to Rickert’s primary intentions. Except for the incorporation of a few illuminating notes, the only significant addition of new material is the long ninth section of Chapter 4, which first appeared in the edition of 1921. This represents a systematic attempt to confront the problem of the ontological basis for a theory of historical understanding. Put another way, it is Rickert’s most serious attempt to come to terms with the problematic of Dilthey’s philosophy of history.

The present abridgment of Rickert’s text of more than seven hundred pages to less than half this length is based on three criteria: coherence, which calls for deletions that do not destroy the intelligibility and structural integrity of the text; originality, which calls for the deletion of material that was part of the philosophical stock-in-

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trade of Rickert's time; and relevance, which calls for the deletion of Rickert's discussions of philosophical positions that have a limited bearing on his main objectives. From the perspective of these criteria, Chapters 4 and 5 are clearly the most important parts of *Die Grenzen*, and Chapter 4 is crucial text in the articulation of Rickert's philosophy of history. As Rickert himself notes, the first three chapters stand as an independent text that has the negative purpose of establishing that the problem of historical concept formation cannot be solved by natural science. Rickert's own solution to this problem is set out in Chapter 4, and its consequences for the objectivity of historical science are developed in Chapter 5. Material from Chapter 3 is included only insofar as it is essential for the understanding of Chapters 4 and 5. Chapters 1 and 2 are omitted in toto.³⁵

These remarks on the principles governing the abridgment are not meant to suggest that everything of philosophical importance in *Die Grenzen* has been retained. Rickert's philosophy of natural science and his analysis of the relationship between concepts and judgments (Chapter 1), his philosophy of mind (Chapter 2), the details of his critique of an ontologically grounded taxonomy of the sciences (Chapter 3), his discussion of the concept of historical development (Chapter 4), and part of his account of the relationship between the theory of historical knowledge and the theory of value (Chapter 5) – all these and more have been deleted.

Rickert writes in the tiresome and didactic style of the university lecturer who, faced with unimaginative and obtuse students, takes refuge in pedantry and repetition in the hope that some of his main ideas will be grasped. For this reason, there is a temptation to relieve the tedium by deleting apparently redundant sections of substantial portions of text that cover a single problem. On the whole, this temptation has been resisted. Sometimes there is a point to Rickert's prolixity. In addition, the reader of the English abridgment should have an opportunity to get a sense of the way the book was written and a feel for Rickert's style, which occasionally approaches unendurable verbosity. Finally, yielding to this temptation would produce a highly fragmented text of doubtful coherence.

Since Rickert is an advocate of "scientific" philosophy as a legitimate academic discipline with valid standards and objective methods, it is not surprising that the language of precision and rigor is an impor-

³⁵The foregoing reconstruction of the reasoning that leads Rickert to a solution to the problem of historical concept formation traces the links between Chapters 1 through 3 and Chapter 4. In providing the background necessary for an understanding of *Die Grenzen*, it also represents an attempt to fill some of the lacunae created by the abridgment.

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tant component of his philosophical rhetoric. In fact, Rickert tries hard to be clear and methodical, and by the standards of those he regards as his peers, these efforts are largely successful. In the main, this group comprises academic philosophers in the German university system from the beginning of the Wilhelmian period to the later years of the Weimar Republic, such as Wilhelm Dilthey, Wilhelm Windelband, Alois Riehl, Edmund Husserl, Georg Simmel, Paul Natorp, Emil Lask, Max Scheler, Nicolai Hartmann, Jonas Cohn, and Bruno Bauch. Regrettably, it does not include G. E. Moore, Bertrand Russell, or even Gottlob Frege. Neither on the basis of our own standards nor even by the best philosophical standards of his own time, does Rickert ever manage to state a thesis or develop an argument with tolerable precision. The introduction and institutionalization of more exacting standards of philosophical clarity are perhaps the most significant permanent legacy of the linguistic revolution in philosophy begun by Moore, Russell, and Wittgenstein and consummated by the Vienna Circle, Ryle, Austin, and their successors. One of its consequences is that considerable patience is required when postrevolutionary readers take up prerevolutionary philosophical texts.

GUY OAKES

Glossary

In *Die Grenzen*, Rickert employs certain terms in a technical or quasi-technical fashion. Because of their importance or frequent appearance in the text, they are translated uniformly throughout, even where this results in an English style that is somewhat awkward and unidiomatic. A list of these terms and their English translations follows:

<i>anschaulich</i>	perceptual
<i>Anschaulichkeit</i>	concrete actuality or perceptuality
<i>Anschauung</i>	perception
<i>Begriffsbildung</i>	concept formation
<i>Begriffswissenschaft</i>	science of concepts
<i>Besonderheit</i>	distinctiveness
<i>Darstellung</i>	representation
<i>Einmaligkeit</i>	uniqueness
<i>Einzigkeit</i>	singularity
<i>Gebild</i>	construct
<i>Geist</i>	spirit or mind (depending on context)
<i>Geisteswissenschaft</i>	human science
<i>geistig</i>	spiritual
<i>In-dividuum</i>	in-dividual
<i>Individuum</i>	individual
<i>irreal</i>	nonreal
<i>Körper</i>	body
<i>körperlich</i>	corporeal
<i>lebendig</i>	vital

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<i>leitend</i>	governing (for example, <i>leitende Werte</i> is translated as governing values)
<i>Materie</i>	matter
<i>nacherleben</i>	reexperience
<i>Psyche</i>	psyche
<i>psychisch</i>	psychic
<i>Realität</i>	reality
<i>Realwissenschaft</i>	science of reality
<i>sachlich</i>	substantive
<i>Seele</i>	mind
<i>seelisch</i>	mental
<i>Stellungnehmen</i>	taking a position
<i>Stoff</i>	material
<i>unwirklich</i>	unreal
<i>wertbeziehend</i>	value relevant
<i>Wertbeziehung</i>	value relevance or relation to values
<i>wertend</i>	valuing
<i>Wirklichkeit</i>	reality or actuality
<i>Wirklichkeitswissenschaft</i>	science of reality
<i>Wissenschaftslehre</i>	theory of science
<i>wollend</i>	volitional or willing (referring to a being that wills or has volition)
<i>Zusammengehörigkeit</i>	coherence
<i>Zusammenhang</i>	nexus