

II.1 Explaining *Verstehen*

Max Weber's Views on Explanation in the Humanities

JEROEN BOUTERSE

Max Weber is, of course, famous as one of the founding fathers of sociology. From the perspective of a threefold division of scholarly activity – natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities – it might seem odd to devote focused attention to him in a discussion of the humanities.

However, the distinction between social sciences and humanities itself deserves historical attention: there is obviously some overlap both in the object and in the interests of those clusters of disciplines. They are both interested in what people do and have done, broadly speaking. They probably do so differently, constructing their research object in different ways and using different vocabularies and concepts. But importantly, in Weber's time the vocabularies pertinent to the study of human culture and society were subject to fierce debate. If in this context Weber developed a position that contributed more to twentieth-century social science than to the humanities, this does not mean that his position at the time was only relevant to a social-scientific perspective. These were categories still in the making.

This paper places Weber's formulation of the position of the human sciences in relation to the challenge to their autonomy posed by the rise of psychology as a scientific discipline – a challenge that was not just intellectual but also institutional: the question whether university chairs in philosophy ought to be given to psychologists as well was a live one, for instance.¹ We will see how experimental psychology backed up its claim to belong the human sciences – and, in fact, to be *the* foundational human science; and we will see how advocates of humanistically oriented disciplines resisted the intrusion of such a psychology in their domain.

Before turning to Weber, we will look at two other attempts to counter the perceived threat that psychology posed to the autonomy of what can pragmatically be called the humanistic disciplines: by Wilhelm Windelband and Heinrich Rickert. The argument will be that while Windelband and Rickert responded by redefining the humanities as individualizing disciplines separated from the

search for regularities, Weber developed another way of meeting the challenge, in which interpretation and the search for lawlike patterns could be combined.

Windelband and Rickert: Expelling psychology from the humanities

There were several traditions in dialogue with which Weber was to develop his project for an interpretive sociology. Of these, the strongest intellectual influence on his own theoretical reasoning was the neo-Kantian school represented chiefly by Wilhelm Windelband and Heinrich Rickert.² From them Weber inherited the problem of the status of the '*Geisteswissenschaften*', as well as part of the solution: they shared the opinion that the study of human culture should be qualitatively different from that of nature, but that the former was not necessarily inferior to the latter.

Windelband noted that a once plausible distinction between these two – based on a substantive difference between *Natur* and *Geist* – had lost its attractiveness, but that there remained a very important *logical* division within the empirical sciences: that between the search for knowledge of general laws on the one hand, and the search for individual knowledge on the other. This was the difference between 'nomothetic' and 'idiographic' sciences, a difference located *not* in the studied material itself, but in the *treatment* of that material.³

This logical distinction conveniently implied that psychology could be evicted from the domain of the *Geisteswissenschaften*, which were now identified as by definition idiographic: psychology was a science of the mind, but its treatment of the material had more in common with the natural sciences in that it, too, sought to formulate general laws: 'the substantive differences are minimal compared to the logical identity which all these disciplines have with respect to the formal nature of their knowledge goals: they are always looking for the *laws* in events.'⁴

Windelband acknowledged that causal knowledge depended on general statements but that individual personality withstood such a reduction to general categories: it was 'causeless', and therefore 'free.'⁵ This reasoning would run the risk of leaving human action incomprehensible were it not for the possibility of intuitive understanding: only by reliving the past in its fullness could one avoid using the abstract concepts which were (according to Windelband) by definition inappropriate for the understanding of free action. This freedom together with intuitive understanding and the logical distinctness of the idiographic sciences served as barriers keeping 'nomothetic' psychology away from the study of human culture.

This self-definition of the sciences of man with psychology left out was developed further by Rickert. He, too, started from the assumption that the division of the sciences by their subject matter was outdated: the prime example was,

again, psychology, which happened to occupy itself with 'mental being' instead of physical nature, but which could not therefore claim to be anything else than a natural science.⁶ Psychology, Rickert recognized, might strictly be a *Geisteswissenschaft* for its subject matter, but it was not therefore a *Kulturwissenschaft* – and the cultural sciences embraced in practice 'all objects of the study of religion, law, history, philology, political economy, etc., that is, that of all "humanities" with the exception of psychology'.⁷

Rickert warned that *if* these disciplines were grouped according to their occupation with human mental life, psychology would become 'the principal basis of all cultural scholarship, understood in its elevated sense'.⁸ Such an intrusion of a discipline so strongly oriented toward the natural sciences was unacceptable. But what, then, were the cultural sciences? Rickert proceeded from the idea that reality was infinitely large and describable in infinitely many ways, and that therefore any attempt to grasp it conceptually had to be simplifying and selective. The nomothetic sciences did this by generalizing, and this was indeed one option. But Windelband's idiographic sciences were originally defined by their ambition to describe a part of historical reality in its totality, which they could in fact never hope to do; so what was their principle of selection?⁹

Rickert concluded that it must be value-relatedness: the 'essential' was selected on the basis of the values of the historian – and according to Rickert, the attribution of cultural value to historical phenomena or persons was mostly based on their uniqueness, on those aspects that made the phenomenon or person in question a unique historical '*Individuum*'. By this supposition, cultural scientific interest was the logical complement to natural scientific interest, which was aimed at the general.¹⁰ Accordingly, the kind of 'psychology' relevant to the cultural scientist was qualitatively different from that advocated by representatives of scientific psychology.

As historians were occupied to a large extent with the mental life of their actors, it was understandable that they were supposed to be good 'psychologists',¹¹ but this had nothing more to do with scientific psychology than had the psychological intuition of artists.¹² Rickert still distinguished between a general 'conceptual' grasp of the psyche, and an individual 'intuitive' grasp of it: the distinction between natural and cultural science, in that respect, went together with a distinction between explanation and understanding: *Erklären* and *Verstehen*.

We have to distinguish explanation [*Erklären*] and understanding [*Verstehen*]. We want to explain the nature of physical being, in so far as we search for its general laws. Mental life in history however we want to understand, as we re-experience it in its individual course. Once this distinction is clear, one will cease to think it self-evident that the historian should practice scientific psychology in order to enhance his 'psychological' understanding,

and one will not consider the foundation of the historical sciences to lie in any science of the mind.¹³

That last remark was in explicit opposition to Wilhelm Wundt, the chief spokesman of scientific psychology, 'who primarily wants', said Rickert in his efforts to refute him, 'to make psychology into the foundation of the humanities'.¹⁴

He seems not to have exaggerated Wundt's ambition, for indeed a few years earlier, Wundt had defined the status of his scientific psychology in relation to the other disciplines precisely in the way that bothered Rickert so much and to which he was now formulating a coherent response. According to Wundt,

as the science of the universal forms of immediate human experience and their combination in accordance with certain laws, [psychology] is the *foundation of the mental sciences*. The subject-matter of these sciences is in all cases the activities proceeding from immediate human experiences, and their effects. Since psychology has for its problem the investigation of the forms and laws of these activities, it is at once the most general mental science, and the foundation for all the others, such as philology, history, political economy, jurisprudence, etc.¹⁵

For Wundt, these latter disciplines were primarily *Geisteswissenschaften* and thus supposed to sail under the flag of the most fundamental science of the mind; Rickert had now redefined them as *Kulturwissenschaften* and thus supposedly secured their independence from Wundtian psychology.

Weber and the explicability of human action

We have seen that both Windelband and Rickert dismissed psychology in part because in their view the kind of knowledge relevant to the idiographic or cultural sciences could not be produced by the generalizing knowledge of psychology. Instead of this generalizing conceptual knowledge, both placed an 'intuitive grasp' or 'reexperiencing' on the foreground. This approach was unattractive to Weber, for whom all science revolved around explanation, as we will see.

Weber wrote his most famous methodological essays after a period of severe mental troubles. The first of these essays was devoted to a critique of two of the most important members of the 'historical school' of political economy, Wilhelm Roscher and Karl Knies.¹⁶ Of these, the latter two (about Knies) are most important for our current purpose. In Knies' work, Weber found several errors that he considered to be so common that a lengthy general treatment of them was justi-

fied – to such an extent that most of the dialogue turned out to be with other thinkers than Knies.

Weber frontally attacked Knies' idea that free and purposeful human action was opposed to regularity. Weber connected this wrong opinion to the intuition that human action was in some sense specifically 'creative', as opposed to the mechanical causality of nature – a mistake that Weber identified in Wundt as well and to which he attributed Wundt's overambitious claims on the status of psychology. The notion of creativity was inherently value-laden, Weber maintained, and reading it as something objective (within the domain of an empirical science) suggested that empirical disciplines could deliver value judgments, *quod non*. Wundt's idea that there could be laws pertaining to the production of *value* and *meaning* amounted to this, and was therefore dangerous: psychology should not claim to provide a worldview.¹⁷

However, Weber's criticism of the uses of psychology extended only to its muddled relation with value judgments, and did not constitute a wholesale dismissal. Indeed, Weber's intention was to *improve* psychology: 'psychology as an empirical discipline only becomes possible through the elimination of value judgments.'¹⁸ Such a purified scientific psychology was potentially equipped for a fruitful search for causal explanations of whatever it would like to investigate. In fact, Weber openly invited psychology to deliver *any* explanation of human mental phenomena, provided, of course, that it could justify these explanations. How could he still refuse to acknowledge it as the foundational science for the study of human culture?

There was, of course, the logical argument that individual phenomena could never be deduced from general laws alone, and in another context Weber did use that argument: 'even today the opinion is not completely eradicated that it would be the task of *psychology* to play a role comparable to mathematics with regard to the individual "humanities"'.¹⁹ But, he argued, *even* if by psychology or another science all possible causal relations had been discovered, in no way 'could the reality of life be *deduced* from these "laws" and "factors" [...] since for our knowledge of reality what matters is the *constellation* in which these (hypothetical!) "factors" [...] are found.'²⁰ This observation drew on Windelband's argument that individual reality was always the product of general laws *and* individual initial conditions, and could therefore not be explained by exclusive reference to these general laws.²¹ However, we may note that this argument guaranteed only a limited amount of disciplinary autonomy for the cultural sciences. For comparison: even a positivist like Hempel would grant this point.²² There was more work to be done.

Returning to Knies, Weber coolly dismissed the latter's view of the irrationality of human behavior: 'in "lived" reality there is no question whatsoever of a *specific* "incalculability" of human action.'²³ Did people not 'take into account' the reactions of others to their own actions? Granted, the actions of others could not

be predicted with full certainty or *in toto*, but was not the same true for the weather?²⁴ When it came to a phenomenon in its total individuality, certain prediction was impossible – at best it could be said in retrospect that the phenomenon had not occurred in *contradiction* with the known regularities.²⁵

There *was* a difference between the explanation of human action and that of natural events, Weber said, but it was not that human action was less rational – on the contrary! Human action could not only be understood as ‘possible’ in relation to general laws, but was also accessible to understanding: ‘*Verstehen*, that is, establishing a concrete “motive” (or a complex of motives) that can be “internally” “reexperienced” and that we can attribute to it with more or less certainty depending on our source material.’²⁶ Apart from *possible*, a historical action could be considered teleologically *rational*, adequately motivated, and as such be understood. ‘The “interpretability” [*Deutbarkeit*] here adds to the “calculability” [*Berechenbarkeit*] when compared to natural phenomena, which cannot be interpreted.’²⁷ To the extent that a historical person acted irrationally, his behavior could in theory still be explained by psychological laws, but then it was both less understandable and less free.²⁸

Human action, then, in so far as it was not regulated by natural laws, was actually *more* explicable than natural phenomena; moreover, even if it could be consistently related to empirical rules, this in itself would not give us the feeling of having understood it adequately²⁹ – ‘we will not possess this understanding as long as we do not also have the possibility of inner “replication” [*Nachbildung*] of this motivation in our imagination.’³⁰ The kind of knowledge appropriate to human action, then, was closely related to the notion of *Verstehen*, considered as a kind of inner experience.

But, Weber hastened to add in a footnote, ‘we will see that one can only speak of “replication” in a very improper sense.’³¹ There was a trap that Weber did not want to fall into, and that was that emphasizing the difference between these two kinds of knowledge came close to separating them altogether – to concluding that the ‘objectifying’ and the ‘subjectifying’ method had nothing to say to each other.³² This was a position that Weber took very seriously, but that he judged to be fundamentally incorrect. In the patient argument against it that covered more than half of his two essays against Knies, Weber maintained that, on the one hand, there was something specific about interpretation that could not in any useful sense be reduced to scientific psychology, and that on the other hand this did not close the door to psychology but instead gave every discipline its proper place. According to this view, scientific psychology would be neither all-powerful nor irrelevant to the understanding of human action.

An opposing view Weber discussed was that of Hugo Münsterberg, who radically separated ‘direct “understanding”, that is, an empathizing with, reexperienc-

ing, feeling, appreciating and valuing of "actualities"³³ from value-free, analytical knowledge. History, according to him, was a subjectifying discipline whose object and way of knowing had no relation to the methods of objectifying knowledge.³⁴ Weber objected that phenomena that could be considered to be irreducible to historical questions were not therefore necessarily out of reach of the objectifying sciences; a psychological analysis of, for example, religious hysteria could very well increase our understanding of a historical phenomenon.³⁵

It could also be the case, of course, that the results of experimental psychology did not exceed the understanding that could anyway be reached by common sense – especially the complexity of individuals, in whom an infinity of causal relations was combined, made this plausible.³⁶ But in this, again, the mental domain was no different from the physical. Abstract laws *could* provide valuable insights – or not; and in that respect psychology was (*a priori*) neither more nor less relevant than any science.

The rules of experience of psycho-pathology and the laws of psycho-physics come into the consideration of history [as a discipline] only in precisely the same sense as physical, meteorological, biological knowledge. That is to say: it is ever dependent on the individual case whether history or political economy has cause to take note of the robust *results* of a psycho-physical nomothetic science [*Gesetzeswissenschaft*].³⁷

The notion that psychology had a special status was dismissed, then:

[T]he assertion one sometimes hears, that 'psychology' [...] would *have* to be a universally indispensable 'foundational science' for history or political economy, since all historical and economical phenomena go through a 'mental' stage and have to go through one, is, of course, untenable.³⁸

One could as well say that acoustics was the foundational science for the historical understanding of political speech. Psychological concepts, rules or statistics in so far as they could not be interpretively understood ought to be treated as simply 'given' – and not therefore irrelevant, but also not satisfying a specific *historical* interest.

This historical interest Weber defined, like Rickert, in terms of values. Knowledge of reality was knowledge of individual phenomena; but there were infinitely many of those, and any one of them was related to infinitely many causes.³⁹ There was nothing in the phenomena itself which could govern the selection of a finite part of these.⁴⁰ 'In this chaos', Weber said,

order comes *only* from the circumstance that in every case only a *part* of individual reality has value and *meaning* [*Interesse und Bedeutung*] to us, while only that part stands in relation to the *cultural values* [*Kulturwertideen*] with which we approach reality.⁴¹

Phenomena were of scientific interest in so far as they related to cultural interest – not, of course, in the sense that science was only about valuable phenomena; prostitution, money and religion could all be of equal interest; this simply meant that they were relevant to the cultural interests of the scientist.⁴²

Interpretation as explanation

In Weber's view, interest in the study of *cultural* (value-related) facts as such was necessarily connected to understandable human action.⁴³ This, then, remained the legitimate and unchallenged domain of the historical sciences. That is, if *Verstehen* was a scientifically legitimate business. Could it be? According to Weber it could, as long as it was disconnected from value judgments, as long as its results were treated as nothing more than intellectual statements, and as long as it served the intellectual goal of causal understanding of actions.

Weber recognized that interpretation (*Deutung*) could mean both the attribution of value and the understanding of motives, but these meanings had to be kept clearly distinct.⁴⁴ Of science Weber demanded abstinence from value judgments at all times – interpretation *as* valuing was by definition not a scientific act. Of course, a scholar could in his interpretation of a historical event or person make use of value-related concepts to which he, *as* a valuing human being, also took a stance – but this was a matter of *Wertbeziehung*, not *Wertung*; in service of objectifying knowledge, the use of value-laden concepts was not an act of *Stellungnahme*, but of *Verstehen*.⁴⁵

Further, the notion of *Verstehen* as a kind of 'experience' (*Erlebnis*) had to be qualified. Too often the claim was made that the 'inner' experience of historical knowledge was in some way more reliable than the kind of experience on which natural scientific knowledge was based; that intuitive reexperiencing was a privileged kind of understanding with special certainty.⁴⁶ Instead of embracing this view as an affirmation of the autonomy of the interpretive science, Weber demolished it completely.

Intuition was no prerogative of the historical sciences⁴⁷ – mathematicians could also use their imagination as a starting point, for example.⁴⁸ The point was that one's own inner 'experience' in itself did not constitute *understanding* of the other – someone who tried to empathize with an acrobat felt neither what the acrobat actually felt, nor what he himself would feel in his place, but something

with an indefinite relation to this;⁴⁹ and even *that* feeling was not 'knowledge', for it was something pre-conceptual. In order to become knowledge, it first had to be transformed into an articulate statement.

This process of transformation was required, for even one's own experience could not be *reproduced* in thinking.⁵⁰ Against the opinion that concepts were restricted to *relations* between things and that understanding of the individual things themselves was necessarily a-conceptual and therefore artistic and intuitive, Weber placed his view that an empirical science could very well create a *Dingbegriff* that was not an exhaustive *Anschauung* but an artificial product of thought – a concept of something individual.⁵¹ It had to create such artificial concepts, moreover, because only concepts could be elements in statements of which the validity could be judged.⁵²

For most importantly, the validity of an interpretation was still only a hypothetical matter which had to be subjected to empirical criticism, 'just, from a logical perspective, like the hypotheses of the "natural sciences"'.⁵³ Rationally understandable actions might possess more *Evidenz* than non-rational events, but this understandability should not be confused with empirical certainty,⁵⁴ which could by definition only be reached by empirical means: 'all "understanding" presupposes (psychologically) "experience" and is (logically) only demonstrable as valid by reference to "experience"'.⁵⁵

In this way, then, understanding was an intellectual business like all others. It had its point of departure indeed in 'co-experience' (*inneres Mitmachen*) or 'empathy' (*Einfühlung*), but for the sake of knowledge, this had to be selectively articulated, 'a "co-experience" of teleologically selected elements'.⁵⁶ The bridge between indefinite feelings and articulate judgments was constituted by values⁵⁷ – value-relations defined what was essential and could therefore serve as guides in the construction of historical units:

[T]he 'historical unit' [*historisches Individuum*], even in its special sense of 'personality', can *logically* only be a 'unity' that is artificially constructed through *value-relations*, and therefore 'valuing' is the usual *psychological* stepping-stone for 'intellectual understanding' [*Verständnis*].⁵⁸

One's own values were 'instruments in the service of understanding [*Verstehen*], which is here the causal interpretation of the actions of others'.⁵⁹

For in its final goal, too, *Verstehen* resembled the treatment of individual natural phenomena:

the 'interpretive' investigation of motives by the historian is a *causal* attribution in a *logically* absolutely identical sense as the causal interpretation of some individual natural phenomenon, for its goal is the identification (at

least as a hypothesis) of a 'sufficient' condition [*Grund*], just as this is the only possible goal of the research of complex natural phenomena, if what matters are the individual elements of those phenomena.⁶⁰

Verstehen was not something radically opposite to *Erklären*, it was a form of it – in the historical sciences an essential one – and was in principle subject to the same procedures as any other kind of explanation within the empirical sciences.⁶¹ It was a specific *kind* of explanation *not* because it was unscientific (that is, valuing, a-conceptual or noncausal), but because it concerned 'meaningful, value-oriented human action and worked by virtue of the fact that the scholar himself could (by means of his own value-orientation) interpret such meaningful action.'⁶²

It was an empirical question to what extent specific human action was actually meaningful, and as said before, psychological laws could provide a different kind of causal understanding if (and in so far as) it turned out not to be meaningful. This is best explained by the hypothesis of rationality: 'interpretation through the categories of "goals" and "means"'.⁶³ Action was most understandable if it was 'teleologically rational': if the scholar could show that it served, given his knowledge of the 'objective' situation, as a means for the actor to reach a valued goal.⁶⁴ Of course, people did not always behave completely rationally, so this ideal-typical construction of what would be rational behavior should be compared to empirical evidence, after which it also served to show the causal scope of irrational elements in someone's actions,⁶⁵ which were then open to scientific psychological explanation:

when our historical knowledge is confronted with behavior that is 'irrational' in the sense of 'not interpretable', our need for causal explanation [*kausales Bedürfnis*] will often have to satisfy itself with a way of 'grasping' [*Begreifen*] oriented upon the nomological knowledge of, for example, psycho-pathology, or similar sciences.⁶⁶

Verstehen and scientific psychology were neither reducible to each other, nor active on incommensurable terrains; they were complementary methods serving the goal of the historical sciences, explaining different kinds of elements within the causal network of one reality.

Conclusion

In contrast with the views of his neo-Kantian predecessors Windelband and Rickert, who tried to disconnect scientific psychology as a generalizing discipline from the historical or cultural disciplines arguing that their respective modes of

understanding were incompatible, Weber decided that *as* sciences, these disciplines were working on the same terrain and could not simply ignore each other. All empirical sciences had in common that they attempted to construct objectively valid knowledge of aspects of reality, and for knowledge to be objectively valid meant for it to be value-free, conceptually articulate and empirically supported – there was no difference here between sciences occupied with the physical and the mental domain, *nor* was there a difference between generalizing and individualizing sciences. ‘Scientific’ psychology had to be purified from value-laden or metaphysical concepts, but the same was the case for historical understanding.

For the notion of *Verstehen*, this meant that in the sense of a subjectifying, valuing, intuitive act it had no place in science. The cultural scholar could, however, identify the motives of agents as causes of their behavior, motives which were connected to value-related concepts, which he in turn could understand because of his own value-relatedness. When his empathic ‘feeling’ was translated, by means of articulate *Wertbeziehung*, into definite concepts, and made part of intellectual statements applicable to empirical reality, it could serve the goal of causal explanation of those aspects of reality that were considered relevant, which was the goal of all empirical sciences.

It should serve this goal, moreover, because human action distinguished itself from other events precisely to the extent that it could only be ‘understood’, not explained by laws. In so far as human action was purposeful, it was best explained by the purpose toward which it was directed – by the values toward which it was oriented; in this case, *Verstehen* was not only possible, but appropriate.

Notes

- 1 On the historical relation of experimental psychology to the philosophical tradition, cf. K. Danziger, *Constructing the Subject: Historical Origins of Psychological Research* (Cambridge, 1990), 17–24.
- 2 The extent of Weber’s debt to especially Rickert has been subject to some controversy. I consider the argument by T. Burger, *Max Weber’s Theory of Concept Formation: History, Laws, and Ideal Types* (Durham, NC, 1976) to be right, who sees Weber’s ideas on concept formation in the historical sciences as an elaboration of Rickert’s theory, but the claim by Oakes (G. Oakes (1988), ‘Rickert’s value theory and the foundations of Weber’s methodology’, *Sociological theory* 6.1: 38–51) that Weber has to accept Rickert’s notion of objective value to be mistaken: for Weber, there is no contradiction between the subjectivity of values and the objectivity of science. A good assessment of Weber’s development of Rickert’s views is provided by F. Ringer, *Max Weber’s Methodology: The Unification of the Cultural and Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA; London, 1997), 36–62.
- 3 W. Windelband, *Geschichte und Naturwissenschaft* (Strasbourg, 1894), esp. 26.
- 4 ‘[S]achlichen Differenzen treten weit zurück hinter der logischen Gleichheit, welche alle diese Disziplinen hinsichtlich des formalen Charakters ihrer Erkenntnisziele besitzen:

- es sind immer Gesetze des Geschehens, welche sie suchen' (*ibid.*, 24). Translations from the German in this text are mine unless indicated otherwise.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 39-40.
 - 6 H.J. Rickert, *Kulturwissenschaft und Naturwissenschaft: ein Vortrag* (Freiburg, 1899), 14-16.
 - 7 '[A]lle Objekte der Religionswissenschaft, der Jurisprudenz, der Geschichte, der Philologie, der Nationalökonomie u.s.w., also aller 'Geisteswissenschaften' mit Ausnahme der Psychologie' (*ibid.*, 21-22).
 - 8 'die vornehmste Basis aller in einem höheren Sinne gefassten Kulturwissenschaft' (*ibid.*).
 - 9 *Ibid.*, 31-38.
 - 10 *Ibid.*, 45-47.
 - 11 *Ibid.*, 40-41.
 - 12 *Ibid.*, 41.
 - 13 'Erklären und Verstehen müssen wir auseinander halten. Erklären wollen wir die Natur des psychischen Seins, indem wir nach seinen allgemeinen Gesetzen suchen, das Seelenleben in der Geschichte aber wollen wir verstehen, indem wir es in seinem individuellen Verlauf nacherleben. Macht man sich diesen Unterschied klar, so wird man es nicht mehr selbstverständlich finden, dass der Historiker zur Ausbildung seines 'psychologischen' Verständnisses wissenschaftliche Psychologie treiben müsse, und wird dann auch in keiner Wissenschaft vom Seelenleben, die mit allgemeinen Begriffen arbeitet, die Grundlage der Geschichtswissenschaften sehen' (Rickert, *Kulturwissenschaft und Naturwissenschaft*, 42-43).
 - 14 'der [...] vor Allen die Psychologie zur Grundlage der 'Geisteswissenschaften' machen will' (*ibid.*, 41-42).
 - 15 W. Wundt, *Outlines of Psychology*, trans. C.H. Judd (1897), 16, cited by D.B. Klein, *A History of Scientific Psychology: Its Origins and Philosophical Backgrounds* (New York, London, 1970), 831-832.
 - 16 M. Weber, 'Roscher und Knies und die logischen Probleme der historischen Nationalökonomie', in M. Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre* (Tübingen 1922; orig. 1903-1906), 1-145. W. Hennis, 'A Science of Man: Max Weber and the Political Economy of the German Historical School', in W.J. Mommsen and J. Osterhammel (eds.), *Max Weber and His Contemporaries* (London, Boston, Sydney, 1987), 25-58, argues that Weber's later work must be understood primarily as a continuation of the tradition of the historical school, and that his criticism of Roscher and Knies fails to add up to a genuine break with their ideas (esp. *ibid.*, 40-52).
 - 17 Weber, 'Roscher und Knies', 63.
 - 18 'Psychologie wird als empirische Disziplin erst durch Ausschaltung von Werturteilen [...] möglich' (*ibid.*, 57).
 - 19 'die Ansicht [ist] noch heute nicht ganz verschwunden, dab es eben die Aufgabe der Psychologie sei, eine der Mathematik vergleichbare Rolle für die einzelnen 'Geisteswissenschaften' zu spielen', M. Weber, 'Die Objektivität sozialwissenschaftlicher Erkenntnis', in M. Weber, *Soziologie, Weltgeschichtliche Analysen*, ed. J. Winkelmann (Stuttgart, 1956, orig. 1904), 186-262, esp. 215.
 - 20 'liebe sich aber aus jenen "Gesetzen" und "Faktoren" die Wirklichkeit des Lebens jemals deduzieren [...] weil es uns für die Erkenntnis der Wirklichkeit auf die Konstellation ankommt, in der sich jene (hypothetischen!) "Faktoren" [...] vorfinden' (*ibid.*, 216).
 - 21 Windelband, *Geschichte und Naturwissenschaft*, 37-39.
 - 22 C.G. Hempel, 'The Function of General Laws in History', *Journal of Philosophy* 39.2 (1942), 35-48, esp. 36.

- 23 'in der "erlebten" Wirklichkeit [ist] von einer *spezifischen* "Unberechenbarkeit" menschlichen Tuns ganz und gar nichts zu spüren' (Weber, 'Roscher und Knies', 64).
- 24 *Ibid.*, 64-65.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 65-67.
- 26 'Verstehen, d.h. ein "innerlich""nacherlebbares" konkretes "Motiv" oder einen Komplex von solchen zu ermitteln, dem wir sie, mit einem je nach dem Quellenmaterial verschiedenen hohen Grade von Eindeutigkeit, zurechnen' (*ibid.*, 67).
- 27 'Die "deutbarkeit" ergibt hier ein Plus von "Berechenbarkeit", verglichen mit den nicht "deutbaren" Naturvorgängen' (*ibid.*, 69).
- 28 *Ibid.*, 69.
- 29 Cf. K.-H. Nusser, 'Verstehen und Erklären bei Max Weber', *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 93 (1986), 142-150, esp. 144-146; also H. Homann, *Gesetz und Wirklichkeit in den Sozialwissenschaften. Vom Methodenstreit zum Positivismusstreit* (Tübingen, 1989), 261-263, on the indispensability of *Verstehen* for the understanding of human action. Burger, *Max Weber's Theory*, 103-113, qualifies the importance that Weber attached to *Verstehen*, pointing out that Weber denied its special logical status (indeed, Weber, 'Roscher und Knies', 126-127, emphasizes that the concepts of which the different sciences make use are logically identical).
- 30 Weber, 'Roscher und Knies', 70.
- 31 'wir werden noch sehen, dab man von "Nachbildung" nur in sehr uneigentlichem Sinn reden darf' (*ibid.*, 70, n. 2).
- 32 *Ibid.*, 71.
- 33 'unmittelbares "Verstehen", d.h. ein Mit- und Nacherleben, Nachfühlen, Würdigen und Bewerten von "Aktualitäten"' (*ibid.*, 74).
- 34 *Ibid.*, 74-77.
- 35 *Ibid.*, 77-78.
- 36 *Ibid.*, 79-80.
- 37 'Erfahrungssätze der Psychopathologie und Gesetze der Psychophysik kommen für die Geschichte nur genau in dem gleichen Sinn in Betracht, wie physikalische, meteorologische, biologische Erkenntnisse. Das heißt: Es ist ganz und gar Frage des Einzelfalls, ob die Geschichte oder die Nationalökonomie von den feststehenden *Ergebnissen* einer psychophysischen Gesetzeswissenschaft Notiz zu nehmen Anlab hat' (*ibid.*, 82).
- 38 'die zuweilen gehörte Behauptung, dab die "Psychologie" [...] um deswillen für die Geschichte oder die Nationalökonomie ganz allgemein unentbehrliche "Grundwissenschaft" sein *müsse*, weil alle geschichtlichen und ökonomischen Vorgänge ein "psychisches" Stadium durchlaufen, durch ein solches "hindurchgehen" mühten, ist natürlich unhaltbar' (*ibid.*).
- 39 Weber, *Soziologie*, 212.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 219-220.
- 41 'In dieses Chaos bringt *nur* der Umstand Ordnung, dab in jedem Fall nur ein *Teil* der individuellen Wirklichkeit für uns Interesse und *Bedeutung* hat, weil nur er in Beziehung steht zu den *Kulturwertideen*, mit welchen wir an die Wirklichkeit herantreten' (*ibid.*, 220).
- 42 *Ibid.*, 223-224.
- 43 Weber, 'Roscher und Knies', 84.
- 44 *Ibid.*, 88-89.
- 45 *Ibid.*, 90-91.
- 46 *Ibid.*, 102-103. Cf. T.E. Huff, *Max Weber and the Methodology of the Social Sciences* (New Brunswick, London, 1984), esp. 46-55, on the subtle relation between reexperiencing and *Verstehen* as a scientific instrument.

- 47 Weber, 'Roscher und Knies', 111.
- 48 *Ibid.*, 98.
- 49 *Ibid.*, 107.
- 50 *Ibid.*, 110.
- 51 *Ibid.*, 108-109. The possibility of a concept of something individual was at the same time an epistemological necessity, as concrete empirical reality could not be 'thought'; cf. Burger, *Max Weber's Theory*, 59-77. The same considerations would lead Weber to emphasize the importance of ideal constructs: his famous ideal-types selectively highlighted certain well-defined aspects of reality (Weber, *Soziologie*, 227-238).
- 52 Weber, 'Roscher und Knies', 111.
- 53 'in logisch gleichem Sinn wie die Hypothesen der "Naturwissenschaften"' (*ibid.*, 100-102).
- 54 *Ibid.*, 117.
- 55 'jedes "Verstehen" setzt (psychologisch) "Erfahrung" voraus und ist (logisch) nur durch Bezugnahme auf "Erfahrung" als geltend demonstrierbar' (*ibid.*, 115).
- 56 'ein "Mitmachen" zweckvoll gewählter Bestandteile' (*ibid.*, 108).
- 57 *Ibid.*, 122-123.
- 58 'weil das "historische Individuum" auch in der speziellen Bedeutung der "Persönlichkeit" im *logischen* Sinn nur eine durch Wertbeziehung künstlich hergestellte "Einheit" sein kann, ist "Wertung" die normale *psychologische* Durchgangsstufe für das "intellektuelle Verständnis"' (*ibid.*, 124).
- 59 'Mittel in den Dienst des "Verstehens", und das heißt hier: der kausalen Deutung fremden Handelns' (*ibid.*, 125).
- 60 'die "deutende" Motivforschung des Historikers ist in absolut dem gleichen *logischen* Sinn *kausale* Zurechnung wie die kausale Interpretation irgendeines individuellen Naturvorganges, den ihr Ziel ist die Fest[st]ellung eines "zureichenden" Grundes (mindestens als Hypothese) genau so, wie dies bei komplexen Naturvorgängen, falls es auf deren individuelle Bestandteile ankommt, allein das Ziel der Forschung sein kann' (*ibid.*, 134).
- 61 Cf. also M. Heidelberger, 'Von Mill via von Kries to Max Weber: Causality, Explanation, and Understanding', in U. Feest (ed.), *Historical Perspectives on Erklären and Verstehen* (Dordrecht, 2010), 241-265, who in this respect locates Weber in the tradition of J.S. Mill, rather than Windelband and Rickert.
- 62 *Ibid.*, 126.
- 63 'Deutung mittels der Kategorien "Zweck" und "Mittel"' (*ibid.*, 126). Cf. F. Ringer, 'Max Weber on Causal Analysis, Interpretation, and Comparison', *History and Theory* 41.2 (2002), 163-178, esp. 92-120, on the relation between explanation and understanding and the function of hypothetical attribution of rationality.
- 64 Weber, 'Roscher und Knies', 127-129.
- 65 *Ibid.*, 130-131.
- 66 'wo es für unser historisches Erkennen auf ein im Sinne der *Undeutbarkeit* "irrationales" Verhalten einmal ankommt, da muß freilich unser kausales Bedürfnis regelmäßig sich mit einem an dem nomologischen Wissen etwa der Psychopathologie oder ähnlicher Wissenschaften orientierten "Begreifen" [...] begnügen' (*ibid.*, 67-68).