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# HEGEL

CONTRA  
SOCIOLOGY

GILLIAN ROSE

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**Hegel**  
**Contra Sociology**

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# HEGEL CONTRA SOCIOLOGY

Gillian Rose



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**For the Intriguer**

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PREFACE  
for 1995 reprint

The speculative exposition of Hegel developed in this book still provides the basis for a unique engagement with post-Hegelian thought, especially postmodernity, with its roots in Heideggerianism. By reassessing the relation between the early and the mature works of Hegel, the experience of negativity, the existential drama, is discovered at the heart of Hegelian rationalism. My subsequent reassessments of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, which challenges the tradition of regarding them as radically nihilistic or existential alternatives to Hegel, draw on this exposition of Hegel (*Dialectic of Nihilism* 1984, *The Broken Middle*, 1992, *Judaism and Modernity*, 1993). Instead of working with the general question of the dominance of Western metaphysics, the dilemma of addressing modern ethics and politics without arrogating the authority under question is seen as the ineluctable difficulty in Hegel, Nietzsche and Kierkegaard's engagement with modernity. This book, therefore, remains the core of the project to demonstrate a nonfoundational and radical Hegel, which overcomes the opposite between nihilism and rationalism. It provides the possibility for renewal of critical thought in the intellectual difficulty of our time.

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# I

## The Antinomies of Sociological Reason

### *Introduction*

This essay is an attempt to retrieve Hegelian speculative experience for social theory, not by means of any ingenuous and ahistorical 'return to Hegel', but, first of all, by recognizing and discussing the intellectual and historical barriers which stand in the way of any such rereading.

The classical origins of sociology are usually presented in terms of two competing paradigms associated with the writings of Durkheim and Weber and with a host of well-known dichotomies: *Erklären/Verstehen*, holism/individualism, naturalism/anti-naturalism. Yet, the thought of Durkheim and Weber, in spite of the divergences, rests on an identical framework: 'the neo-Kantian paradigm.'<sup>1</sup>

The transcendental structure of Durkheim's and of Weber's thought has been persistently overlooked, and this has resulted in fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of their sociologies. The common criticisms that Durkheim's most ambitious explanations are tautological, and that Weber's hypothesis of a rational ethic to explain rational capitalism is circular, miss the point that a transcendental account necessarily presupposes the actuality or existence of its object and seeks to discover the conditions of its possibility. The neo-Kantian paradigm is the source of both the strengths and weaknesses of Durkheim's and of Weber's sociology.

Many of the subsequent radical challenges to the sociology of Durkheim and Weber were motivated by the desire to break out of the constrictions of the neo-Kantian paradigm. Phenomenology and the Marxism of the Frankfurt School, for example, must be assessed in this light. Nevertheless, I shall argue, they remain essentially within that paradigm. More recent discussions of the significance of Marx for social theory have also been dominated by neo-Kantian assumptions.

The very idea of a scientific sociology, whether non-Marxist or

Marxist, is only possible as a form of neo-Kantianism. This neo-Kantianism bars access to the philosophy of Hegel, and, consequently, inhibits discussion of Marxism from the standpoint of its philosophical foundations. Yet, as I shall show, Hegel's thought anticipates and criticizes the whole neo-Kantian endeavour, its methodologism and its moralism, and consists of a wholly different mode of social analysis.

### *Validity and Values*

The 'return to Kant' which started in the second half of the nineteenth century took many different forms.<sup>2</sup> Among them were the critical realism of Alois Riehl (1844–1924), the metaphysical interpretations of Otto Liebmann (1840–1912) and Johannes Volkelt (1848–1930), and the neo-Friesianism<sup>3</sup> of Leonard Nelson (1882–1927).

The two most original developments were the logical idealism of the Marburg School, founded by Hermann Cohen (1842–1918) and Paul Natorp (1854–1924), and the logical value theory of the Heidelberg School founded by Wilhelm Windelband (1848–1915) and Heinrich Rickert (1863–1936). The Heidelberg School is also known as the Baden or South-West German School.

To call all these thinkers 'neo-Kantians' is, at best, vague, and in the case of the Marburg and of the Heidelberg School most inaccurate, because they reject Kantian critical philosophy in fundamental respects. They read the *Critique of Pure Reason* in the terms of the *Prolegomena* and transform the transcendental deduction into an exposition of objective validity. In the following paragraphs I rehearse this reading.

Kant made a rigorous distinction between the *quaestio quid facti*, the question of fact, and the *quaestio quid juris*, the question of right, that is, between the manner in which a concept is acquired through experience, and the deduction of its legal title, the manner in which concepts relate *a priori* to objects.<sup>4</sup> This justification of the employment of concepts would demonstrate their 'objective validity' (*objektive Gültigkeit*).<sup>5</sup>

Objective validity is established for what can be presented to us as an object within the limits of the constitution of our sensibility, and the functions of our understanding (*Verstand*). Objective validity is restricted to the condition of the possibility of objects of experience, of appearances, and to the conditions of all knowledge of objects.<sup>6</sup> The

task of justification is to show how 'the subjective conditions of thought'<sup>7</sup> and of our sensibility possess objective validity and not merely subjective validity, and thus how experience in general is brought into existence.<sup>8</sup>

The exposition concerns the transcendental conditions of knowledge, that is, of the *a priori* rules which 'make possible empirical knowledge in general'. These are general rules for the synthesis of perceptions into objects of experience.<sup>9</sup> It is these rules, or pure, synthetic judgements which relate to the possibility of experience, and upon this alone is founded the objective validity of their synthesis.<sup>10</sup>

Transcendental rules thus have an empirical employment. A merely subjective perception or representation becomes experience when it is subsumed under a concept which connects the empirical consciousness of the representation within a consciousness in general (*Bewusstsein überhaupt*), and thereby provides the empirical judgement with objective validity.<sup>11</sup> The perception is subsumed under a concept of the understanding, and can then form part of a judgement of experience.

For example, to say 'when the sun shines, the stone is warm', is a judgement of perception. It merely conjoins the two perceptions, however often they have been perceived. 'But if I say the sun *warms* the stone the concept of cause proper to the understanding is added to the perception, and connects the concept of warmth with the concept of sunshine. The synthetic judgement becomes necessarily universally valid, consequently objective, and is converted from a perception into an experience.'<sup>12</sup>

The *a priori* rule for experience in general is employed empirically in relation to particular perceptions. It is an *immanent* principle whose application is confined entirely within the limits of possible experience.<sup>13</sup> However, a transcendental principle may be misemployed: that is, employed in a way which extends beyond the limits of experience. This is merely an erroneous use of the understanding. It is essentially different from a *transcendent* principle. A transcendent principle is not an error of judgement, the wrong use of the right principle, but an exhortation to tear down the boundaries of experience and to seize possession of an entirely new domain which recognizes no limits of demarcation.<sup>14</sup>

It follows from a transcendental account of experience that certain necessary features of the explanation are themselves transcendent and hence unknowable. The unity of consciousness in general which the

object makes necessary is the formal unity of consciousness in the synthesis of the manifold of representation.<sup>15</sup> This pure, original, unchangeable consciousness of the identity of the self, 'the transcendental unity of apperception', is at the same time a consciousness of the synthesis of appearances according to rules.<sup>16</sup> It is distinguished from empirical consciousness which is in itself diverse and without relation to the identity of the subject, and which therefore has only subjective validity.<sup>17</sup> The self as transcendental unity is distinguished from the self as intuited object, and can only know itself as it appears to itself and not as it is in itself.<sup>18</sup> Hence pure consciousness, the source of objective validity, is unknowable.

Knowledge is the synthesis of the manifold of perception into appearances. These appearances do not exist in themselves, but only relative to the subject in which they inhere. Appearances are not things-in-themselves, but depend on our constituting them. Yet they are also 'representations of things which are *unknown* as regards what they may be in themselves'.<sup>19</sup>

In spite of Kant's separation of objective and subjective validity, of the question of right from the question of fact, of an empirical from a transcendental account, the critical philosophy lends itself to a psychological reading. For a transcendental account may transform the logical question of validity into the epistemological question of how we may rightly acquire knowledge. Objective validity is established by dividing the mind into faculties, and by reference to perception and representation. According to this reading, the whole project for a transcendental logic reduces validity to the synthesis of representations, to the description of processes of consciousness.

Furthermore, a transcendental account reduces knowledge to 'experience', to the synthesis of appearances. It makes the conditions of the *possibility* of experience in general likewise the conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience.<sup>20</sup> Objective validity pertains to the synthesis of experience, but not to any knowledge of things-in-themselves. If the idea that the mind synthesizes the objects of knowledge is accepted, then it can be argued that it makes no sense to retain 'reality' for something beyond our knowledge. The production of objects may equally well be said to be the production of their reality, not of their appearance. According to this criticism the hypothesis of things-in-themselves is otiose.

Alternatively, the restriction of legitimate empirical knowledge may

be accepted, but it may be denied that this is the only kind of knowledge possible to us. There may be other kinds of knowledge, theoretical and practical, which open up realms which are transcendent in strictly Kantian terms.

These criticisms accept the idea of a transcendental enquiry, but reject some of the conclusions which Kant drew. Other criticisms argue that the notion of the thing-in-itself is contradictory. For if the thing-in-itself is unknowable, how can it be called a 'thing'? If it is unknowable, how can its relation to appearances, which are knowable, be specified? The relation cannot be *causal*, because we could then subsume it under the concept of cause, a category of the understanding, and it would be knowable.

Thus, on the one hand, it may be argued that logical validity has nothing to do with epistemology, with questions of cognition. On the other hand, it may be argued that cognition cannot be restricted to experience, nor does it consist of the synthesis of appearances.

There have been four major generations of critics of Kant. The first generation, 1780–1790, consisted notably of K. L. Reinhold (1758–1823), S. Maimon (1753–1800) and F. H. Jacobi (1743–1819). Their disputes were concentrated on the status of the thing-in-itself.<sup>21</sup> The second generation, Fichte, Schelling, Hölderlin, the early Romantics and Hegel, tried to resolve these Kantian aporias by giving primacy to Kant's practical philosophy or to the *Critique of Judgement*. The third generation, in the period after Hegel's death, 1830–1870, included Bernard Bolzano (1781–1848) and Rudolf Hermann Lotze (1817–1881). They supplemented Kant's critical philosophy with Leibnizian and Platonic metaphysics. The fourth generation after 1870, known as 'the neo-Kantians', opposed the psychologism of their day which culminated in Wilhelm Wundt's (1832–1920) psychological reading of Kant. They sought to develop a non-transcendental, non-formal logic as the basis for the exact and historical sciences.<sup>22</sup>

This fourth generation of Kant critics flourished in the period prior to the First World War. They took their transformation of Kant's critical philosophy in crucial respects from the third generation, read it back into the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and made it serve new ends. It is this position from which the idea of a scientific sociology arose.

Who now reads Lotze? It is difficult for us to realize how great a stir he made in the world . . .<sup>23</sup> While Lotze is now unknown, I shall argue that his way of thinking is by no means dead. In the 1870s in England

and in America Lotze was considered to be as great a German philosopher as Kant and Hegel. His main works were translated into English; they appeared on university syllabuses, and attracted the interest and comment of major philosophers on both sides of the Atlantic: Josiah Royce and George Santayana, T. H. Green and Bernard Bosanquet.<sup>24</sup>

In Germany Lotze's notions of 'validity' and 'values' became the foundation of the Marburg and Heidelberg schools of neo-Kantianism and of their sociological offspring. The 'neo-Kantian paradigm' refers to those who attempted a new answer to the Kantian question of validity within the framework of validity and values first developed by Lotze. Within this framework the question of validity may be given priority over the question of values, or, the question of values may be given priority over the question of validity. Hence reconsideration of Lotze is essential for comprehending the transition from Kantian epistemology to neo-Kantian sociology.

The division of Lotze's major work, *Logic*, into three parts, the first entitled 'Of Thought (Pure Logic)' and the third entitled 'On Knowledge (Methodology)', indicates his strict separation of the logical question of validity from the epistemological question of cognition, the way knowledge is acquired on the basis of perception and representation.<sup>25</sup> Kant's *quaestio quid juris*, the deduction of objective validity, refers to the *a priori* preconditions of possible experience. But, for Lotze, the validity of the *a priori* elements of thought is established independently of any reference to possible experience, to representation, to the being either of appearances or of things-in-themselves. Only if validity can be established independently of cognition can the process of cognition itself be critically assessed. Both Kant's (*objektive*) *Gültigkeit* and Lotze's *Geltung* are translated into English as 'validity', but they do not have the same meaning.

'Validity' for Lotze, in opposition to Kant, pertains to propositions not to concepts.<sup>26</sup> Propositions can be affirmed or denied regardless of whether we are in a position actually to perceive or experience the objects to which the contents of those propositions refer. Hence a proposition which we affirm or deny has a reality which is different from the reality of events which 'occur', or of things which 'exist' or 'are'. The reality of a proposition means that it holds or is valid, and that its opposite does not hold. For example, the proposition '*x ist [is]*' is contrasted with the proposition '*x gilt [holds or is valid]*'.<sup>27</sup>

This kind of reality, the validity of truths, is quite distinct from the

question of whether their contents can be related to any object in the external, spatio-temporal world:<sup>28</sup>

This conception of validity . . . at once excludes the substance of the valid assertion from the reality of the actual being and implies its independence of human thought. As little as we can say how it happens that anything *is* or *occurs*, so little can we explain how it comes about that a truth has validity; the latter conception has to be regarded as much as the former as ultimate and underivable, a conception of which everyone may know what he means by it, but which cannot be constructed out of any constituent elements which do not already contain it.<sup>29</sup>

In addition to this twofold distinction between the reality of necessarily valid truths which belong to thinking, and the reality of given facts which belongs to perception and cognition, there is a third reality: the reality of determination of value.<sup>30</sup>

Perception of things is always accompanied by feelings of value: 'we clothe the world of values in the world of forms [nature]', although the connection between the two is not knowable, and can only be based on conviction.<sup>31</sup> Our way of attributing value and meaning depends on judgements which do not conform to the principles of scientific understanding (*Verstand*), but are based on a 'reason receptive to values' (*Wertempfindende Vernunft*). Reason endows values with validity by recognizing the inner value of contents in a way which cannot be justified according to the criteria of disinterested understanding.<sup>32</sup> We have an unshakeable faith in the validity of this value-determining reason, which is as 'genuine a revelation' as the investigations of the understanding are an instrument of experience.<sup>33</sup> Value-determining reason has its meaning and goal in ethical action, and thus, to a certain extent, determines the operations of the understanding.<sup>34</sup>

This distinction between moral or value-determining reason (*Vernunft*) and a faculty of perception and cognition (*Verstand*) is close to Kant's distinction between the legitimate role of the ideas of reason in moral philosophy, and the restriction of cognition to empirical reality in theoretical philosophy. But Lotze's distinction between validity, which he compares to Plato's Ideas, and empirical cognition is contrary to the meaning of Kant's theory which specifically denies any legitimate employment to Plato's Ideas in theoretical philosophy.<sup>35</sup>

In spite of the coincidence between Lotze and Kant on the relation of



*Verstand* and *Vernunft* in moral philosophy, Lotze's reformulation and terminology is responsible for the way in which moral philosophy became known as philosophy of value (*Wertphilosophie*), and for the emphasis on the undeniable and immediate validity of moral values.<sup>36</sup>

Lotze's acceptance of Kant's faculties of the mind and their restricted legitimate employment is only one aspect of a philosophical system which culminates in the personality of God, the source of validity and values, and in whose personality our own participates. God's existence cannot be proved in any logical way: it is the highest value of which we are conscious and has an immediate certainty and validity.<sup>37</sup>

However, it is Lotze's threefold distinction between validity, cognition of empirical reality and values which has been of importance, not the Leibnizian metaphysics which complements them.

All our analysis of the course of the world ends in leading our thought back to a consciousness of necessarily valid truths, our perceptions to the intuition of immediately given facts of reality, our conscience to the recognition of an absolute standard of all determinations of value.<sup>38</sup>

In this passage 'reality' (*Wirklichkeit*) is reserved for empirical cognition, whereas in the *Logic* different kinds of reality are distinguished, such as empirical reality and the reality of validity. In this passage, too, 'validity' is reserved for 'truths', but, in the *Microcosmos* generally, values also have 'ultimate' and undeniable validity. For Lotze the reality of validity and the reality of values were ultimate, undeniable and *separate* spheres of life.

On the basis of Lotze's thought, critical, transcendental philosophy became transformed into the neo-Kantian paradigm of *Geltung* and *Werte*, validity and values. The three Kantian critical questions 'What makes judgements of experience, of morality, of beauty objectively valid?' become the questions 'What is the nature of validity in general?' and 'What is the relation between validity and its objects?' Logic is separated from cognition, validity from representation, but not from its objects. The result is a general but not a formal logic: a methodology.

A transcendental logic enquires into the conditions of the possibility of experience which is actual. A general logic enquires into how an object can and should exist or be created. Both kinds of enquiries depend on the formulation of demarcation criteria which distinguish

correct from incorrect use of rules. The transcendental approach does not claim to be the *origin* of the existence of the experience whose precondition or possibility is uncovered. The general logic, however, is prescriptive and normative not merely in relation to rules of validity, but also in relation to the creation of the object which corresponds to those rules. The creation of this object, its objectification, becomes a 'never-ending task' for the Marburg School, a prescription (*Sollen*) for the Heidelberg School. This objectification is not the objectification of reality in general, but the objectification of the object domains of individual sciences.

Lotze's emphasis on the reality of validity in contra-distinction to the reality of empirical existence resulted in the debasement of spatio-temporal reality, and in the development of philosophies of identity: identity between pure logic and its objectifications. Lotze's distinction between validity and values proved ambiguous. On one construal, 'validity' and 'values' are equally ultimate and underivable; on another construal, 'values' or meaning are the primary bearers of validity. In this case 'values' become the origin of logical validity as well as of the moral law. In Kant and Lotze ultimate and autonomous value was the determinant of moral life, but not of theoretical validity. In the works of the Heidelberg School empirical reality or existence is subordinate to this transcendent realm of value.

The Marburg School gave the question of validity priority over the question of values; the Heidelberg School gave the question of values priority over the question of validity. But in both cases the transformation of Kant's critical method into a logic of validity (*Geltungslogik*), a general method, excluded any enquiry into empirical reality. Objectification became the correlate of pure logic.

Lotze's demarcation of validity set it apart from any relation either to processes of consciousness or to consciousness in general (*Bewusstsein überhaupt*). Validity was separate even from transcendental genesis, but the price of this critique of the philosophy of consciousness, of transcendental psychology and epistemology, was the later development of philosophies of identity. Lotze kept the examination of perception and cognition strictly separate from the logic of thinking. But, in subsequent versions of logic of validity (*Geltungslogik*), thought, with its ultimate and underivable validity, becomes the thinking of being, or, validity emanates from a transcendent sphere of value which is both the criterion and object of knowledge.

Like Lotze, the Marburg School argued that there is a basis in Kant for a 'pure logic' (Cohen), or a 'general logic' (Natorp). This means a logic of thought which is independent of the process of cognition.<sup>39</sup> Since Kant's theoretical philosophy was directed against both the idea of general logic and the idea of a 'pure' reason, the Marburg notion of a pure logic heralds the end of transcendental logic.<sup>40</sup>

Cohen and Natorp reinterpreted Kant's transcendental *a priori* judgements as ontological principles without the reference to their necessarily empirical employment which alone guaranteed their 'objective validity' in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. They argued that Kant like Plato (*sic*) presupposes the 'factual validity' (*faktische Geltung*) of the principles of mathematics. These principles (*Grundsätze*), which Plato called Ideas, are 'hypotheses' in the sense of 'laying the base' (*Grundlegung*) of Kant's new philosophical method.<sup>41</sup> The principles are 'pure' because they are self-evident and underivable.

According to Cohen, Kant merely misnamed the principles when he called them 'synthetic', and he was wrong to complete their meaning by connecting their employment to sensuous perception and intuition.<sup>42</sup> For the idea that thought is a 'synthesis' makes its unity depend on a *given* plurality which it synthesizes. But unity and plurality are equally preconditions of any thought. Hence they cannot be 'given' to thought but must be produced or created by the act of thinking itself. There must be an 'origin' (*Ursprung*) of thought which is prior to both unifying and diversifying, prior to the distinction between thought and being. Logic is the logic of this origin.<sup>43</sup> Instead of calling thought a 'synthesis', with this heteronomous implication, thought should be considered a creating or producing (*Erzeugen*).<sup>44</sup>

The basic form of thought is the judgement. A judgement affirms or denies a state of affairs. Lotze argued that the reality of the validity which pertains to propositions is of a different kind from the reality of things which 'are' or 'exist'. For Cohen, too, the validity of judgements is independent of representation and perception, of processes of consciousness. But, for Cohen, judgements are always judgements of being. For being can only be posited by a judgement. No distinction can be made between the logic of thinking and the reality of 'being' (*Sein*). Being is the being of thinking: and thinking is the thinking of being (of being as object by being as subject: *genitivus objectivus* and *genitivus subjectivus*). Thinking in this sense is thinking of 'cognemes' (*Erkenntnisse*). Logic, which is no longer critical or transcendental, is thus not

formal, but a *doctrine* of cognemes, based on the principles of mathematical natural science.<sup>45</sup>

The 'unity of consciousness' does not refer to consciousness in a realm of opposition between itself and its objects. It refers to a unity based on the principle of pure logic, the logic of scientific consciousness.<sup>46</sup> Scientific thought is the unity of the creating and its creations and its activities of unifying and diversifying are a never-ending, infinite task.<sup>47</sup>

Logic investigates judgements in general, the genus character of judgement, and the different species of judgements. Each species of judgement creates and presupposes a corresponding unity of cognemes and objects in its respective domain.<sup>48</sup>

This logic, based on the exact mathematical sciences is the ideal for the human and cultural sciences too:<sup>49</sup>

All the human sciences share the presupposition of the mathematical natural sciences that thought is able to give and to secure fixed, determinate and unchanging creations. The identity of Parmenides is the pole-star of all science and all research, of all thinking.<sup>50</sup>

The understanding is the faculty of rules.<sup>51</sup>

The Heidelberg School of neo-Kantianism was as opposed to transcendental logic as the Marburg School, and also cloaked its opposition in Kantian terminology.

Like Lotze and the Marburg School, Windelband and Rickert believed that the origin and nature of validity cannot be ascertained by reference to representation or to the contents of consciousness.<sup>52</sup> Cognition cannot be understood as the synthesis of appearances, as knowledge of spatio-temporal objects beyond which lies the reality of things-in-themselves.<sup>53</sup> Rickert argued that the twin assumptions of a knowing subject and a reality independent of the subject, but somehow connected with it in the medium of representation, were solipsistic and subjective.<sup>54</sup>

Rickert agreed with Lotze and Cohen that the primary act of consciousness is not representation or perception but judgement. Unlike Lotze and Cohen, however, Rickert argued that a judgement is not valid because it affirms or posits what is true, but, on the contrary, it is the prescriptive force of the judgement which confers validity on what we call truth.<sup>55</sup> This prescription which we acknowledge when we

make a judgement is 'an ought' (*ein Sollen*) or 'a value', and the moral connotations of *Sollen* and 'value' are retained in this account of judging.<sup>56</sup> In other terms, a judgement does not have a value because it is true, but it acquires truth by force of its value. Value confers both meaning and authority on the judgement, its validity. Rickert claimed that this explication of validity was no more circular than the one it replaced.<sup>57</sup>

Validity is thus in no sense derived from the relation of the judgement to empirical reality, but originates in the validity of the *Sollen*. This validity does not depend on the judging subject or consciousness. For it belongs to the very meaning of affirming a judgement that the prescription which is thereby acknowledged has a validity independent of the act of acknowledgement.<sup>58</sup> Rickert calls this validity of *Sollen* or values 'transcendent', by which he means both that validity is prior to any act of judging, and the more conventional meaning of 'transcendent': that validity cannot be justified within the bounds of spatio-temporal experience. Unfortunately, Rickert's insistence that values or prescriptions are *sui generis* has been hypostatized by commentators who present it as a timeless realm of eternal values, to which our access, as empirical consciousness, is limited.<sup>59</sup>

Like Lotze, Rickert distinguished between the reality of empirical existence and the 'irreality' of validity. By calling validity 'irreal' he meant that to say something is (*ist*), is to attribute a different mode of reality from that involved in the claim that something holds or is valid (*gilt*).<sup>60</sup> As in Lotze, the reality of validity is underivable, but, unlike Lotze, the force which is underivable but which confers validity is called 'value' or *Sollen*. It is value which is ultimately underivable or *sui generis*. Logical validity has a moral imprimatur.

As in the works of the Marburg School the destruction of subject/object epistemology has implications for the status of the object-domain (*Gegenständlichkeit*).<sup>61</sup> Rickert calls values or *Sollen* both the *criterion* of cognition and the *object* of cognition.<sup>62</sup> This paradox arises because, from the point of view of the judging consciousness, the *Sollen* or value is a criterion, a prescriptive force which confers validity. But judging consciousness is itself only possible because value or *Sollen* is valid independent of the act of judgement. In this sense value or *Sollen* is the object of knowledge.

From the point of view of the judging consciousness, a *Sollen* or value is always acknowledged in judging. It is this acknowledgement

which makes cognition possible, but the acknowledgement itself is not necessarily conscious or known.<sup>63</sup> The unity of the object depends on the subject-predicate unity of a judgement which necessarily acknowledges a value.<sup>64</sup>

Rickert's *Sollen* or valid values, which make possible the unity of the object in judgement, and Cohen's 'pure cognemes', which make possible the unity of the object created by different kinds of judgement, provide a theoretical identity impossible within the terms of Kant's theoretical philosophy. The Marburg and the Heidelberg School are usually contrasted, because Cohen extended a logic based on the mathematical natural sciences to all cognition, while Rickert distinguished between the object of natural science and the object of the historical and cultural sciences. But Cohen's logic of identity, the circle of pure cognemes, judgements and objects, and Rickert's transcendental logic, the circle of value, judgements and objects, turn transcendental logic into *Geltungslogik*. They turn Kant's critical method into an autonomous logic of validity based on an original, underivable unity which is not the unity of consciousness. In both cases objectification is the correlate of the logic and can be methodically examined in any individual science. 'Validity', 'objectification' and 'method' do not have a transcendental or formal status but constitute a metaphysics of a new kind.

### *Morality and Method*

The development of the idea of a scientific sociology was inseparable from the transformation of transcendental logic into *Geltungslogik*, the paradigm of validity and values.

*Prima facie* the idea of a sociological account of validity appears contradictory. For a sociological interpretation of experience, like a psychological one, might be expected to address itself to the *quaestio quid facti*, not the *quaestio quid juris*, to the history and genesis of experience, not to its justification or validity.

On the contrary, the sociology of Durkheim and of Weber endorsed the neo-Kantian critique of psychologism, the derivation of validity from processes of consciousness. Like the neo-Kantians, Durkheim and Weber treated the question of validity as pertaining to a distinct *realm* of moral facts (Durkheim) or values (Weber) which is contrasted with

the realm of individual sensations or perceptions (Durkheim) or from the psychology of the individual (Weber).

Durkheim granted the question of validity priority over the question of values, and made validity into the sociological foundation of values (moral facts). Weber granted the question of values priority over the question of validity and made values into the sociological foundation of validity (legitimacy). The meaning of the paradigm of validity and values was decisively changed. It was the ambition of sociology to substitute itself for traditional theoretical and practical philosophy, as well as to secure a sociological object-domain *sui generis*.

The identification of a realm of values (*Sollen*) or moral facts, and the development of a scientific method for their investigation, a Cohen-like logic in the case of Durkheim's *Rules*, a Rickertian logic of the cultural sciences in the case of Weber, were classical neo-Kantian moves in the original project to found a scientific sociology.

But Durkheim and Weber turn a Kantian argument against neo-Kantianism. For when it is argued that it is society or culture which confers objective validity on social facts or values, then the argument acquires a metacritical or 'quasi-transcendental' structure. The social or cultural *a priori* is the precondition of the possibility of actual social facts or values (transcendental). The identified, actual, valid facts or values can be treated as the objects of a general logic (naturalistic). The status of the precondition becomes ambiguous: it is an *a priori*, that is, not empirical, for it is the basis of the possibility of experience. But a 'sociological' *a priori* is, *ex hypothesi*, external to the mind, and hence appears to acquire the status of a natural object or cause. The status of the relation between the sociological precondition and the conditioned becomes correspondingly ambiguous in all sociological quasi-transcendental arguments.

Both Durkheim and Weber were educated and worked within neo-Kantian circles. Weber's connections with the Heidelberg neo-Kantians especially Rickert, are well-known.<sup>65</sup> Durkheim was closely associated with the leading French representatives of German neo-Kantianism: Charles Renouvier, Emile Boutroux, Octave Hamelin and Leon Brunschwig. He was taught by Boutroux at the *Ecole Normale Supérieure*, 1879–1882, and was greatly influenced when a student by the writings of Renouvier. Hamelin was a life-long friend, and, together with Brunschwig, they were later grouped around the journal *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, the organ of French neo-Kantianism.<sup>66</sup>

Durkheim claimed in several places that he was providing an alternative answer to the critical Kantian questions 'How are theoretical and moral judgements possible or objectively valid?'<sup>67</sup> He rejected Kant's theory of the application of the fundamental categories of thought and of faculties of the mind to explain the *a priori* preconditions of judgement, because, he said, it was tautological and uninformative, 'a purely verbal answer'.<sup>68</sup> Durkheim argued instead that mental capacities and the origin and employment of the categories themselves presuppose social organization: that society as a reality *sui generis* is the origin of the validity of judgements.<sup>69</sup> It is important to note that he did not deny that the categories are *a priori*, nor did he reject the form of the Kantian question: 'X is actual, what are the conditions of its possibility, of its objective validity?' For Durkheim, moral judgement, social facts or the categories are actual, and the task is to discover the social condition of their possibility, of their validity.<sup>70</sup>

The criterion for the existence of a moral or social fact is coercive force or sanction, and coercive force or moral power is also the criterion for the existence of the 'collective being' or 'personality'. This 'collective being', the origin of the moral force which confers validity on social institutions or social facts, is underivable, '*sui generis*': 'Society is a moral power . . . a *sui generis* force.'<sup>71</sup> It cannot be a fact, because it is the precondition of social facts and hence cannot be one of them: it is 'a transcendent objectivity'.<sup>72</sup>

Durkheim draws attention to the resemblance between what he calls the 'postulate' of society as 'a moral being', and Kant's postulate of God:

The similarity between this argument and that of Kant will be noted. Kant postulates God, since without this hypothesis morality is unintelligible. We postulate a society specifically distinct from individuals, since otherwise morality has no object and duty no roots. Let us add that this postulate is easily verified by experience.<sup>73</sup>

Strictly speaking, in Kantian terms, a 'postulate' is introduced when it is impossible in principle for any experience to correspond to a concept. In particular, the whole critical philosophy was directed against the idea that any experience could correspond to the concept 'God'. According to Kant, the postulate or idea of 'God' can only be a *regulative* not a constitutive principle, that is, it cannot be a principle which is the basis of objective validity.<sup>74</sup> But, for Durkheim, society *sui generis*



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