Introduction to the theory of science and metaphysics

Riehl Alois
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THE ENGLISH AND FOREIGN

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PHILOSOPHY.

INTRODUCTION TO
THE THEORY OF SCIENCE
AND METAPHYSICS.

BY

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TRANSLATED BY

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

Professor Riehl's book on Philosophical Criticism has made a deep impression on philosophical thinkers in Germany; a second edition of the original work is already called for, and parts of it have been republished in a Russian translation. Even after the careful and thorough review of the book by Professor Adamson, in Mind, January 1889, I find that it is not generally known to English and American readers, so that I believe its usefulness will be materially increased by a translation into English. The original work consisted of three parts. The first, entitled "History and Method of Philosophical Criticism," gives a history of the critical method as used in turn by Locke, Hume, and Kant. The second part discusses the sense basis of experience, sensation, space and time, and perception, and also the logical principles of scientific experience: namely, the principle of identity, causality, and the categories of substance and force. The third part, of which the present work is a translation, discusses the problems of the general theory of science, and problems of metaphysics, from the standpoint of the critical philosophy.

It is idle to expect that any discussion of such problems will command complete assent from the reader, any more than from the translator, but the treatment in the present volume seems to me to shed much light on some problems that are widely discussed to-day, and to open certain problems anew which we have too hastily settled. The critique of metaphysics differs from those more familiar to English readers, in that it is largely
devoted to that most widespread metaphysics of our own
day which calls itself by the name of science, and brings
forward its dogmas under the shelter of columns of
figures and records of observations. The conception of
scientific experience is profoundly modified by Professor
Riehl's theory of the immediate perception of the ex-
ternal world; and the question as to the relation of
psychical phenomena and physical processes receives a
clear answer in harmony with the positions of the
Kantian philosophy. Finally, I should like to call
attention to the distinct recognition of the social factors in
experience, e.g., in Part I., chapter iii.; Part II., chapters
i. and iii. The principles of logic and of ethics have a
social existence and sphere of activity, which has been
obscured by the tendency among philosophers to regard
each mind as an independent unit or monad. Individual
personality is a social product, and the attempt to ex-
plain thought and action without reference to society is
essentially absurd.

With reference to the translation itself only a word
is necessary. I have ordinarily translated the word
Vorstellung by idea, although not infrequently some
other word was necessary to bring out the sense clearly;
I have written Idee when the German word was Idee,
except in some cases where it seemed fair to translate
this word by ideal. It goes without saying that I have
not attempted to reproduce the German literally, but
I hope the meaning has been rendered with accuracy.
Much of the translation has been read by Professor
Riehl, and parts of it by other friends; the author has
made numerous minor changes and corrections which
will be incorporated in the second German edition.

ARTHUR FAIRBANKS.

NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT, U.S.A.,
April 1894.
AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The German original of this work, appearing in 1887, formed the conclusion of a larger work, "Philosophical Criticism, and its Meaning for Positive Science." Still, the following investigations as to the general theory of science, and metaphysics, have a considerable degree of independence, both as to the subjects treated, and the form of treatment.

The first division of the book discusses problems of the general theory of science: questions as to the true idea of philosophy, and the distinction between metaphysical and scientific system-making, as to the limits of knowledge which are found to be its presuppositions, and as to the origin and conception of experience. The second part treats those metaphysical problems which the critical method can grasp and handle scientifically. The author includes under this heading the questions as to the reality of the external world, the connection of psychical phenomena with material processes, the problem of the freedom of the will, the cosmological problem of the infinite, in so far as this stands in connection with the principle of the indestructibility of matter, the persistence of force, and the fundamental idea of causality, and finally the discussion of the relation of necessity and adaptation in nature, of the mechanical and the telcological conception of things.

The separation of the book into two parts should not destroy the inner connection of the thoughts. Although
this arrangement of the material may have necessitated some repetition, still it had the advantage of giving greater freedom to the discussion than would have been possible if the topics had been arranged according to an exact system. The reader will recognise that chapters i. and iv. of the first part stand in close connection, as also chapter ii. of the first part, and chapters ii. and v. of the second part.

In treating the question of the determinism of the will and practical freedom, it proved impossible to avoid some questions of practical philosophy. In antithesis to ordinarily received opinion, it was necessary to show that determinism alone explains moral responsibility and justifies it. With reference to the history of the idea of responsibility (p. 246), it may be added that in primitive states of society, it is not the doer at all, but rather his clan, which is held responsible for an act.

May the book in this form also contribute something to the understanding of these scientific problems, as well as to the distinctly practical task of philosophy.

A. RIEHL.

Freiburg i. B., April 1894.
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