
The Limitations of Minor Logic

Source: *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, Jan. 21, 1904, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Jan. 21, 1904), pp. 45-46

Published by: Journal of Philosophy, Inc.

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2010662>

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of the cultural development of man as well as of every single historical process, and he views knowledge teleologically. This discussion in methodology brings us back to a fundamental problem of metaphysics—the relation of the individual and the universal. Rickert seems, on the whole, to be right in his account of the contrast in method between the natural sciences and the historical or humanistic sciences. But he does nothing to solve the dualism in our knowledge which this contrast creates. It may be true that the real is always individual. If so, we need to know what is the function and what constitutes the validity of the universals of science in relation to reality. Merely to make good the assertion that the real is the individual, one must give a clearer answer to this question than Rickert has done. On the other hand, there seems good ground for holding that there are conceptual universals or laws, valid for the social-historical world, although they are more remote and less easily discovered than in natural science. What is the significance of these universals in relation to the so-called general culture-values and to the individual real? Rickert has raised metaphysical problems which can not be laid simply by calling his opponents ‘conceptual realists.’ The unity of knowledge is a postulate of philosophical thinking, and this unity is left in question by the sharp antithesis of the natural and the historical sciences.

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THE LIMITATIONS OF MINOR LOGIC.

IN the last number of this journal, Mrs. Franklin says: “A recent writer in *Science* slips into a curious error in phraseology. He allows himself to speak of a ‘superabundance of physicians going hand in hand with a shortage of patients’ as being attributed to, etc. But the superabundance of physicians is the same thing as the shortage of patients,” etc. The editor of a journal disclaims responsibility for the opinions and doubtless also for the logic of its contributors. But in this case the responsibility appears to be thrown on the journal rather than on the contributor, who is not mentioned. We are all ready to confess that we are miserable sinners, but usually object to the imputation of any particular sin. I venture to suggest that Mrs. Franklin’s comments illustrate the limitations of minor logic rather than a lapse in logic on the part of the writer. He was discussing the statistics of medical students, and the conclusion of his sentence (omitted by Mrs. Franklin) was ‘must be attributed to a decrease in the number of illnesses, a decrease due to the application of modern methods of preventive

medicine.' The writer of course means that there has been an increase in the number of physicians as compared with the total population, and that at the same time the number of illnesses, as compared with the total population, has decreased, largely owing to the increased number of physicians. These statements are by no means the same. It would scarcely be worth the while to make this explanation if it were not that it illustrates the fact that formal logic tends to ignore the complexity of thought—hence its comparative barrenness.

EDITOR OF SCIENCE.

REVIEWS AND ABSTRACTS OF LITERATURE.

The Nature of Goodness. GEORGE H. PALMER. Houghton, Mifflin & Co. 1903.

That a need exists for a good text-book in ethics has long been evident from the succession of introductions which have appeared of late years. Mackenzie's 'Manual' and Muirhead's 'Elements' have held their own pretty well, yet have not been felt to satisfy the need completely. Nor has Seth's 'Principles,' though marking an advance, quite realized the ideal. The Hegelian spirit seems to manifest itself in a tendency to over subtlety and refinement in details which is confusing to a beginner, and at the same time to a vagueness in the statement of first principles which often produces in the reader a sense of mystery and elevation, but by no means conduces to clearness of comprehension. The student is not impressed with the reality of the analysis—the principles discovered seem to be those of an experience other than his own—the whole discussion seems remote from life, and he retains a vague feeling that his study has not answered his legitimate expectations.

Apparently with a desire to meet these objections we have had two more recent works, one professedly an introduction, the other a more comprehensive treatise, those of Fite and Mezes. The latter of these, in its preliminary discussions of the nature of ethics and the characteristics of moral experience, is refreshingly real and concrete. One feels that he is face to face with life and engaged with its analysis. Yet the book as a whole lacks that unity of principle and treatment necessary to make it intelligible to a beginner. The materials are good but they appear to have mastered the builder. Dr. Fite's 'Study' makes interesting reading for the initiated or for those philosophically inclined and looking for a theory of the world as a whole, but for the uninitiated ethical student it is impossible. The work is not an introductory study of ethics, but an elaborate and interesting criticism of certain typical philosophic theories, with special reference to their social and moral significance. It is an introduction to theories rather than to the facts of the moral life.