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Producing Objectivity Under Assumption of Values?

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Abstract

In recent studies some sociologists and philosophers of sciences supported the view that assumption of values plays a significant role in the production of scientific knowledge. Arguing that this view can be traced back to the Southwestern neo-Kantian school, I will discuss the epistemology of Heinrich Rickert, who is commonly regarded as one of the main representatives of this school—and sometimes even as its “leader”. Roughly speaking, his way of dealing with scientific judgments is based on four theses: (1) objectivity is the result of a constituting process; (2) this constituting process is deeply rooted in the concrete subjectivity of epistemic agents; (3) concrete subjectivity is first and foremost characterized by the assumption of values; (4) those values exert a normative constraint on the judicative activity of the epistemic agent. In this paper I will focus on (3) and (4) insofar as those theses provide us with an interesting alternative to Husserl’s Life-World Theory and other similar views.