

PREFACE TO ALL VOLUMES

This six-volume translation of the main writings of Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911) is intended to meet a longstanding need. It makes available to English readers translations of complete texts representing the full range of Dilthey's philosophy. The multi-volume edition will thereby provide a wider basis for research not only in the history and theory of the human sciences but also in Dilthey's philosophical understanding of history, life, and world-views. His principal writings on psychology, aesthetics, ethics, and pedagogy are also included, together with some historical essays and literary criticism.

Whereas the Spanish-speaking world, which assimilated Dilthey early and intensively under the influence of Ortega y Gasset, has had an eight-volume translation since 1944–45, the English-speaking world has approached Dilthey more hesitantly. The efforts made by H. A. Hodges to acquaint the British public with Dilthey met with only limited success. H. P. Rickman has translated parts of Dilthey's writings, and his introductions have sought to dispel the distrust of Continental Philosophy, which characterized the early phases of the Analytical Movement. While a few individual works have also been translated, a systematically collected edition will provide a more consistent rendering of important terms and concepts.

An increasing interest in continental thought (Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, hermeneutics, structuralism, and critical theory) has created a climate in which the still not adequately recognized philosophy of Dilthey can be appropriated. As phenomenological and hermeneutical theories are being applied to more complex and problematic questions, it is becoming more evident that the nineteenth-century roots of these philosophical theories must be reexamined. This is especially the case with problems surrounding the theory of the *Geisteswissenschaften*. As given its classical formulation by Dilthey, this theory has been entitled in English as that of the "human studies" in order to differentiate it from the positivistic ideal of a "unified science." Currently, the more forthright title, "human sciences," has been adopted—but at the risk of becoming submerged in a universal hermeneutics and post-Kuhnian philoso-

phy of science. Given this new situation, the difference between the natural sciences and the human sciences will need to be reconsidered. If interpretation and the circularity associated with it are inherent to both the natural and human sciences, then the task will be to determine what kind of interpretation is involved in each and at what level.

The translations of Dilthey's main theoretical works on the human sciences will show that Dilthey's overall position was more flexible than has been realized. His distinction between understanding (*Verstehen*) and explaining, for example, was not intended to exclude explanations from the human sciences, but only to delimit their scope. Moreover, the importance of methodological reflection in the human sciences should become more evident and serve to eliminate the persistent misconceptions of understanding as empathy, or worse still, as a mode of irrationalism. The German term *Geisteswissenschaften* encompasses both the humanities and the social sciences, and Dilthey's theory and works assume no sterile dichotomies rooted in a presumed opposition between the arts and the sciences.

The limits of a six-volume edition did not permit inclusion of some significant works: full-scale historical monographs such as the *Leben Schleiermachers*, major essays from *Weltanschauung und Analyse des Menschen seit Renaissance und Reformation* and *Die Jugendgeschichte Hegels*. We trust that our volumes will generate enough interest in Dilthey's thought to justify the future translation of these and other works as well.

This edition arose through a close cooperation among the editors, their respective universities (Emory University, Atlanta, and Ruhr-Universität Bochum), and a great number of colleagues from various disciplines who served as translators. This kind of large-scale cooperation required an organizational framework. A group of Dilthey scholars consisting of Professors O. F. Bollnow, K. Gründer, U. Herrmann, B. E. Jensen, H. Johach, O. Pöggeler, and H. P. Rickman met twice in Bochum to assist the editors in selecting the content of this edition. Several translation sessions were held at Emory University to bring the translators together to discuss terminological difficulties, and other scholars have advised us as well (see list of advisory board in the front matter and Editorial Note to this volume).

Dilthey is difficult to translate. In an effort to render the translations as coherent as possible, the editors prepared a comprehensive lexicon for the use of the translators. To guarantee the quality

of the translations, they have been carefully edited. First we scrutinized the translations for problems left unresolved by the lexicon and collected data for our bibliographical references. Then we went over each text, making revisions where necessary (1) to ensure that the allusions and idiomatic meanings of the original German have been preserved and (2) to make Dilthey's complex and indirect prose accessible to the modern English reader.

An Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship in 1978-79 made it possible for the editors to begin their cooperative efforts. The Fritz Thyssen Stiftung in Cologne enabled them to execute this project through a ten-year grant. The Translations Program of the National Endowment for the Humanities and Emory University have also made substantial means available for this project. The editors are grateful to all these institutions for their very generous support. Of course, this project would not have borne fruit were it not for the commitment of Princeton University Press and the encouragement of Sanford Thatcher, Ann Wald, and Ian Malcolm. Our appreciation to all who have helped in this time-consuming but worthwhile endeavor.

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