

Abstract

Title: *Simmels former* (Simmel's forms). Author: David Stockelberg. Ph.D. Dissertation in Swedish, Department of history of Ideas and Theory of Science, Göteborg University, ISBN 91-628-6518-8

The purpose of this study is to analyse the concept of form in the thought of Georg Simmel. The analysis is divided into three independent inquiries: the first of these is into Simmel's *Die Probleme der Geschichtsphilosophie* (1905/1907), the second into his *Soziologie* (1908), and the third into his last book *Lebensanschauung* (1918). These inquiries also focus on three different concepts of form: an epistemological, a sociological, and that articulated within the framework of Simmel's philosophy of life.

Each chapter begins with an historical background that is followed by an analysis of Simmel's concept of form and the terminology in which it is expressed. In the third part of each chapter an investigation is made into what extent Simmel uses this concept in relation to specific problems and questions.

In the last chapter the inquiries into Simmel's concept of form are summed up. Similarities and continuities concerning his way of using the word "form" are indicated and some general inferences are drawn. It is maintained that reality, according to Simmel, always shows itself in the form of a form and that humans beings live by or through forms. Accordingly it has been shown in preceding chapters: that to produce knowledge of the world we need forms of thought; that society is created when people interact (which necessarily takes place through some form of interaction); and finally, that although forms constitute an obstacle to the creative movement of life, life can only come to expression through some kind of form. It has also been shown that in Simmel's texts the relations between words such as "form", "content", "material" and "category" are extremely relative, and what is a form in one perspective may be content in another. In particular the various and complex relations between "form", "content" and "Gebilde" have been analysed. Finally, it is shown that reality, according to Simmel, is in constant motion and continuously changing, and so consequently are the forms in or through which we exist.

Keywords: Georg Simmel, Immanuel Kant, neo-kantianism, Wilhelm Dilthey, Völkpsychologie, form, Gebilde, sociology, epistemology, philosophy of life, Lebensphilosophie, conceptual analysis, conceptual history, Begriffsgeschichte