

Presentation – Kant and the Neo-Kantian Schools: celebration of 100 years of Ernst Cassirer’s *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*

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The present dossier is the result of a collective work which aims to update the reception of Neo-Kantian thought, in its several aspects, in the Brazilian philosophical circuit and to stimulate a high-quality discussion regarding this philosophical movement in dialogue with its multifaceted context. In this sense, it seeks to follow the renewed interest for the works of the authors on this plural movement in the international philosophical circuit that has been noticed in recent decades.

It can be said that, since the so-called “Cassirer Renaissance” in the mid-1980s, research on Neo-Kantian thought have intensified mainly from two perspectives. The first is related to the properly historiographical research, which reconsiders the historical-philosophical role of this movement in the context of the final decades of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century facing other philosophical tendencies that were formed at the same time – as a critical dissidence or even opposition to the limits of the original program outlined by the so-called Neo-Kantian schools. The second addresses the new inscription of Neo-Kantian philosophy in the landscape of contemporary philosophy, whether in the field of epistemology of the natural sciences, or in the diversity of its contributions to different sciences of culture.

A landmark of this renewal of interest and of the field of possibilities opened by the works of these authors is the seminal book of Michael Friedman, *A parting of ways* (2000), which claims to consider Neo-Kantianism - especially in the version of Cassirer’s mature work - as a possibility of mediation between the fields of analytical philosophy and hermeneutics. This work sheds new light on the Davos Debate between Cassirer and Heidegger in 1929, understood as the defining event of the philosophical landscape in the 20th century. From then on, one can perceive a gradual deepening and broadening of the investigation of Neo-Kantianism can be perceived, which gradually abandons the narrow and caricatured understandings of the importance of this philosophical movement as a mere exegetical interpretation of Kant’s work, furthermore, restricted to the epistemology of the natural sciences, to make way for an understanding of its broad contribution as a philosophy of culture.

Thus, the purpose of this dossier, whose scope was deliberately broad, is to enable the reflection on the various authors, periods, and possible interfaces of Neo-Kantian thought, and thus stimulating the dialogue between young and experienced philosophers from many countries, who have dedicated themselves to researching the philosophical contributions of Neo-Kantianism. It is also our intention to mark and

celebrate the centenary of the publication of the first volume of Cassirer's *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, his *magnum opus*, which marks the late phase of Neo-Kantian era and the maturity of his philosophical project of a *critique of culture*.

In a first group of texts, focused on the Baden School and their interrelations, we open the dossier with an article by Christian Krijnen who, in *Rickert's Heterology in the Mirror of Hegel's Logic: External reflection*, discusses the points of contact and dissonance of the position proposed by the Heinrich Rickert's heterology, one of the great exponents of the Neo-Kantian Southwest School, and Hegel's dialectical philosophy. In particular, the author brings to the debate the relationship between heterology and dialectic, formalism, and the possibility of a transcendental reflection as an external reflection to offer an alternative reading of Rickert's theory of subjectivity.

Then, in *Le renouvellement critique de la philosophie de l'histoire par Heinrich Rickert*, ("The critical renewal of the philosophy of history by Heinrich Rickert") Servanne Jollivet explores Rickert's philosophy of history, reconstructing his position *vis-à-vis* Dilthey's historicism, highlighting the genesis of the Neo-Kantian approach on this topic in the attempts undertaken by Cohen and Windelband in the previous generation. In this article, the author demonstrates how the search for a historical science triggered a process of profound reformulation and reconfiguration of the critical program, from the reconsideration of concepts formation until the consolidation of a philosophy of values.

Closing this section of articles on Rickert's philosophy, José de Resende Jr. presents the general structure of the theory of the formation of scientific concepts developed by Heinrich Rickert. In his article, *A teoria da formação dos conceitos científicos na filosofia dos valores de Rickert* ("The theory of the formation of scientific concepts in Rickert's philosophy of values"), Resende sheds light on the intricate textual path built by the Neo-Kantian, thus providing to the reader a key to understanding Rickert's cultural perspective on scientific concepts.

The second moment of the dossier focuses on contributions related to epistemology and the interfaces between Neo-Kantianism and the philosophy of natural and formal sciences. Opening the section, Thomas Mormann, in *Natorp's Neo-Kantian Mathematical Philosophy of Science*, presents a reading of Paul Natorp's position – from Marburg's school – and his *sui generis* role in the philosophy of mathematics in the transition period between the 19th and 20th centuries. Also addressing the discussions with the philosophies of Cohen and Cassirer, the debate with Carnap, the intuition and concept dichotomy, and the new mathematical systems of that time, Mormann's text is a fundamental key to a proper understanding of the still neglected neo-Kantian philosophy of mathematics.

Still regarding Natorp's thought, Laura Pelegrín situate her contribution within Kant's critical project and from Neo-Kantian remarks, providing to the present volume an interesting reflection on the analytical and synthetic methods based on Paul Natorp's approach, with her article entitled *Analytical Method and Synthetic Method in Marburg Neo-Kantianism*. Still focusing on the Marburg school, Lucas Amaral in *Elementos kantianos na filosofia da matemática de Ernst Cassirer* ("Kantian elements in Ernst Cassirer's philosophy of mathematics") analyzes the aspects preserved from Kant's philosophy in the Cassirerian approach to mathematics. The author argues that, although Cassirer is a critic of Kant, especially regarding his theory of pure intuition in the foundation of arithmetic and geometry, there are at least two points that must be preserved: the anti-metaphysical character of philosophy and the underlying conception of "transcendental" logic. According to Amaral, due to these "Kantian elements", Cassirer was able to carry out his criticism and discuss it on an equal basis with significant thinkers of his time: namely, Frege and Russell.

Luigi Laino offers a second contribution to Cassirer's philosophy. In *Russell and Cassirer as Leibniz's interpreters: on the analytic and Synthetic Nature of Mathematical and Physical Knowledge*

he develops a solid historical and systematic overview of Cassirer's and Russell's readings of Leibniz's philosophy. The "flexibilization" concerning the analytical or synthetic nature of mathematical and physical knowledge is conditioned, according to the author, to the following interpretative keys: a more Kantian line of thinking (Cassirer) and a logicist one (Russell). Outlining the strengths and critical points of the readings proposed by Cassirer and Russell, Laino presents the reader an interesting analysis of the celebrated revival of the philosopher of Leipzig and his writings in the second half of the 19th century. Ericsson Coriolano, in *O conhecimento matemático na 'Crítica da Razão Pura' e a interpretação de Jaako Hintikka do método transcendental* ("Mathematical Knowledge in the 'Critique of Pure Reason' and Jaakko Hintikka's Interpretation of the Transcendental Method"), on the other hand, discusses the difficulties and possible corrections to Kant's philosophy regarding the kind of knowledge that mathematics produces. Thus, Coriolano preserves in his text the spirit of Neo-Kantian philosophy based on the continuous examination of the transcendental method as well as on the permanent reflection on the implications of mathematical knowledge for the particular sciences.

By his turn, Tobias Endres, in *The Elasticity of Perception: Undermining the (Non) Conceptualism Debate*, highlights the contribution and relevance of Cassirer's theory of expression to an approach to the quarrel between conceptualists and non-conceptualists in philosophy of perception, once its symbolic basis resolves the mutual exclusion between the two positions raised in the debate and opens the possibility of a new conception of the relationship between cognition and perception that could end up undermining the installed debate. By reconstructing the situated problem from the exposition of the concepts of representation, perception, and sensation in the Kantian critical program and by placing the debate in the current analytical approach of the author of the three *Critiques*, Endres presents Cassirer's position from the "elasticity" of perception, based on the distinction between perception of thing and perception of expression presented in *Zur Logik der Kulturwissenschaften*.

Closing this thematic section, Caio Souto, in his article *The rupture of French historical epistemology with neo-Kantianism: Bachelard and Canguilhem in the face of Brunschvicg and Alain*, highlights in detail the rupture process promoted by Bachelard and Canguilhem in relation to Neo-Kantian French tradition. Respecting the specificity of each philosopher involved, the author reconstructs the whole scenario of this process of theoretical distension. Thus, he demonstrates that the emergence of French historical epistemology has its roots in the common context of the science crisis, which occurred at the end of the 19th century, whose epistemic consequences, intertwined in the ethical, moral, and, consequently, political field, spread across different regions of the scientific domain, causing the problem of historical rationality to delineate its most defined contours from the rubble of past tradition.

In its third part, the dossier features contributions related to several themes from the Neo-Kantian philosophy of culture. Opening with Kurt Zeidler's essay, *On the Neo-Kantian revision of the a priori*, we have a rich reflection whose paths cover three directions: one pointing to the Marburg school (Cohen, Natorp, and Cassirer), another turned to the Baden Neo-Kantians (Wildenband, Rickert, and Lask) and a third with a realistic approach (Liebmann and Riehl). Zeidler's reading draws an interesting parallel between the three schools with the problems worked out by Kant in his three "Critiques". With this, so Zeidler argues, the Neo-Kantian theory of values (*Geltungstheorie*) and the notion of *a priori* can be properly understood.

In the article entitled *A filosofia do Renascimento e a fundação do pensamento modern em Ernst Cassirer* ("The Philosophy of the Renaissance and the foundation of modern thought in Ernst Cassirer"), Ivânio Azevedo and Rafael Garcia analyze the reading that Cassirer undertakes of the Renaissance period in his 1927 book entitled *Individual and Cosmos in Philosophy of the Renaissance*. The purpose of this writing is to explain in what sense, for Cassirer, the thought developed in the Renaissance, especially by Nicolau de Cusa, can be understood as responsible for establishing the conceptual and programmatic basis of modernity, as a kind of foreshadowing of Kant's critical philosophy. On Cassirer's philosophy of culture, Fernando Sepe Gimbo presents

the tensions between philosophy of language and phenomenology in his thought-provoking article *O simbólico e a crítica: uma leitura da filosofia da cultura de Ernst Cassirer* (“The Symbolic and Criticism: A Reading of Ernst Cassirer’s Philosophy of Culture”). By initially focusing his argument on the interpretative polarity of important authors from two different philosophical traditions, namely Jürgen Habermas, a supporter of the semiotic reading of the *linguistic turn*, and Merleau-Ponty, a defender of an interpretation of the phenomenology of the *Lebenswelt*, the author demonstrates the possibility of a third interpretative possibility, in which Cassirer’s philosophical anthropology can be read as an interweaving between pluralism and criticism, allowing an expansion of the symbolic domain, whose philosophical experience opens up to the alterity represented in the human-world relationship.

Gregory Moss, in his article entitled “The Place of the Sacred in Cassirer’s Philosophy of Mythology”, presents a thorough discussion of Ernst Cassirer’s philosophy of mythology. At first, the author discusses the problem of dualism contained in the concepts of sacred and profane, defending it against critics who point to Cassirer’s possible theoretical negligence upon this last concept. Moss, then, undertakes a conceptual reconstruction of Cassirer’s arguments presented in his second volume of the *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, demonstrating that the distinction between the sacred and the profane rests on the foundations of mythical thought, since mythical consciousness itself has its origin in the process of objectifying provided by the emotional phenomenon of life.

Closing the article section, Joaquim Braga, in *O conceito de técnica na pedagogia social de Paul Natorp* (“The concept of technique in Paul Natorp’s social pedagogy”), discusses this important aspect of Natorp’s work, in yet another proof of the depth of the interdisciplinary vocation of Neo-Kantism, with emphasis on the role that is assigned to the technique for articulating the central points of this pedagogy. Attentive to the vigilant role that pedagogy assumes in the configuration of areas where there is technical mediation, Braga discusses Natorp’s technocentric vision of social relations and institutions in the context of German reformist pedagogy, highlighting the centrality that the “we” assumes in this work as a counter position, but not a refusal, to the heritage of the “I” of the Enlightenment.

The dossier also brings reviews of two recent and remarkable releases of current production in the subject area of Neo-Kantianism. Firstly, it is the last of 19 volumes that compose the collection of Ernst Cassirer posthumous works, the “*Registerband*”, which contains the registers of concepts and terms that occur in the other volumes of the collection, in addition to other important elements to continue the historiographical research of Cassirer’s work. The conclusion of this collection also remarks the end of an endeavor that goes back to “*Cassirer’s Renaissance*”, as Rafael Garcia writes. Christian Möckel, one of the editors responsible for the collection of these posthumous works and organizer of the volume reviewed here, is also the author of second reviewed text in this section: *Philosophie des 20. Jahrhunderts - Wegmarken: Ausgewählte Schriften (1976-2021) mit einer autobiographischen Einführung*. In this biographical work we have access to Möckel’s intellectual path, one of the main names among the scholars of Ernst Cassirer’s philosophy, but whose work has many other strands and contributions, especially in the scope of phenomenology, Austro-Marxism and the philosophy of life. In *Wegmarken*, Möckel provides a very solid and broad perspective about the different interfaces of Neo-Kantianism with those other philosophical trends of the same period.

Last but not least, we have three original translations, extremely valuable for Neo-Kantian studies in Portuguese language, which encompass three distinct moments of Ernst Cassirer’s philosophical writings. The texts were arranged in chronological order, thus, initially we have the article from 1912, entitled *O problema do infinito e a ‘lei do número’ de Renouvier* (“The problem of infinity and the ‘law of number’ by Renouvier”), translated from German and presented by Newton da Costa and Katia Santos. This article was first published in a collection of texts in honor of the founder of the Marburg school, namely,

Hermann Cohen zum 70sten Geburtstag. In this commemorative article, Cassirer develops a critical analysis of Renouvier’s conception of the “law of number” and the notion of the “actual infinity”, taking into account a deep dimensioning of the mathematical issues adjacent to Renouvier’s neo-criticism in the light of the previous Kantian critical project.

In sequence, we have the translation by Adriano Mergulhão of Cassirer’s notes on Martin Heidegger’s “*Kantbuch*”. Such manuscripts, entitled *Ensaio-Heidegger. Apontamentos para ‘Kant e o problema da metafísica’* (“Essay-Heidegger. Notes for Heidegger’s ‘Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics’”) date back to the early 1930s, when Cassirer was preparing a review of the same book for the journal *Kant-Studien*, which was later published in 1931. The notes, which served as an outline for Cassirer’s review, remained unpublished until 2014, when they were published for the first time in issue number 17 of his Manuscripts and Unpublished Texts. Finally, we also present the translation by Italo Lins Lemos of the text *A influência da linguagem no desenvolvimento do pensamento científico* (“The Influence of Language in the Development of Scientific Thought”). This article, originally published in English in 1942 in *The Journal of Philosophy*, circumscribes the final phase of Ernst Cassirer’s thought, in which there was a profound discussion about the historical character of language and its intertwining with mathematics and science, according to the logical character of such functions, thus promoting a generous landscape of the situation of modern epistemology limited to the period in question.

Borrowing here the spirit of “*Logos*”, the “*International Journal of the Philosophy of Culture*” [*Logos: Internationale Zeitschrift für Philosophie der Kultur*], founded in 1910 by the younger generation of Neo-Kantians of the time with a characteristic supranationalism bent, this dossier intended to bring together efforts from different fronts that deal with research around Neo-Kantian thought around the globe. As a result, we have, in this volume, the participation of philosophers from 12 countries – Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Chile, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Portugal and the United States. The texts contained herein were written in English, French and Portuguese, all kept in the language chosen by their respective authors.

The editors of this dossier are very grateful to each philosopher for their contribution to the preparation of this volume. We thank the editors of the journal *Studia Kantiana* for the opportunity granted to organize a special volume that will undoubtedly be of great importance for research and studies on Neo-Kantianism in Brazil and the rest of the world. It is worth mentioning the names of Joel Klein, Monique Hulshof and Robinson dos Santos who provided full support during the process of preparing this edition. Finally, we would also like to thank Elliot Scaramal and Gabriela Meneses for their valuable contributions during the revision of the texts, as well as the fellow researchers who accepted the task of evaluating the articles, translations and reviews, thus strengthening the debate among peers in the context of philosophical and editorial work in Brazil.

Have a nice read!

From the south,

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