Post-Neo-Kantianism. What is this?

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Abstract. The article attempts to define the concept of “post-neo-Kantianism” based on the nature of its relationship to the concept of “neo-Kantianism”. Concerning this matter, the author poses the following tasks: to characterize the phenomenon of neo-Kantianism, to point out the problems of its definition, to identify the relevance of the term “post-neo-Kantianism” and its relation to the philosophy of I. Kant in particular. The author emphasizes the need to introduce this term in the classification of philosophy of the XX century with the appropriate-ness of building the model of “Kantianism — Neo-Kantianism — Neo-Neo-Kantianism — Post-Neo-Kantianism”, where each new stage is determined by the nature of the reflection of thinkers of a certain period over the fundamental philosophical problems articulated in Kant's “Critics”. Among the post-Neo-Kantians, A. Noras names thinkers traditionally considered to be german phenomenologists, such as E. Husserl and M. Heidegger: it is from the philosophical concept of Husserl that one can speak of the emergence of post-Neo-Kantianism, and the semantically correct interpretation of Heidegger, according to author, is most clearly understood in the framework of Baden Neo-Kantianism. Investigating the phenomenon of post-Neo-Kantianism, the need is established for answering a question regarding the preceding Neo-Kantian tradition, within which there is still a number of contradictions unresolved in the history of philosophy regarding the classification of Neo-Kantian schools and the distinction between the two periods of Neo-Kantianism: early (classical) and late (“correct”). Neo-Kantianism shows the relevance of Kantian philosophy, highlighting the ongoing debate about understanding the Kantian “Critique of Pure Reason”. Post-Neo-Kantianism plays an important role in terms of the perspectives of modern Kant studies, which include Gottfried Martin, Manfred Brelage, or Hans-Michael Baumgartner.

Keywords: Kantianism, Neo-Kantianism, Neo-Neo-Kantianism, Post-Neo-Kantianism

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Relevant to the problem is the relationship between philosophers included to post-neo-Kantians and neo-Kantians. Important role is played by the philosophy of Immanuel Kant. Post-neo-Kantians descend from neo-Kantians however, they derive as well from an assumption that in neo-Kantianism Kant’s philosophy has been wrongly interpreted. This way post-neo-Kantians reinterpret Kant, staying within the spirit of considerations of Königsberg thinker philosophy however perceiving it differently from their teachers. Therefore, it is about answering some questions regarding neo-Kantianism itself, the interpretation of Kant within frames of neo-Kantianism and next about the relation between neo-Kantianism and post-neo-Kantianism. The term of “post-neo-Kantianism” is not commonly used in philosophical literature however it is not equivalent to a claim of its originality.

The necessity of introduction to classification of twentieth century philosophy a term of “post-neo-Kantianism” results from several facts. First of them is constant vitality of reflection over Kant’s thought, resulting in several phases being — broadly considered — neo-Kantianism, neo-neo-Kantianism or modern variety of transcendentalism appealing to Kant. It is not possible not to notice richer and richer knowledge of Kant’s philosophy, which results in more holistic interpretations of his ideas. Nothing detracts from the validity of his philosophy and even more the validity of transcendental philosophy, which received a powerful impulse from the Husserl’s phenomenology. Secondly, because of Husserl, it is important to distinguish post-neo-Kantianism, as thinkers included in it are often being reduced to phenomenology and sometimes even, as especially in the case of Heidegger — they are analyzed only within the flow of phenomenology. Simply a fact of differences appearing between post-neo-Kantians and neo-Kantians seems for many interpreters sufficient argument to place them within the frames of phenomenology. These divisions have only organizing sense — they are made ex post, although often they help to capture the proper sense of a given philosophical thought. However, according to genetic way of justifying philosophy you need to capture the source of given philosophical thought, to understand its proper sense. Heidegger, already mentioned, is a good example as understanding his philosophy is much easier, when you consider it within the frames of Baden neo-Kantianism, not limiting it to simply a thought resulting from criticism of Husserl. The more so, because Heidegger’s criticism of phenomenological transcendentalism is as well, or maybe even above all criticism of neo-Kantian transcendentalism. Heidegger proved that in the famous disputation with Cassirer, which took place in Davos. It concerned neo-Kantianism

1 Term „post-neo-Kantianism” was used for the first time in [3. P. 11].
2 See: Davoser Disputation zwischen Ernst Cassirer und Martin Heidegger in [1]; K. Gründer, Cassirer und Heidegger in Davos 1929 in [2]; A.J. Noras, Kant a neokantyzm badenski i marburski [3].
and more precisely attitude towards Kant. The discussion itself highlights the post-neo-Kantianism of Heidegger, which cannot be said about Cassirer.

Question about post-neo-Kantianism, requires answer to a question regarding the neo-Kantianism itself. Here appears a number of controversies regarding how to classify post-neo-Kantianism, what division criterion should be adopted within the frames of Neo-Kantian schools etc. Classical division of neo-Kantian schools, distinguishing seven directions, by Traugott Konstantin Oesterreich³, was modified numerous times, not only because of historical reasons. Problem concerns not only a division into schools but distinction of two phases of neo-Kantianism being early neo-Kantianism and neo-Kantianism (also called classical or proper). First case is about neo-Kantianism, which is often called Kantian philology (Kantphilologie), which is in fact an attempt of rehabilitation of philosophy and getting it out of the impasse philosophy found herself in due to Hegel’s philosophy. Characteristic feature of early neo-Kantianism is that the problem discussed was the actuality of Kant in the situation of philosophy at the time. From this first phase clearly distinguishes neo-Kantianism (proper), which can be associated only with the philosophy of Baden school and Marburg school. For the sake of justice, however, it should be added that, in essence, neo-Kantianism develops in parallel to early neo-Kantianism. The beginning of Marburg school dates back to year 1875 when Cohen took over the Department of philosophy from Lange and the Baden schools to 1882, when Windelband moved from Freiburg to Strasburg (although it is also recognized that the beginning of the Baden school is year 1907, when Windelband took over Heidelberg’s department of philosophy from Kuno Fisher) it should be mentioned that Windelband was lecturing in Heidelberg since 1903.

At the same time Marburg and Baden neo-Kantianism concentrates not on the letter of Kant's philosophy, but on her spirit. The creator of Baden school — Wilhelm Windelband, who in the Preface of Präludien (from 1883) posted a famous phrase, best captured this issue: „To understand Kant is to go beyond him” [5]. Therefore, it is not, and it never was, about orthodoxy towards thought of Kant, but about philosophizing in the spirit of Kant. Such philosophizing results from taking into account a science that Kant did not accounted for himself, only those after him, being Hegel, Dilthey and other, did it, and that science is history. In the light of the historical consciousness and in the light of philosophizing in the historical context it is not possible to philosophize in Kant’s understanding. Philosophizing can only be done in the spirit of Kant meaning the spirit of his critical philosophy. Hundred years ago, on the hundredth anniversary of the death of thinker from Königsberg, Windelband wrote “We are standing here, after a hundred years again asking the question: what should happen to criticism” [6]. The answer to such question, important as well today, excludes any orthodoxy in reading Kant’s thought. As a result, it is not a question about Kant, but about possibilities of applying his critical philosophy to solving philosophy’s problems. Paul Natorp, co-creator of Marburg school, was convinced that Kant’s thought should be read adding necessary

corrections and at the same time claimed that philosophy of Marburg school results from those necessary corrections. He wrote “Speaking about orthodox Kantianism of Marburg School never had basis; along with further development of the school every last semblance of justification is also lost⁴”. Natorp’s thesis characterizes however, the philosophy of Marburg school, but its sense is much wider: the thought of any neo-Kantian school grows from those necessary corrections of Kant’s philosophy. This thesis, regardless of all the consequences appearing on the ground of Marburg school, is important not only to understand Baden and Marburg school but the whole concept of neo-Kantianism (so early neo-Kantianism as well). Emphasizing lack of orthodoxy in interpreting philosophy of the thinker from Königsberg shows, that this orthodoxy is hard to find in the thoughts of Kant itself. Open (antisystem) character of Königsberg philosopher considerations resulted in question about the center of gravity of his philosophy. In the response to this question main interpretative positions were cleared — this way neo-Kantian schools came to life. One may be tempted to generalize the above thesis and state: Baden and Marburg school of neo-Kantianism differs from the early neo-Kantianism insofar as the situation of philosophy, at the time when the proper neo-Kantianism is born, differs fundamentally from the one in which it was when neo-Kantianism arose (analogous to the situation, how different it was from when Kant created his transcendental philosophy). Different historical context causes that tasks faced by early neo-Kantianism and neo-Kantianism differs radically. Problem of early neo-Kantianism is to get philosophy out of collapse caused by Hegelianism. Hopes for breaking the deadlock were placed in a new science which was not entirely new, but which was given the character of a leading discipline, namely the theory of cognition. Here appears the problem of theory of cognition. As it turn out the concept of “theory of cognition” was not introduced by Eduard Zeller although in fact, in 1862, he published important for neo-Kantianism article Über Bedeutung und Aufgabe der Erkenntnistheorie. Problem is more complicated that it seems and it is difficult to determine clearly, who used this term for the first time. For sure, already in 1840 (22 years before Zeller), this term has been used by Fries’s student Ernst Friedrich Apelt. Even earlier, the term “theory of cognition” appeared in correspondence between Christian Hermann Weisse and Immanuel Hermann Fichte, in 1832. In the same year, separately from correspondence between Weisse und Fichte’s son, Friedrich Eduard Beneke has used “theory of cognition” term. Klaus Christian Köhnke, who devoted whole chapter of his work about the beginnings of neo-Kantianism states, that the “theory of cognition” term appears for the first time in 1819 and was authored by Wilhelm Gottlieb Tennemann (1761—1819), German historian of philosophy, to whom Hegel often referred, who used it in his Geschichte der Philosophie⁵.

⁴ „Die Rede von einem orthodoxen Kantianismus der Marburger Schule war niemals begründet; sie hat mit der Weiterentwicklung dieser Schule auch jeden fernsten Schein von Berechtigung verloren“. P. Natorp. Kant und die Marburger Schule[7].

⁵ See K. Ch. Köhnke, Entstehung und Aufstieg des Neukantianismus: Die deutsche Universitätsphilosophie zwischen Idealismus und Positivismus [8].
Theoretical maturity of neo-Kantianism towards early neo-Kantianism lies in fact that the problem is not the “theory of cognition” itself, but a possibility of making the “theory of cognition” first philosophy. In this sense neo-Kantians of both schools, Baden and Marburg, have no doubt that the only valuable philosophical discipline is the theory of cognition. However, they go further and try, within the frames of theory of cognition, to solve the problem they assume to be the most important for the philosophy and science, namely the problem of their ultimate justification (Letzbegründung). It can therefore be concluded that while the theory of cognition itself is a problem for early neo-Kantianism, the actual neo-Kantianism does not deal with the problem of science itself (scil. theory of cognition), but takes it for granted and focuses on the problem of ultimate justification. The term „Letzbegründung” is now making a career. The fact that the scientific nature of philosophy has been questioned in positivism results in a fundamentalist attitude of neo-Kantianism, additionally supported by the need to oppose historicism. Return to Kant turns out to be not so much return to historical Kant but an attempt to show, that the ultimate justification must happen in the frames of transcendental philosophy (Marburgians speak directly about the transcendental method, to which they reduce entire research effort on the philosopher from Königsberg). Only in this context, one can read the thesis of Windelband, already mentioned before. And only because of that, Hermann Cohen in the preface of first edition of Kants Theorie der Erfahrung noted: „[...] everybody is reading his own Kant” [11]. Cohen’s “reading of own Kant” has nothing in common with characteristical for today philosophizing relativism. The thing is not that everybody can read Kant as he wants, but that everybody reads Kant according to knowledge he possess and the historical context he is reading Kant in. Cohen’s thesis is in a way a manifesto of neo-Kantianism due to fact that in chronological order it appeared before Wiendelband’s “To understand Kant is to go beyond him”.

Cohen’s thesis is important because that is where lies the difference in undertaking philosophical problems by post-neo-Kantians, philosophers coming from neo-Kantianism but reading Kant differently than it was done by neo-Kantians. From this reason, Ernst Cassirer, an outstanding student of Marburg’s neo-Kantians cannot be treated as post-neo-Kantian. Cassirer reads Kant a bit differently than Cohen and Natorp, but in fact, his philosophy does not go beyond the problem of ultimate justification based on the theory of cognition. Very different is case of another outstanding Marburg student, Nicolai Hartmann, who by some interpreters is considered Marburgian, but who, following Schnädelbach should be called “most significant Marburg renegade”. Hartmann’s retreat from Marburg neo-Kantianism is made in the name of ontology, and for this reason, determines common direction of post-neo-Kantians research. It is a direction from theory of cognition to ontology,

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7 See H. Schnädelbach, „Erkenntnis der Erkenntnis”? Eine Verteidigung der Erkenntnistheorie [12].
which made an incorporation of Husserl into post-neo-Kantianism uneasy. Husserl through whole his life is going into opposite direction — from ontology of Logical investigations (Logische Untersuchungen) to epistemology of Ideas: General introduction to pure phenomenology (Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Erstes Buch: Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie) and First Philosophy (Erste Philosophie 1923/24) and to attempt to go back to ontology in The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy (Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Phänomenologie).

Question that must be asked here should be: is the turn from epistemologically oriented neo-Kantianism to ontology made in w reference to Kant or Husserl? History of philosophy of first twenty years of twentieth century is complex and from today’s perspective admits right to phenomenology. Today’s perspective however does not coincide with perspective of the participants of the dispute, who considered it through the prism of neo-Kantianism. Answering that the turn from epistemology to ontology is made in reference to Kant one should point to aforementioned dispute in Davos and Heidegger’s book, which became the reason for the dispute, being Kant and the problem of metaphysics. Heidegger, during the dispute with Cassirer (student of Marburg neo-Kantians) seems as someone who already long ago realized the end of neo-Kantianism and necessity of different that it had took place in neo-Kantianism — metaphysical or ontological — reading of Kant’s thoughts. Not getting into details of the dispute must be acknowledged that Cassirer as well confirm neo-Kantian provenance of Heidegger’s philosophy, when he states “I have to admit that even I found an neo-Kantian in Heidegger although I assumed it is already gone.” Cassirer’s comment confirms the problematic historian of philosophy encounters when trying to determine genetic dependencies, although it accentuates the neo-Kantian sources of Heidegger’s thinking. Therefore, it seems justified to see Heidegger not as Husserl’s student but as a post-neo-Kantian — a thinker whose reflections stems primarily from reflection on philosophical problems based on neo-Kantianism. The work Kant and the problem of metaphysics, or more precisely the metaphysical interpretation of Kant turns out to have their own antecedentions in neo-Kantianism, but at the same time it should be remembered that the metaphysical direction appeared in neo-Kantianism earlier because it includes such thinkers as Otto Liebmann, Johannes Volkelt, although Friedrich Paulsen and Max Wundt as well. In other words, Heidegger was not the first one to interpret Kant not in epistemological spirit, as it was done by neo-Kantians, but in spirit of metaphysics (ontology). Amongst thinkers included in post-neo-Kantianism, ontological interpretation of Kant appeared already in 1921, when Hartmann published Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis.
however, did not came out of nothing. Rather, it should be assumed, that the situation was slowly maturing not to withdraw from fundamentalist position as such but to interpret Kant differently that it took place in neo-Kantianism. In other words, post-neo-Kantianism is connected with attempts at a comprehensive interpretation of Kant being the opposition to neo-Kantianism perceived as one-sided interpretation. Research on philosophy of the Königsberg’s thinker has revealed the possibility of a metaphysical or ontological interpretations of his thoughts. For the sake of justice, we must add that even today we are dealing with a re-reading of Kant, which enriches our knowledge about his philosophy. This confirms the historicity of post-neo-Kantianism. Ontological interpretation of Kant, referring primarily to his division into *metaphysica generalis* and *metaphysica specialis*, characteristic for post-neo-Kantianism is associated primarily in reading of his philosophy not so much in light of *Critique of pure reason* (as done by Marburgians) or in the light of *Critique of practical reason* (as done by Baden’s) but is an attempt of holistic approach to his philosophy. For post-neo-Kantians, neo-Kantianism is too one-sided. However, after all — paradoxically — post-neo-Kantianism refers to neo-Kantianism, moreover, it can be said that neo-Kantianism determines their view on ontology. Martin Heidegger built his fundamental ontology around the *Dasein* concept and thus avoided the characteristic for Baden research position *Hiatus irrationalis* between subject and object. However when Heidegger characterizes *Dasein* one can see the reference to Fichte and his characteristic of I (*Ich*). In Heidegger’s reference to Fichte, one cannot see something original, but rather only, the consequence of Baden neo-Kantianism, often referred to as neo-Fichteanism. It is no different with Hartmann, whom within his critical ontology, has ontologized all relationships. This step, as well, can only be seen as a reference to concept of Marburgians and, what Władysław Tatarkiewicz accurately called, relationism of Marburg school. The problem results from a collapse — under the influence of modern physics — the idea of substance, which was best expressed by Ernst Cassirer in his *Substance and Function* (*Substanzbegriff und Funktionsbegriff*, 1910).

Werner Flach sees concepts of Martin Heidegger and Nicolai Hartmann (as well as Edmund Husserl’s) in the concept of deepening the (and criticism at the same time) of Kant’s criticism. Heidegger is seen as the one, who turns into the point of lack of transcendental-ontological dimension as a part of criticism and is looking for a way out through ontologization of idea of justification. Thus, Heidegger is replacing a transcendent-al-logical question by a transcendent-
ontological one. Hartmann whereas is seen as the one who to criticism opposes total ontology. Thus, Flach argues that Hartmann opposes to criticism in most radical way. It is worth to add, that Husserl is seen by Flach as the one, who criticize insufficient concept of subject and also Husserl points out to Kant the unrelated existence of a pure and empirical subject and a kind of transcendental-logical conduct in the process of justification of cognition. The question asked by Husserl to Kant concern — according to Flach — “how” of transcendentalism. When it comes to other post-neo-Kantians, Karl Jaspers retains relative autonomy, which was influenced by his path to philosophy and his initial interest in the philosophy of existence. That is why his transcendental metaphysic (periechontology) has no signs of connection to neo-Kantians, although it arises out of opposition to them. It should also be added that due to metaphysical interests, another student of Marburger Heinz Heimsoeth and Alois Riehl’s student — Richard Hönsigswald — could be included in post-neo-Kantianism. In the context of growth of philosophical reflection after Kant, so critical philosophy, post-neo-Kantianism seem as another phase after early and classical neo-Kantianism and before neo-neo-Kantianism — connected by Hans-Ludwig Ollig with thinkers like Wolfgang Cramer, Hans Wagner and Rudolf Zocher. Neo-neo-Kantianism show, despite all limitations, the topicality of Kant’s philosophy, showing the ongoing dispute about understanding of Kant’s Critique of pure reason. In Wagner’s opinion, the core of Critique of pure reason is transcendental dialectic. Werner Flach, student of Wagner, refers to his teacher, when in spirit of his considerations wrote: “subjective side of the problem, almost entirely omitted by Plato, is Kant’s foreground namely at the cost of an ontological moment and in an accented contrast to it” [18. P. 5]. In this context neo-neo-Kantianism basically confirms the philosophy of neo-Kantianism, bringing to the fore the issues of the theory of cognition, which takes place especially in the concepts of Hans Wagner and his student Werner Flach [18. P. 5]. The latter positively evaluates the achievements of Hermann Cohen. However neo-neo-Kantianism in not unanimous in accenting problems of theory of cognitions, since Rudolf Zocher will try to show the unity of whole Kant’s philosophy. He will not therefore limit to problems of theory of cognition like Wagner and Flach, but will search for the unity of three critics, just as Marburg’s neo-Kantianism. Post-neo-Kantianism is important as well from the perspective of today’s research on Kant, in which such scientists as Gottfried Martin, Manfred Brelage or Hans-Michael Baumgartner played an important role.

14 See [Ibid. P. 1-3].
16 See H. Wagner, Philosophie und Reflexion [21. P. 114].
17 See W. Flach, Grundzüge der Erkenntnislehre: Erkenntniskritik, Logik, Methodologie [22].
18 See [Ibid. P. 78–79].
References

Что такое постнеокантианство?

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В статье осуществляется попытка определить понятие «постнеокантианство», исходя из характера его отношения к понятию «неокантианство». С этой целью автором ставятся следующие задачи: охарактеризовать феномен неокантианства, указать на проблемы его определения, выявить актуальность термина «постнеокантианство», в особенностях его отношения к философии И. Канта. Автор подчеркивает необходимость введения данного термина в классификацию философии XX в. целесообразностью выстраивания модели «кантианство — неокантианство — неонеокантианство — постнеокантианство», где каждый новый этап обусловливается характером рефлексирования мыслителей некоторого периода над принципиальными для философии проблемами, сформулированными в кантовских «Критиках». Среди постнеокантианцев в концепции автора находятся мыслители, традиционно причисляемые к немецким феноменологам, такие как Э. Гуссерль и М. Хайдеггер: именно начиная с философской концепции Гуссерля можно говорить о появлении постнеокантианства, а семантически верная интерпретация Хайдеггера, по мнению автора, наиболее отчетливо понимается в рамках Баденского неокантианства. Исследуя феномен постнеокантианства, устанавливается необходимость требования ответа на вопрос относительно предшествующей ему традиции неокантианства, внутри которой существует неразрешенный до сих пор в истории философии ряд противоречий относительно классификации неокантианских школ и различения двух периодов неокантианства: раннего (классического) и позднего («правильного»). Неокантианство показывает актуальность кантовской философии, выделяя непрекращающийся спор о понимании кантовской «Критики чистого разума». Постнеокантианство играет важную роль с точки зрения перспектив современных исследований Канта, к которым относятся Готфрид Мартин, Манфред Брелаге или Ханс-Михаэль Баумгартнер.

Ключевые слова: кантианство, неокантианство, неонеокантианство, постнеокантианство

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