

Kant, Neo-Kantians, and Transcendental Subjectivity

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Abstract: This article discusses an interpretation of Kant's conception of transcendental subjectivity, which manages to avoid many of the concerns that have been raised by analytic interpreters over this doctrine. It is an interpretation put forward by selected C19 and early C20 neo-Kantian writers. The article starts out by offering a neo-Kantian interpretation of the object as something that is constituted by the categories and that serves as a standard of truth within a theory of judgment (I). The second part explicates transcendental subjectivity as the system of categories, which is self-referential and constitutes objects (II), in order to then evaluate this conception by means of a comparison with Hegel's absolute subject (III). Rather than delineating the differences between neo-Kantian writers, the article systematically expounds a shared project, which consists in providing the ultimate foundation for judgments by means of an anti-psychologist and non-metaphysical interpretation of transcendental subjectivity.

Transcendental subjectivity has caused many a headache for analytic and continental Kant interpreters alike, and historical neo-Kantians are no exception. Besides the empirical person (i.e. the conception one has of oneself as a particular individual that stands in relation to other entities in space and time), and besides the individual psyche that receives sense input from things-in-themselves, there is at least one additional sense of subjectivity in Kant. This transcendental subjectivity is most famously linked to Kant's statement that 'I think' must be able to accompany all representations (KrV B132).¹ Kant calls it the 'unity of apperception', the 'subject', and the 'transcendental unity of self-consciousness' (KrV B132). As a first approximation, it can be said that these terms refer to subjectivity insofar as it is the condition of the possibility of thinking and judging.

A key worry about transcendental subjectivity has always been that what conditions thinking cannot be known according to Kant's own theory; claims about it seem to be groundless metaphysical assertions about a world beyond knowledge, assertions of the sort that Kant himself dismisses so fervently as rational psychology. Peter Strawson (1993: 32) attacks Kant's talk of mental faculties in this vein and argues that Kant introduces 'the imaginary subject of transcendental psychology' by means of unfounded metaphysical speculation. Wilfrid Sellars (1970/1: 44) compares Kant's transcendental subject to a Cartesian substance, something distinct from thinking that has the thoughts. Such an entity cannot be known for Kant, since it is a *noumenon* and exists beyond thought—and yet, on Sellars' reading, Kant still makes and needs to make certain suppositions about it.

Henry Allison interprets the I in I think as the 'subject of thought' (Allison 1996: 96), which is not a distinct individual, nor is it a noumenon beyond thought or a phenomenon held in thought (Allison 1996: 65). Rather, it is the function or activity of thinking as such, which, Allison (1996: 66) argues, is 'systematically elusive' and cannot be known. What one *can* know, according to Allison (1996: xiv), is merely how individuals must see themselves as cognizers and actors, what conception they must have of themselves and of their own activity.

Allison thus contradicts Strawson and Sellars on the proposition that Kant tries to say something about an object that exists outside of thinking and therefore cannot be known. Interestingly, however, Allison concurs with the other authors in the idea that this subject as a condition of thought would have to be the logical or actual subject of thinking, the activity, or entity, which does the thinking. They agree that this should not be knowable according to Kant's theory. Since whatever is made an object of thought is given the form of the categories, it is impossible to know or describe the subject as it is in itself, beyond categorical thinking (and if Kant does so in terms of mental faculties or otherwise, he is contradicting himself).

While these observations are not without foundation in Kant's text, there is another way of reading Kant precisely on this problem² that does not seem to have been taken up in the discussion of contemporary Anglophone commentators. As the neo-Kantian Rudolf Zocher (1946: 112) puts it: '[T]he central tenet of neo-Kantianism at the turn of the century [was] the primacy of epistemology as a theory of an ideal subject that precedes all concepts of an empirical or positive science of being'. The neo-Kantian project consists in finding the ultimate foundation of valid judgments. What provides this basis is the universal and unified structure of thought that can be called transcendental subjectivity. Hermann Cohen first proposed that Kant's transcendental subject must be understood neither psychologically nor metaphysically, but merely as the unity of the categories.³ As Wolfgang Marx (2001: 124) puts it, 'not consciousness, but the laws that regulate its unity and make it intelligible' are primary. Transcendental subjectivity in this sense recurs in different forms in the works of many neo-Kantian thinkers.

The article focuses on the early Cohen as well as Baden neo-Kantians such as Rickert, Bauch and Zocher, and neo-Kantian-inspired thinkers like Klaus Reich, Hans Wagner, and Werner Flach. This group of scholars generally understands transcendental subjectivity as an unchanging and ahistorical logical structure, underlying, primarily, the possibility of valid judging and only secondarily the natural sciences. I will call them neo-Kantians (group 1). Marburg neo-Kantians like Natorp and the late Hermann Cohen develop a more objectivist, scientific, and historically minded strand of neo-Kantianism, which I will occasionally use as point of comparison. I will call them neo-Kantians (group 2). Expressions like 'the neo-Kantian concept of transcendental subjectivity' always refer to the views of group 1, since group 2 does not explore this concept (and instead focuses on logos, reason, or spirit). Rather than outlining in detail the differences between neo-Kantian thinkers, this article aims at providing an exposition of what transcendental subjectivity can mean, drawing on neo-Kantian writings, thereby outlining a position that has hardly been received in the English-language debate.

Neo-Kantians (group 1) suggest that subjectivity does not refer to anything that exists beyond thinking, no substrate, or thing-in-itself that has the thoughts. Moreover, it also does not merely refer to the function or activity of thinking as such that cannot be described (*pace* Allison). Rather, transcendental subjectivity is the system of the categories, which must be seen, first, as constitutive of objects that are logically coherent and, second, as containing an element of self-relation, which individuals can become conscious of in the thought I think.

Transcendental subjectivity in this sense can be known because of the fact that the system of the categories does not need to be made an object of enquiry (in which case, it would necessarily be [mis]conceived in accordance with the categories as a thinking substance). Rather, the knowledge of the system of categories emerges as a by-product in the study of other questions regarding the possibility of objects and judgments. Subjectivity as the total, impersonal structure of transcendental logic has an undeniably Hegelian ring to it, but neo-Kantians make a strong case for linking this idea to Kant's own work and distinguishing his view from Hegel's.

Before plunging into a discussion of the neo-Kantian conception of transcendental subjectivity, it is worth considering whether the neo-Kantians (group 1) can be taken to interpret Kant or whether they effectively depart from Kant's original theory. This question is not as straightforward as it may seem. Kant's work has received an incredible variety of interpretations, many of which contradict one another. It is therefore impossible to show that a neo-Kantian interpretation of Kant's work is 'the' correct reading of Kant. What I want to suggest is merely (a) that the neo-Kantians (group 1) *intended* to interpret and do justice to Kant's work, (b) that there are passages in Kant's text that offer themselves to this interpretation, and (c) that their interpretation shares broad aims with some of today's more mainstream accounts of Kant.

(a) Hermann Cohen was one of the founders of the Marburg School of neo-Kantianism. Nevertheless, his very early writings also inspired neo-Kantians of group 1 (which comprises primarily scholars from the so-called Baden or Southwest School). In the first edition of *Kant's Theory of Experience* (1871), Cohen aimed at 're-establishing the Kantian authority' (Cohen 1871: vi). He wanted to return to 'the documented and actual Kant' and defend him against his critics 'simply by quoting' from Kant's own text (Cohen 1871: iv). With the second edition of said book (1885), Cohen started to explicitly develop his own independent theory—on an ever thinner Kantian footing. Neo-Kantians (group 1) follow the early Cohen in assuming that when interpreting Kant faithfully, one will have to suppose that Kant's theory of knowledge in the first critique is based on a theory of a (transcendental) subject. Cohen believes that, for Kant, the ultimate foundation of knowledge must be located within the subject or the constitutive and necessary aspects of consistent thought. (And he implicitly identifies the categories with the transcendental subject, in line with the interpretation presented here.)⁴

In his later works, Cohen rejects this idea, explicitly opposing Kant.⁵ Cohen then demands that one should study the 'fact of science', that is inquire into the basis of what is currently accepted as scientific truth.⁶ The foundation of science

can only consist in scientific concepts and categories that are valid due to their function for science (i.e. for their role in the constitution of scientific objects); they cannot be considered valid because they are inescapable for consistent judging or human thought. One of Cohen's reasons for rejecting the second, more Kantian line of reasoning is his worry that readers will confuse the transcendental subject with a psyche, a person, or a metaphysical entity. Natorp, the co-founder of the Marburg School, rejects a subjectivist foundation of cognition for broadly the same reason, while admitting that his subjectivist opponents are closer to Kant's original text.⁷ (That said, it should be noted that both thinkers do occasionally invoke an a-personal, anti-psychologist sense of subjectivity, which they distinguish from subjectivity in the sense of the psyche or the personal activity of thought.⁸ They call subjectivity in this sense 'reason' or 'spirit' in a Hegelian fashion and try to conceive of it as both a logical yet changing structure *and* a historical collective consciousness that creates logical and scientific concepts. I will come back to this point at the end of section III).⁹

Neo-Kantians (group 1) do not follow the late Cohen and Natorp (group 2) in turning away from transcendental subjectivity. Rickert, Bauch, Zocher, Reich, and Wagner share the latter's disdain for a psychologistic or cognitivist foundation of knowledge. Yet, they believe that the transcendental subject *can* retain a foundational role in a Kantian system, if it is understood in an anti-psychologist manner. Those scholars therefore strive to explicate transcendental subjectivity as a condition of judgments and objects, while distinguishing it—more clearly than Kant himself—from an actual human psyche, mental faculties, or someone's activity of thought. This is the strand of neo-Kantianism on which the present article will focus. While it is more strictly Kantian, at least by Cohen's and Natorp's standards, its proponents, nevertheless, sometimes amend Kant's reasoning in the belief of thereby strengthening his original argument—as do many contemporary Kant scholars.

There is certainly a textual basis (b) for the neo-Kantian interpretation of transcendental subjectivity discussed here. Notwithstanding the variety of readings of Kant's work, it is clear that Kant dedicates important sections of the first critique to notions such as the unity of apperception (KrV B132ff.) and 'the unity of (self-) consciousness' (KrV B 141 f.; B143ff.). Generations of scholars have supposed that these notions refer to something that has a foundational role for Kant's system.¹⁰ In other words, neo-Kantians (group 1) form a part of that group of scholars who pay particular attention to Kant's deductions, his theory of objects, and the question of how it is possible to make valid judgments about those objects.

It is not only their textual interests, but also their interpretative aims (c) that overlap with those of many contemporary Kantians. The neo-Kantian interpretation of transcendental subjectivity strengthens idealist, anti-psychologist, and logical elements of Kant's philosophy, while searching for a foundation of his theory of judgment. Consequently, this interpretation is less relevant to scholars who regard (parts of) Kant's work as an ontology or psychology (e.g. Allais and Kitcher, respectively); it is more interesting to those who have sympathies with interpreters such as Allison, Longuenesse, Anderson, or, in fact, Strawson and Bennett. It goes

without saying that several of those contemporary Kantians were influenced either directly or indirectly by neo-Kantians (groups 1 and 2). Henry Allison, for example, received their tenets via Gerold Prauss,¹¹ if not directly from neo-Kantian writings. The theory of transcendental subjectivity explicated here, however, has been received almost exclusively in German-speaking Kant scholarship.¹²

This article starts by tracing the neo-Kantian (group 1) interpretation of Kant's conception of the object and its logical constitution (I). It then proceeds to examine transcendental subjectivity, with regard to both its function in constituting objects and its self-relatedness (II), before, finally, offering an evaluation of the proposed position (III). The latter is achieved by asking whether neo-Kantians (group 1) avoid the problematic metaphysics that prompted concern from Sellars and Strawson, and how the conception outlined differs from Hegel's and that of neo-Kantians (group 2).

1. Judgment and the Logically Structured Sense Object

As Lanier Anderson (2005) has expounded, neo-Kantianism emerges in the nineteenth century as a decisive break from a psychologistic reading of Kant. Neo-Kantians avoid any reliance on mental faculties, they are uninterested in the receptive psyche, and they pursue a logical inquiry into the conditions for making valid judgments. (This is true of neo-Kantian groups 1 and 2, but I am only concerned with the first group here). A neo-Kantian conception of transcendental subjectivity emerges as a by-product of Kant's analysis of the object and its function within judgments. For neo-Kantians, unlike many Kant scholars, Kant's question is not 'how can this or that judgment be proven to be true or meaningful?', but rather 'how is it possible to distinguish between true and false judgments in a universally valid manner?' The traditional answer to this question runs: because there is an object that exists independently of thought, and that everybody can consult in order to see whether someone's judgment about it is correct or not. For Kant, however, this external independent object has become problematic, and this raises the closely linked questions: (1) how are valid judgments possible? and (2) what is the object?

Similarly, as Sebastian Roedl (2006) has proposed, neo-Kantians (group 1) believe that neither the relation *within* the judgment (between the subject and predicate term) nor the one *between* judgments is central. Rather, the key relation is that between the judgment and the object of which the judgment is meant to be true. Wilhelm Windelband and Heinrich Rickert insist on this twofold, 'transcendent and the immanent sense of a judgment' (Flach 2012: 34), where the transcendent sense is the relation of the judgment to a supposedly mind-independent object to which the subject term refers. Kant describes the function of this object as follows:

If we investigate what new characteristic is given to our representations by the relation to an object, and what is the dignity that they thereby receive, we find that it does nothing beyond making the combination of

representations necessary in a certain way, and subjecting them to a rule (KrV B242/A179).

The surplus or benefit that accrues from the fact that judgments are about objects is that the object makes the link or the ‘combination of representation’ that the judgment proposes objectively necessary and universally valid. Because it is true of the object that two aspects combine, a judgment proposing this connection is not a subjective fantasy, but objective truth.¹³

While this is also true for statements of fact, Kant is primarily interested in necessary and universally valid synthetic judgments. They bring out theoretical problems that are also present but less obvious in statements of fact. Objectively valid synthetic, that is non-tautological, judgments can be either a priori (i.e. about objects we do not encounter in experience) or judgments of experience such as ‘the sun warms the stone’ (Kant 1968: 301).

What makes these judgments interesting for Kant is that they cannot be proven either by tautological reasoning or by mere sense input from a purported object. Kant agrees with Hume that perception only reveals what ‘usually happens’; one can experience neither universal laws nor the necessity of a change, ‘that the effect is posited by the cause and follows from it’ (KrV B124).

Unlike Hume, Kant proposes that universal synthetic judgments are nevertheless possible—as is a natural science that studies universal natural laws. The object about which those judgments are being made must contain a logical and universal regularity that cannot be received as sense input; Kant therefore proposes that this regularity must stem from thought. Thought principles, the categories of formal logic, can be found within objects, which is why Kant calls their study transcendental logic (KrV B79).

What exactly does Kant propose in this famous line of reasoning? There are at least two systematic questions: Roedl addresses the question of sequencing, whether there is, first, a representation that consists in sense content, which is subsequently logically structured, or whether no such distinction can be made (Roedl is of the latter view). A second, more fundamental question is the question of reference; that is, whether Kant is referring to an object in the sense of a representation or whether he refers to the object that is being represented, the (supposedly) mind-independent object.

While neo-Kantians (group 1) agree with Roedl that there is no object without it being structured by the categories (as something that has qualities, remains the same over time, etc.), they are speaking of a different object. Roedl (2006: 45) believes ‘what is, is merely a formal expression for what thinking grasps’; for him, Kant reduces the object to what one grasps, to mere representations, replacing a traditional metaphysics with a new one. On a neo-Kantian reading, on the contrary, Kant’s aim is to incorporate the function and idea of the mind-independent object of traditional metaphysics within a theory that does not believe in (the knowability of) such an object (cf. Edmunds 2008: 269). Kant requires an object that can serve as a standard for truth in a correspondence theory of truth (cf. Hiltcher 1993) and ‘what thinking grasps’, by means of senses or reason, precisely cannot

serve as a standard for checking whether one's grasp and therefore one's judgments are correct.

Kant says 'The accordance with the object is truth' (KrV B236/A191) and then goes on to explain how 'the object that is distinct from representations' (KrV B236/A191) can be explained within his theory. The object that Kant is interested in is thus not a representation, but, as Rudolf Zoicher (1954: 184) puts it, 'the object that corresponds to our representations', the object that is being represented. In order to preserve the correspondence theory of truth while denying knowledge of things-in-themselves and the sensing of universal laws, Kant needs an object that explains why the object is perceived as independent and external and that fulfils its function of being independent of the judger and displaying universal regularities.

Kant manages this feat by means of the categories, as the early Cohen (1871: 248) explains '[T]he object, which we search for and posit behind the category, only comes about in consequence of the categories, due to the concept of causality and substance'. Cohen (1871: 250) confirms that the object Kant is talking about is the one 'we search for and posit behind the category', 'the unknown something' to which representations are meant to refer.

Cohen's point is that the very idea (and therefore also the imagined perception) of something being independent from thinking requires the categories. This is as true of direct perception as it is of reflective reasoning. The clue lies in the paradox that it is impossible to perceive something as being independent of one's perception. While individuals do not reflect on this, only by means of thinking something as a substance—something that continues existing even when not perceived—and as part of its own causal sequence does the independent object come about.¹⁴ The categories of substance and causality, together with the schema of time, make it possible to attribute to an object its own time sequence distinct from the sequence of one's perceptions. (The house remains the same when one looks at it from different angles, KrV B235/A190). This is how, Kant writes, 'we come to posit an object for our representations, or ascribe to their subjective reality, as modifications, some sort of objective reality' (KrV B242/A197). Heinrich Rickert (1904: 169) draws the fitting conclusion that the very givenness of objects in sense experience, and even the givenness of sense data, must be seen as imbued by categorical form.

What this interpretation implies can be fathomed with a quick look at historical accounts that expand on Kant's take on the object. Rickert (1904: 122, 174) defines the object of cognition as an 'ought', as what our cognitive efforts ought to grasp (Rickert 1904: 126). He writes

My representations contain no transcendent necessity whatsoever; they are nothing but contents of consciousness. Only judgments have necessity that points beyond the content of my consciousness, i.e. transcendent necessity, and they have no necessity as regards a transcendent being, but that of a transcendent ought, of a value, that must be accepted as soon as we judge (Rickert 1904: 131).

Representations do not represent anything transcendent, that is any object that actually transcends or exists beyond thinking. However, Rickert introduces a new sense of transcendence, namely, a transcendent ought, a norm, or necessary supposition that transcends the arbitrariness and particularity of the individual judge. It is in this sense that the object is 'independent from the subject' (Rickert 1904: 129). (Even scholars who do not make judgments about objects presuppose at least some 'transcendent minimum', Rickert (1904: 157) proposes, such as the supposition that one cannot affirm and negate the same statement).

The ought or 'norm' in Rickert's interpretation is not opposed to natural laws. Rather, it refers to the idea that some judgments are right and ought to be made—since, out of many possible explanations in terms of natural laws, only one corresponds to the object. The function of the object is thus to provide a necessary rule for representing it. Inversely, the idea of a necessary connection within a unified entity serves as a placeholder for the independent object. As Zocher (1954: 184) writes: 'the unity of rules appears as the surrogate for the unity of the object'.¹⁵

A second line of interpretation focuses on the point that what seems external and given is actually part of thinking. Thinking tricks itself. The independent object we take our perceptions to stem from and our judgments to be about actually results from the idea of it having a rule or necessary connection of its own.

Besides the term 'positing', which he is cited as using above (KrV B242/A197), Kant also says that the object is presupposed or pre-posed, using the German expressions 'vorausgesetzt' or 'vorausangenommen' (KrV B243/A195). Hegel (1969: 30f.) picks up on this term as he interprets Kant's philosophy as a 'philosophy of reflection' (Hegel 1996: 287–433), more precisely of external reflection. Kant's thought is characterized by a contradictory way of thinking that—by means of the category of substance, or in Hegel's terminology 'self-identity'—posits something as independently given, that is: as supposedly un-posed. It presupposes an external object that is given to thinking without realizing that it was only its own presupposition that made the object this supposedly independent and external other in the first place.¹⁶

Both interpretations clearly point in the same direction: They maintain the object in a strong sense as something independent from the individual judge, while also explaining it as an element of thought. For Rickert and other Baden neo-Kantians (group 1), this independent object is primarily a rule or norm independent from the individual's activity of judging; in the Hegelian reasoning, the focus lies with explaining the independence of the object as an invention or posit of thought. Interestingly, this Hegelian line is also suggested by neo-Kantians (group 2), for example, in Natorp's pieces on the Marburg School and the objective foundation of knowledge.¹⁷

2. The (Neo-)Kantian Sense of Transcendental Subjectivity

This allows for a preliminary notion of what neo-Kantians (group 1) mean by transcendental subjectivity: Judgments about objects employ categories, but the

independent object that is being judged also displays those categories. Transcendental subjectivity is the self-related system of transcendental logic that encompasses both the object and thought. Transcendental subjectivity is a structure or system of concepts, not an activity or actor of any kind. Nevertheless, one could say, metaphorically speaking, that thinking relates to itself, its own structure within the object. This should be understood as meaning: human beings, when thinking and judging consistently, enact or actualize a self-related structure of transcendental subjectivity, making judgments with the help of the categories about objects that display those categories.

Kant famously introduces his transcendental subject, or the unity of apperception, saying that I think must be able to accompany all representations: I am 'conscious of the identical self in regard of the manifold of representations [...], because I call them all together my representations' (KrV B135). This statement could have the banal psychological meaning that everything someone has in his or her mind can in principle be made conscious in the statement 'I think this representation'. But Kant continues:

But that is as much as to say that I am conscious a priori of their necessary synthesis, which is called the original unity of apperception, under which all representations given to me stand, but under which they must also be brought by means of synthesis (KrV B135f.).

The individual human thinker knows herself as one and the same in all representations, because all representations necessarily display a synthetic unity. Kant also calls this synthetic unity the 'objective unity of apperception', that is the unity that representations have in virtue of representing the same object or world of objects. This unity consists in links made according to the categories (cf. KrV B144). Representations of a house, a car, or of beauty all have the structure of at least some categories (representing objects that have this form), and in doing so those representations are mine and belong to thinking.

Kant famously argues that transcendental subjectivity cannot be cognized (KrV B157): The subject as an object of thought must necessarily be thought as a soul substance, since everything that becomes an object for thought displays the form of the categories. Neo-Kantians (group 1) disagree; in fact, they believe Kant contradicts himself on this point. If representations are part of the self, because they display the form of the categories (or, more precisely, because they are taken to represent a unified and categorically coherent object), then one cognizes the structure of subjectivity precisely in cognizing the categories.

While one cannot make transcendental subjectivity directly the object of thought (neo-Kantians agree with Kant on this point), it can nevertheless be so indirectly by observing the form, regularity, and systematicity it gives to objects (cf. Hiltcher 2011: 126f.). As Klaus Reich (1848: 32) points out, 'I' is a completely empty representation and one cannot deduce knowledge of the self from I think. However, along with this empty representation, something else is given. This is basically the way one necessarily thinks (objects), i.e. the forms of judgment, the categories, and the law-like links between objects. For this reason, according to Kant, we

already know the categorical connection of objects before any actual objects are being given. Neo-Kantians (group 1) argue that these categorical connections *are* the transcendental subject. As the early Cohen (1871: 249) puts it, I in a 'purely intellectual' rather than personal sense refers to nothing but the 'formal condition of the connection between my representations'.

To sum up, objects appear independent from subjective perception and have a regular, law-like structure and relations, *because* of connections that are established by means of the categories and forms of intuition. The structure of thinking and intuiting underlie or enable the very objectness, the independence, and regular nature of objects. This is why Hans Wagner (1980: §29) links subjectivity to the Latin term *sub-iacere*, 'underlying', claiming that subjectivity is what underlies objects; Bruno Bauch (1923/4: 32 f.) calls the transcendental subject 'that which enables the object'. And Hermann Cohen (1918: 76) writes in *Kant's Theory of Experience*: 'that I constitute a thing as the sum [Inbegriff] of its properties is a character trait of what is called spirit or reason, a way something that is called thinking preferably operates'.¹⁸

As a preliminary result, we can thus say that transcendental subjectivity refers to the categories insofar as they constitute objects and thereby enable universal judgments about them. There are two obvious objections to this reasoning: First, amending a critique Henrich (1955: 55) voiced against German Idealists, one can say that neo-Kantians (group 1) identify the conditions of cognition with the structure of cognition. Why is it legitimate to regard the categories not simply as how we must think objects but as the constitutive structure of thought? If the answer is that thinking is nothing but its operational mode or structure, a second worry arises: Do the neo-Kantians (group 1) provide a 'short argument to idealism' in the sense criticized by Ameriks (2009)? In this case, the system of logical operations would be called subjectivity, rather than objectivity or transcendental logic, based on the psychologist distinction between what stems from the mind and what stems from supposed things-in-themselves.

One can expand on the second worry by briefly looking at a difference between group 1 and group 2 neo-Kantians (which broadly, but not completely, coincide with the Baden and Marburg Schools, respectively). The later Cohen, Natorp, Cassirer, and others (group 2) do not regard the system of categories as foundational; rather, they argue that the system of scientific principles and concepts,¹⁹ in fact the very notion of lawfulness as such, constitutes the foundation of science and its objects. And they call the system of fundamental concepts objective, rather than subjective. To put a different spin on the previously raised question, one can thus ask why do neo-Kantians (group 1) refuse to follow the late Cohen and Natorp (group 2)? Why do they dismiss the proposition that there is an *objective* system underlying objectivity, a system of scientific concepts and principles?

Cohen and Natorp call their system objective, because it is a mere 'fact' or given presupposition of the sciences. Stolzenberg (2010: 136) even interprets Cohen's first principle itself as historical: the demand *that* there is lawfulness in experience is a historical presupposition (of a particular, historically contingent kind of science). Holzhey (1986: 57) suggests that for Marburg neo-Kantians, the underlying

principles and functions must ultimately be understood as those of scientific and historical change as such. Leaving different interpretations aside, it is clear that Marburg scholars reject any notion of a closed and fixed system of fundamental concepts, a limited number of well-known and unchanging elements of knowledge. The precise, scientific and lawful order of objects is historical, changing, and therefore, at least to some extent, accidental. It is not an absolute and eternal truth that is necessarily valid across all times and cultures (due to the constitutive structure of human or rational thought).

By contrast, neo-Kantians (group 1) suggest that the system of categories is necessary for consistent thinking and judging as such. There cannot but be this particular system of categories and the particular way they constitute objects—unless one wants to deny the possibility of coherent thought. (Interestingly, when Cohen (1885: 75 ff.) rejects such a subjectivist and Kantian foundation of knowledge, he also makes very clear what is at stake when denying this view: It was precisely Kant's achievement against Hume to show that the categories are not accidental habits of thought, but necessary, inescapable, and universal structures of thought).

Replying to the two objections mentioned earlier, one can therefore say: Neo-Kantians (group 1) do indeed define transcendental subjectivity as nothing but the necessary structure or, if you will, operational mode of all coherent thought and judging. However, their reason for taking this approach is not psychological. Rather, the notion is intended to help distinguish thought structures both from the actual activity of thought of a particular thinker and from the objective and historically contingent system of science or nature, with its particular concepts and natural laws. Transcendental subjectivity as the system of all categories is supposed to be more fundamental than the latter, ensuring the unchanging and eternal validity of the most basic scientific principles (at least as long as there are beings capable of coherent thought).

Additionally, so the reasoning goes, the system of the categories displays basic features of subjectivity, such as unity and self-reference, and thereby prefigures and enables the actual self-consciousness of human beings. The claims are (1) all categories constitute a unified system and (2) there is an implicit reflexivity inherent in judgments, which underlies human self-consciousness.

(1) Many neo-Kantians interpret the categories as a coherent system: The early Cohen (1871: 198) proposes a first principle of all synthetic judgments from which all categories issue and which makes them coherent; Klaus Reich cites Kant who claims 'this division [of the forms of judgment] is systematically generated from a common principle' (KrV A80f./B106). Unless the categories/functions of judgment form a system, Reich (1848: 9) argues, it is impossible to determine whether all categories have been detected (which Kant clearly believes he has done), and their origin would be empirical and accidental. It would appear as if Kant had simply picked them up from the history of logic.

Additionally, this thought has been added in recent years, a necessary link between the categories is a condition of the possibility for judging something to be logically consistent (cf. Flach 1994: 55 ff.). The fact that logical categories may be combined in a way that fails to be consistent shows that there must be

something beyond these categories, some necessary connection between them that judgments may fail to attain. If Kant's project is to explain the possibility of judgments, this aspect must also be explained, so the reasoning goes.

(2) The complete system of categories provides a unified candidate for transcendental subjectivity and it is certainly what underlies, in the sense of 'sub-iacere'. However, it is only by proposing the reflexivity of the system of the categories that something recognizably subjective is introduced, which allows for distinguishing between objectivity, in the sense of nature and its laws, and subjectivity as the self-referential structure of thought containing and grounding the laws of objectivity.

The self-reference of thought does not refer to someone thinking about herself, nor is it a psychological necessity. It is a logical requirement for judging and refers to a relation between a principle and what falls under this principle. The basic neo-Kantian (group 1) proposition is that judgments necessarily have the form that a particular object is considered as a (possible) instance of a universal rule. The judgment 'A causes B' functions not merely by means of the category of causality but by way of measuring this particular (alleged) instance of a causal connection against the universal rule of causality. Only if you implicitly know the categories as universal rules, which have a validity in their own right, can you know their universal and necessary application and therefore know the instance that is being judged as falling under a universal rule. Every judgment therefore implicitly contains a self-relation between the category as a general principle and the category as instantiated in this particular object. Klaus Reich (1848: 27ff) refers to this self-relation between the rule and its instance when he says that I think somehow brings the thought principles along with it.²⁰ That is to say, thought brings the categories as universals with it to the alleged particular instance of a category. In fact, thought does not merely 'bring the categories with it', but, metaphorically speaking, 'demands' the use of the categories. In other words, any consistent thinking necessarily requires that the objects of thought be conceived by means of the categories.

This normative element is meant to distinguish the so-called reflexivity or self-relation of the system of categories from any ordinary distinction between a universal concept and its instance. Of course, empirical concepts can also be distinguished from their particular instances. However, their instances may stop occurring. Unlike categories, they lack the infinite and invariant applicability to future instances, because they are not universally valid and necessary rules. An empirical concept does not function as a norm within the judgment that, if it is not met, defines the judgment as false. Even though the empirical concept 'swan' includes the attribute white, 'the swan is black' is not necessarily a false judgment. The same is not true for categories. The category of causality implies, for example, that the cause must be prior to its effect. If this time sequence is reversed in an alleged instance of causal affection, this necessarily implies that there was no causal affection and any judgment that claims otherwise is false.²¹ (By distinguishing transcendental subjectivity from the actual thought activity of an individual human subject, one explains the possibility of false judgments).²²

The neo-Kantian notion of transcendental subjectivity as a reflexive system of categories can thus be compared with that of a self-legislating reason, whereupon rational and coherent thought requires specific inescapable and eternal rules to be applied. Metaphorically speaking, the system of categories ‘applies rules to itself’. That is to say, when thinking and making judgments with the help of the categories such as causality, one also has to construct objects of experience according to this rule, that is: in the correct causal order. (This self-application of rules can of course be linked to Rickert’s notion of the object as a self-imposed norm.)

Additionally, neo-Kantians (group 1) suppose that the self-related structure of the categories enables the actual self-consciousness of human individuals, their reflexive capacity to say I think. Kant famously introduces the unity of apperception by claiming I think must be able to accompany all my representations. This notion seems to present a problem to the neo-Kantian interpretation offered here: Since transcendental subjectivity is merely a structure, rather than an actor of any kind, it needs a concrete subject, an actual human being who thinks according to its categories in order to be actual. And yet, the actual thinker clearly does not consciously think the structure of transcendental subjectivity with the phrase I think.

In fact, there are passages in Kant which suggest that I think refers primarily to the reflective activity of an individual, rather than to a structure of thought as neo-Kantians propose. In §16 of the B deduction, Kant says that I think must be ‘produced’ by self-consciousness (KrV B132). This seems to suggest that I think is exclusively the reflective act of an individual thinker (transcendental subjectivity cannot act or produce). As against what neo-Kantians argue, I think does not seem to be the actualization of a self-related structure of thought that is given to the individual. Additionally, if Kant suggests that the thought I think is a way for the individual thinker to distinguish herself from all her thoughts (including the thought principles), then the I is a completely empty reference-point of all her representations. Again, this contradicts neo-Kantian reasoning: For them, I think denotes the self-referentiality of the categories, the I is therefore not empty, but it represents or contains all categories.

However, there is a way to interpret I think in accordance with a neo-Kantian notion of transcendental subjectivity. On this reading, transcendental subjectivity turns out to be the condition of possibility of the self-consciousness of any individual. Neo-Kantian-inspired thinkers like Hiltcher (2013: 40–61) claim that the identity of consciousness of any particular thinker exists by virtue of her thinking according to the structure of thought that is called transcendental subjectivity. The individual consciousness is one and the same in all her representations and can be conscious of this identity, *because* and insofar as the thinker necessarily and always uses the same forms of judgment and corresponding categories. (One can of course utter incoherent words that are not judgments, i.e. that are not meant to be coherent claims to truth and consequently do not display any of those forms. Yet, confused words are incoherent precisely measured against the standards of a judgment—and it is one’s recognising them as not adhering to those universal standards that distinguishes a self-conscious subject from a delirious mental patient or someone experiencing hallucinations).

The individual thinker ‘produces’ the I think or self-relatedness of thought merely in the sense that she necessarily pretends to make judgments—that is to utter something that can be measured against the standards of coherence and truth. By making a claim, the individual thinker implicitly distinguishes between the categories and the particular objects that are meant to display those categories, and thereby introduces the self-related system of thought.

3. Evaluating Transcendental Subjectivity and Hegel’s Absolute Subject

Neo-Kantians (group 1) employ three strategies to avoid problems noted by Strawson, Sellars, and Allison: First, the individual is only present insofar as she fulfils and actualizes the functions of thought; the psyche, mental faculties, or the individual that has the thoughts and could exist beyond them is severed from transcendental subjectivity (I will discuss this below). Second, neo-Kantians (group 1) avoid regarding the transcendental subject as a thing-in-itself or noumenon, contra Sellars’ worries. Transcendental subjectivity is nothing beyond the realm of representations; it is no hidden basis, but the very structure and regularity of thinking. As regards transcendental subjectivity, the term I in I think does not have reference; it does not refer to an entity of which it is the representation. Rather, when thinking ‘I think’ an individual may become conscious of the unity her consciousness has due to its unified structure of thought.

Third, while transcendental subjectivity is neither a thing-in-itself nor a representation of anything, it is also not systematically elusive, as Allison claims. Transcendental subjectivity is a special case, which can be known as it is in itself, since what it is ‘in itself’ is merely within the realm of representations. One certainly cannot know transcendental subjectivity by making it an object of inquiry—in which case one would use the categories to (mis)construe subjectivity. Yet, one can know transcendental subjectivity indirectly, by observing the regularities of objects and judgments. Transcendental subjectivity is not a cause having a structuring effect, but the very regularity within thought and objects.

That said, Kant’s philosophy cannot completely avoid supposing the existence of a subject that is a thing-in-itself: Kant proposes that the subject receives sense input, which clearly implies that there must be something—a brain, psyche, or mental faculties—that exists among and alongside things-in-themselves and can be affected by them. Neo-Kantians (group 1) deal with this problem by bracketing the individual and her (possible) interaction with mind-independent reality. In fact, Rickert and the early Cohen (1871: 241ff .) agree that the very idea of a ‘transcendent world’ (Rickert 1904: 23), that is to say, a world beyond thought, is problematic from their epistemological standpoint—and this includes the idea of a subject existing beyond thought. Rickert (1904: 168), like Kant, assumes that some sense input must be given to the subject (from a world that exists independently of any subject).²³ Nevertheless, Rickert argues that for a Kantian theory of valid judgments, one primarily needs a transcendent ought, an object whose laws are necessary, non-arbitrary, and the same for any subject. As Kant

had shown, an actual mind-independent world cannot play the role of this universally accessible and identical standard of truth.

While this neo-Kantian approach takes some edge off the dualism dilemma raised by Strawson and Sellars, it also certainly comes close to a Fichtean or Hegelian theory of subjectivity.²⁴ Hegel analyzes a system of categories in his *Logic* and concludes that this system is reflexive and must be called subjectivity. Key terms in Bauch's work mirror the terminology of Hegel's *Logic* (Bauch, 1923a, 192 ff.). (Also neo-Kantians (group 2) use seemingly Hegelian expressions, like the late Cohen (1922: 14) who speaks of 'the self-consciousness of the concept'. His and other Marburg accounts of historical and creative reason will be discussed alongside Hegel's spirit below).

There are certainly similarities between Hegelian thought and the account of transcendental subjectivity offered by neo-Kantians (group 1). However, they are due less to a concerted interest in Hegel than to the fact that both address similar problems in Kant.²⁵ The neo-Kantian line of inquiry presented here is, like Hegel (2003: §42), concerned with the origin of the categories. Klaus Reich (1848: 9) is dissatisfied with calling the categories simply conditions of knowledge (rather than transforming them into the system of subjectivity), because this leaves open the question: 'where did those conditions come from?'—a question that points to an underlying arbitrariness in Kant's theory and entails the need to stipulate some beyond, some inexplicable basis that lies outside of the realm of knowledge and completely conditions it. Hegel and neo-Kantians (group 1) introduce absolute and transcendental subjectivity, respectively, because they want to deduce the categories as a necessary element within a self-grounding system of thought.

The question that needs to be raised is whether the very demand for a self-grounding system of categories commits neo-Kantians (group 1) to a position closer to Hegel's than they would like to admit. As Hiltcher (2006: 280) points out, Kant regards human cognition as finite because the principles by which it functions are merely given, that is not necessary or provable. This means that other beings may have other principles given to them by their modes of cognizing and that human cognition is, in principle, one among many possible ways of cognizing. If, on the contrary, the categories can be derived and shown to be the only possible principles of cognition, those categories construct a universal reality that any cognizing being would have to construe in this very same way.²⁶

If reality is necessarily cognized in the same way, it becomes hard to distinguish the universal and necessary construal of reality from reality as it is in itself or independently of that construal. In other words, one comes close to proposing an absolute subjectivity that creates the world. While this is a reasonable worry, it is more problematic for the late Cohen and his Marburg disciples than for neo-Kantians (group 1). For Rickert, co-founder of the Baden School, the content of cognition cannot be deduced from rational principles.²⁷ This implies the dependence on something external to thinking and the possibility of a typically human form of receiving sensations, which distinguishes human cognition from truth as such. Even if judgments about objects were the only manner in which finite beings can have knowledge, there would thus still be the possibility of an infinite, God-like

cognition and of other finite beings having different ways of schematizing the categories (i.e. of understanding causality and substance without any reference to space and time). Unlike Hegel, neo-Kantians (group 1) retain the Kantian view that while human cognition has a particular and unchanging structure, one needs to assume the existence of other types of cognition. The categories, or at the very least the concrete principles derived from them, are only valid in and for human cognition; they are not the laws of the world or valid for any cognizing being.

The issue is different for the late Cohen, Natorp, and the Marburg neo-Kantians, who follow their lead (group 2). In fact, a comparison to Hegel allows us to distinguish their view from the neo-Kantian conception of transcendental subjectivity (group 1). The line of reasoning of many Marburg neo-Kantians (group 2) overlaps with Hegel's at two central points: Like Hegel and unlike neo-Kantians (group 1), they propose (a) that the underlying conceptual system is scientific, logical, and objective, and (b) that this system is not merely a structure of thought, but the result of an absolutely free and creative deed on the part of spirit or collective scientific consciousness.²⁸ And yet, despite these similarities, Marburg neo-Kantians like Natorp and Cohen vehemently distance themselves from Hegel.²⁹

It is impossible to exhaustively treat the Marburg conception of 'logos', spirit, or reason here. I can merely point to their key differences from Hegel: When read metaphysically, as neo-Kantians do, Hegel argues that his *Logic* analyzes the structures of mind-independent reality, logical structures that are present in nature even if no human being ever notices it. By contrast, Natorp and others suppose that the object is 'posited' by spirit or by means of scientific concepts in the sense of being *conceived* in specific ways by a particular culture or within a scientific era. (In this and other respects, Marburg neo-Kantians (group 2) come close to the so-called 'non-metaphysical Hegel' proposed by Pippin and Pinkard among others). Additionally, when the late Cohen (1922: 15) speaks of 'scientific consciousness' or 'cultural consciousness' and demands that the sciences give an account of their own system of cognition, he clearly speaks of an open-ended process. As Cassirer (1922: 18) notes, 'the 'fact' of science according to its nature is and remains obviously a historically developing fact'. Unlike Hegel (and, indeed, unlike Kant), neo-Kantians (group 2) suppose an infinite process of inventing and reinterpreting categories and scientific concepts.

4. Conclusion

In this article, I have explored a neo-Kantian interpretation of transcendental subjectivity, which was developed primarily by thinkers of the Baden School, but also by the early Cohen, Klaus Reich, Hans Wagner, and others. I have called these thinkers neo-Kantians (group 1). Their account clearly avoids the dualism that so concerned analytic thinkers. The transcendental subject is not what thinks (and exists beside thinking) but what enables valid judging as its necessary structure; it underlies thought in a logical rather than material sense.

Nevertheless, important differences remain, which become clear when one compares the neo-Kantian (group 1) position to that of Strawson. Like most neo-Kantians, Strawson opposes any psychologist aspects in Kant. Unlike neo-Kantians (group 1), he agrees with psychologists to the extent that the notion subject refers to a particular person who thinks and has experiences. For this reason, Strawson interprets Kant's transcendental deduction in a very different manner. After having detected the logical concepts or categories that are necessary for valid judgments (which Kant did in his metaphysical deduction), Kant turns to a different topic, according to Strawson. The new topic involves the question of how it is possible for any one individual to bring her sense experience under concepts. The strictly logical enquiry comes to a conclusion when Kant finds the categories; attributing these categories to (the mental faculties) of a 'transcendental subject' adds an origin and validation to the categories that they do not require.

For neo-Kantians (group 1), on the contrary, both deductions tackle the question of how judgments and the use of logical categories are possible. Kant is enquiring into the possibility of judgments and logical, consistent thought both when he discusses the categories *and* when he discusses objects (thereby suggesting that logical categories require a transcendental logic, i.e. a reference to a categorically structured object, in order to function). A mere array of necessary concepts does not explain why and how one can distinguish between true and false judgments in a universally valid and necessary manner. Those necessary concepts need to be linked and structured in a systematic way (to the effect that when the concepts are not applied in the correct, law-governed manner, a judgment is necessarily false). Kant's transcendental subjectivity provides the systematic connection between thought principles, as it implies their necessary reference to a logically consistent object (which is part of a closed and self-referential system of categories).

As an alternative to transcendental subjectivity, I have introduced the Marburg argument for an objective foundation of knowledge by means of a first principle that is meant to generate, link, and make coherent all fundamental concepts. I suggested, however, that this view entails a less Kantian and more problematic sense of subjectivity. Marburg neo-Kantians (group 2) come close to a Hegelian absolute reason that generates its own standards from its first principle. If one adds the thought that human beings can generate different categories from this first principle over the course of history—as Cohen and, indeed, Pippin's non-metaphysical Hegel do—then transcendental subjectivity ceases to be the unchanging framework for truth that is independent of any judge. Rather, subjectivity or reason turns into the collective, 'creative' process of amending and construing a coherent reality and standards for truth.

Since this creative subject and its activity change over time, it cannot coincide with the (unchanging) structures of thinking as such—and one falls back into the very dualism that Strawson and many neo-Kantians worried about: There is something else beside thought, a bearer, collective thinker, or agent that underlies and conditions thinking. This bearer of thinking is either some inexplicable metaphysical subject that cannot be accounted for, or an actual historical and collective subject. The latter option entails that all knowledge is only valid in a limited and

relative manner, namely, for and within a group that happens to accept a particular set of core concepts as valid. Neo-Kantians (group 1) wanted to preempt this relativism and salvage the universal, transhistorical validity of judgments and basic scientific concepts—in a very Kantian manner. It may be debatable whether their argument is ultimately convincing, yet they manage to bring some consistency to a central and highly problematic concept within Kant's thought, while offering an explanation as to why Kant considered this notion to be important in the first place.

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NOTES

¹ KrV refers to Kant 1998.

² The early Cohen (1877: 57) worries that Kant's expression 'unity of consciousness' suggests a 'mixing of the transcendental with the metaphysical' and may be taken to imply that the deduction of the categories is a mere 'psychological fact'.

³ Cohen (1871: 148) points out that Kant identifies the 'synthetic unity of apperception' with the 'unity that is thought in the categories'. In 1883, he still interprets the unity of consciousness or transcendental apperception as 'the unity of [Zusammenfassung], the generic term [Gattungsbegriff] for all kinds of categories and principles' (Cohen 1883: 108).

⁴ See footnote 3 (cf. Edel's discussion of a 'transcendental-subjectivist' foundation of knowledge; Edel 1988: 49 f., 51, 404 ff.).

⁵ Cohen (1885: xiii) defines his aim as 'introducing the shape Kant's doctrine has taken within my own thinking'. He openly opposes Kant on the status of ideas, the origin of sensations, and the foundation of scientific knowledge, among other issues.

⁶ For a discussion of this approach, see Richardson 2006: 211–226.

⁷ Natorp 1887: 261 f. (English: Natorp 2015a: 166 f.).

⁸ For subjectivity in the second sense, see Edgar 2008: 60 and Luft 2015: 92 ff.

⁹ Section III focuses on Natorp and the late Cohen. However, Cassirer's account of subjectivity also clearly overlaps with neo-Kantians (group 1)—despite the fact that he speaks of reason rather than transcendental subjectivity. For Cassirer (1921: 207), subjectivity in a Kantian sense is 'none other than reason itself, in its universal and its particular functions [...] the highest rational principles' (English: Cassirer 1981: 193). 'Reason should not be understood in the empirical sense as the psychological capacity of thought of human beings' (Cassirer 1921: 166; 1981: 154). However, unlike neo-Kantians (group 1), he identifies

subjectivity in this sense with 'the totality of spiritual culture', 'science, and its axiomatic presuppositions' (Cassirer 1921: 166; 1981: 155)—rather than with the system of Kantian categories. Nevertheless, Cassirer, just like the later Cohen and other Marburg neo-Kantians (group 2), does not adopt a completely empirical or historicist approach, as he claims that the scientific axioms, which appear to have emerged accidentally over the course of history, must be traced back to their necessary and first ground (Cassirer 1921: 166; 1981: 155). Cf. Cohen 1885: 77.

¹⁰ Scott Edgar identifies a cognitive and an epistemic/anti-psychologist camp. Neo-Kantians (groups 1 and 2) generally belong to the latter group. See Edgar 2010: 285–314.

¹¹ Allison uses Prauss as a key reference in *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*. Prauss (1971: 93 ff.) develops his influential thesis about objects and things-in-themselves by agreeing with Hermann Cohen. He mentions Zocher as another source of his argument (Prauss 1971: 92) and refers to many neo-Kantians throughout the book.

¹² I am thinking of works by Reinhard Hiltcher, Christian Krijnen, Kurt-Walter Zeidler, and others.

¹³ Kant claims that the judgment 'bodies are heavy' means 'both representations are united within the object, that is independently of the condition of the subject, rather than being united merely in perception' (KrV B142). There is a 'necessary unity' of those representations because they are 'united within the object' and 'according to principles' making this judgment 'objectively valid' (KrV B142).

¹⁴ The later Cohen comes to link this 'transcendental object' to his novel and revised conception of the thing-in-itself (cf. Horstmann 2008: 136).

¹⁵ As Windelband (1915: 137) puts it, the object is nothing but 'determinate rules for uniting representations' (cf. Beiser 2015: 492 ff., esp. 496).

¹⁶ Within Hegel's *Logic*, the term pre-positing attains a non-epistemological meaning, since Hegel believes to have overcome epistemology along with its mistaken presupposition of a subject-object divide—partly thanks to his analysis of Kant.

¹⁷ Natorp 1887: 268 f. (English: Natorp 2015a: 169 f.) and Natorp 1912: 204 (English: Natorp 2015b: 186): 'As a result something comes to be given (i.e. is created) that appears to simply *be* given as a fixed fact'.

¹⁸ This stems from the third edition of Cohen's book. As noted in the introduction, the later Cohen also retains an a-personal sense of subjectivity, to which he adds, however, a historical, scientific, and factual basis. Note that Cohen does not mention the categories in the quoted passage (the 'properties of objects' could well be defined by scientific concepts). The quoted passage is also suggestive of Cohen's focus on the action and creation of thought, as he does not describe subjectivity exclusively as a passive structure. Nevertheless, the general thrust of his reasoning clearly moves in the same direction as that of Wagner and Bauch.

¹⁹ Natorp (1910: §1) speaks of a system of logical functions, wherein 'logic presents the core concepts of a science' (cf. the English translation of a later version in Natorp 2015c: 198). For Marburg views on science, logic, and their foundation, see Heis 2010: 383–408.

²⁰ Compare with this self-related structure: Königshausen 1977: 170 f.

²¹ Interestingly, there is a similarity between this view and Natorp's (group 2) distinction between object and subject as universal and particular (Natorp 1887: 275 ff., English: Natorp 2015a: 172 ff.). However, the denomination is inverse for neo-Kantians (group 1); they interpret this distinction as part of one all-encompassing system and insist on the normative aspect outlined above.

²² Compare with 'Rightness and wrongness are the relations [Verhältnisse] which actual thinking has to the function of truth that gives it direction' (Bauch, 1923b: 70).

²³ Compare with footnote 27.

²⁴ For the proximity of German Idealists and neo-Kantians, see Fulda and Krijnen (eds.) 2006 and Pätzold and Krijnen (eds.) 2002.

²⁵ There are also some direct links between their philosophies, as Beiser (2015: esp. 221 ff.) shows.

²⁶ Bruno Bauch (1918: 50) seems to suggest that any claim to truth must have the form of a judgment, when he defines the judgment as a relation between representations and their object, that is what they are meant to be true of.

²⁷ 'This blue and that red remain in any respect undeducible or, as one may put it, irrational, as this determinate content is a limit for thought' (Rickert 1904: 168).

²⁸ See Natorp 1912: 197 f. (English: Natorp 2015b: 182) (cf. Friedman 2005: 72 ff).

²⁹ Compare with Cohen 1922: 9 f.; Natorp 1912: 212 (English: Natorp 2015b: 190). Compare also with Holzhey's and Edel's contributions in Pätzold and Krijnen (eds.) 2002.

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