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HETEROLOGY AND THE BEGINNING OF PHILOSOPHY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF HEINRICH RICKERT AND WERNER FLACH

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the evolution of the doctrine concerning the beginning of philosophy as evidenced in the philosophies of Heinrich Rickert and Werner Flach. The initial section of the paper explores Rickert's anti-Hegelian approach to the problem of philosophical beginning, while the subsequent section delves into Werner Flach's adaptation of Rickert's principles, infusing them with a renewed Hegelian perspective. The concluding segment offers an assessment of the limitations inherent in both doctrines pertaining to the beginning of philosophy.

KEYWORDS

RICKERT. FLACH. HETEROLOGY. DIALECTICS. BEGINNING OF PHILOSOPHY.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of the beginning of philosophy exemplifies a specific case within the broader debate between transcendental and speculative conceptions of idealism. This problem also plays a crucial role in interpreting the continuity or discontinuity of transcendental philosophy both before and after the Second World War. Consequently, its evolution is intricately linked to the history of contemporary transcendental philosophy.

Within this historical context, I strive for a comparative perspective. However, it is crucial to acknowledge a fundamental limitation when interpreting this endeavor as a contrast between Neo-Kantianism and Contemporary Transcendental Philosophy. From a hermeneutical standpoint, analyzing the continuity or discontinuity between these two directions proves to be extremely demanding. The contributions of Neo-Kantian philosophers to the problem of the beginning extend beyond the scope of this article, both historically and substantively.¹ The same applies to Contemporary Transcendental Philosophy, with the additional challenge that this newer philosophical tradition, unlike Neo-Kantianism, does not constitute a closed totality. Although the roots of Contemporary Transcendental Philosophy are anchored in the post-war period, it continues to develop and represents a dynamic trend. Therefore, it is difficult to definitively define the continuity or discontinuity between the two currents, although this may become possible in the future. The advantage of this situation, however, is that historiographical uncertainty invites reflection that can be relevant in both contemporary philosophical discussions and systematic investigations.

Our historical account, while one possible narrative, is not arbitrary. It focuses on two central points in the transcendental interpretation of the

¹ Regardless of the criteria used to define Neo-Kantianism and discuss its internal coherence, the question itself suggests the possibility of an answer. Neo-Kantianism is a historical phenomenon, and as such, it lends itself to conceptual determination. For a more comprehensive analysis of the historiographical challenges in defining Neo-Kantianism, see the works of Andrej Noras (e.g., NORAS, 2020).

beginning of philosophy. Regarding Neo-Kantian philosophy, the first cornerstone of our investigation is Heinrich Rickert's (1863–1936) contribution titled "On the Beginning of Philosophy".² The second cornerstone is Werner Flach's (1930–2023) early work, *Negation and Otherness*, which already exhibits characteristic features distinguishing it from Neo-Kantian philosophy. The crucial difference between these two positions lies in their relationship to Hegel's philosophical legacy. As highlighted in the concluding section of this essay, which adopts a critical perspective, this relationship remains a central issue in the ongoing discussion about the problem of the beginning of philosophy.

CHALLENGES FOR A NEO-KANTIAN 'BEGINNING'

Rickert's treatise on the beginning of philosophy exhibits characteristics of both a demand and a provocation. This complexity arises from Rickert's engagement with speculative idealism, a context in which his contribution is situated. Rickert's decision to use a well-known passage from Hegel's *Science of Logic* as the starting point for his investigation, along with certain statements that likely caught his attention, underscores this engagement. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Rickert did not include an extensive bibliography at the end of his text. Nevertheless, it is plausible to interpret Rickert's work as a polemical intervention in Neo-Kantian philosophy. The statements referenced can be viewed as appeals to Neo-Kantian philosophy, originating from two authors associated with the intellectual milieu of the Neo-Kantians: Jonas Cohn (1869–1947) and Siegfried Marck (1889–1957).

The earliest reference to this topic is found in Siegfried Marck's writings: "Criticism does not know a 'beginning' of logic; it stands immediately in its midst, in its 'middle'; Hegel infers from the negative critique of the beginning of

² This is an article originally published in 1925 in the preferred publication of the Baden Neo-Kantians, the journal *Logos*. There are several editions of this text; I am citing the 1939 reprint.

logic not its elimination, but its sublation in the end” (MARCK, 1917, p. 48).³ In addition to his positive assessment of Hegel, Marck identifies a crucial difference absent in Neo-Kantian philosophy, which is also considered a variant of criticism: the capacity to reflect on the beginning of philosophy while taking into account Hegel’s specific understanding of logic.

Jonas Cohn, by this time already a more established author than Marck, dared to address his dissent openly and articulate his criticism clearly, writing:

Especially for this reason, there is almost no one from whom the theory of dialectics has more to learn than from its most determined opponent. Rickert provides the indirect proof that undialectical construction in philosophy is not sufficient; but furthermore, his concept of heterothesis captures an essential moment of truth, namely that at every step of thinking, something new, alien to its origin, must be incorporated (COHN, 1923, p. 50-51).

The questions raised concerning Rickert are distinctly outlined: Can the commencement of philosophy be contemplated while adhering to the confines of transcendental philosophy, in alignment with the Neo-Kantian agenda? Can the concept of heterothesis be deemed beneficial and adequate for this purpose? Rickert unequivocally affirms these inquiries, and throughout this section, we will expound upon the rationale behind this affirmation.⁴

The originality of Rickert’s stance regarding the inception of philosophy resides in his pursuit to establish a correlation at its outset. This implies that Rickert perceives the commencement of philosophy not as simplistic, but rather as dualistic. This duality, present at the genesis of philosophy, manifesting as the duality between subject and object—subsequent elaboration will elucidate the

³ All translations from the German are my own. It should be noted that in his 1929 book *Die Dialektik in der Philosophie der Gegenwart* (Dialectics in Contemporary Philosophy), Marck also engages in a critical discussion of the debate between Heinrich Rickert and Richard Kroner. This debate should also find its place in a more comprehensive presentation of the problem addressed here.

⁴ Even with these questions, the various facets of Rickert’s essay are not yet concluded. Just as important as the engagement with the position of speculative idealism is the confrontation with phenomenology. This other direction would lead us to connect “On the Beginning of Philosophy” with another contemporary essay by Rickert: “The Method of Philosophy and the Immediate” from 1924.

essence of this duality – can be examined from diverse vantage points. From my perspective, at least three such perspectives can be discerned, each embodying distinct modes of argumentation: an indirect mode, a direct mode, and lastly, a critical or polemical approach.

We initiate our analysis with the indirect mode of argumentation. Although the explicit delineation of its scope may be somewhat latent within Rickert's treatise "On the Beginning of Philosophy," its exposition serves to elucidate Rickert's fundamental philosophical impetus.

Rickert posits dogmatic thinking as characterized by an antithetical structure, delineating a conflict between divergent approaches to comprehending the entirety of the world. One approach entails comprehending this totality from an object-oriented perspective, achieving unity by incorporating the subject within the realm of objects. Conversely, the other approach commences with the subject, situating all objects within the realm of subjectivity. This antithesis is thus articulated as a juxtaposition between an objectifying and a subjectivizing philosophy. Rickert does not consider these two approaches as philosophies in the strict scientific sense; rather, he regards them as two worldviews, each corresponding to distinct misunderstandings. These positions lack a cohesive internal structure. Rather than seeking to annul this contrast, Rickert contends that the coherent position resides in achieving a harmonious equilibrium between these two inclinations.

A correlational perspective towards the inception of philosophy, posited as a third alternative, could serve as a pivotal juncture that engenders equilibrium between the subjectivizing and objectivizing proclivities of thought. The conceptualization of a correlational starting point, if honed into a philosophical framework, embodies a stance of harmony, equilibrium, and conciliation. Through this lens, it becomes conceivable to delineate a third alternative to truth within the dialectical tension between subjectivism and objectivism, thereby averting the pitfalls of unilateralism. However, it is imperative to acknowledge that while this impetus is relevant, it alone does not

suffice. Nevertheless, it is essential to bear this in mind when critically evaluating the ramifications of Rickert's endeavors, which concurrently constitute his contribution to Contemporary Transcendental Philosophy.

Rickert's direct argumentation encompasses at least three distinct facets. The initial argumentation may be labeled as 'enabling,' as Rickert lays down the prerequisites for formulating a critical rejoinder to the quandary of the beginning of philosophy. The subsequent lines of argumentation expound upon two indispensable attributes of the genesis of philosophy: immediacy and universality. These facets elucidate that the correlational approach fulfills these criteria. In each of these three instances, the notion of a heterothetic principle of cognition assumes a distinct role.

The initial argument delineates Rickert's anti-dialectical maneuvering. This strategy, ostensibly the most rational and least contentious, manifests prominently through a threefold differentiation of the notion of 'beginning'. Despite its seemingly innocuous nature, this differentiation belies its complexity, as Rickert endeavors to reconcile the inherent contradiction within the concept of the beginning of philosophy by delineating multiple, non-contradictory interpretations.

Rickert introduces a dichotomy between a mere starting point and further distinguishes between a logical and an ontological beginning (RICKERT, 1939, p. 9).⁵ Hegel's presupposition of a 'simple' argument to demonstrate the mediating nature of the inception seems to conflate the inception with the starting point. Conversely, the counterargument, also deemed 'simple', underscores the logical significance of the beginning. Hence, it is decidedly problematic to assert that this inception—whether construed as the logical inception or the inception of a system—presents something immediate and therefore must be perceived as such.

⁵ The very idea of making this distinction and the associated considerations could also serve as a genuine "starting point" for Rickert's philosophy. Whether this can be the case will be seen towards the end of the discussion. Rickert does not devote particular attention to this issue.

In any event, the differentiation between these significations inherently implies a critical demarcation between logic and ontology.⁶ While Marck posits that the problem of the beginning can only be contemplated through a dialectical lens, never from a critical perspective, Rickert's approach reverses this relationship. The purported 'resolution' of the beginning problem negates the idea of a philosophical system, as Rickert contends: "With the beginning, one would have simultaneously reached the end" (RICKERT, 1939, p. 12).

Rickert concludes that the concept of an immediate beginning is not inherently contradictory. However, it is crucial to underscore that such a beginning inevitably denotes the initiation of the system, particularly within a (transcendental) logical framework rather than an ontological one. The critical standpoint entails acknowledging and upholding this differentiation. Serving as transcendental logic, the commencement of philosophy simultaneously signifies the inception of world cognition (transcendental) and exclusively the framework of this cognition (logical).⁷ These deliberations prompt an examination of Rickert's second argument.

The second argument posited by Rickert addresses the immediate nature inherent in the concept of the beginning. Rickert contends that any element devoid of mediating relationships must inherently be an immediate "given".⁸ This immediacy carries a dual aspect, manifesting in both the given itself and the individual to whom the given is presented.⁹ In addition to the certainty of the self

⁶ "Only the 'dogmatic' believes that the immediately given or the world's foundation can be logically grasped at the outset of world thought. The critically trained philosopher will rather perceive the 'beginning' of being as the ultimate, about which he must refrain from any judgment at the beginning of the system" (RICKERT, 1939, p. 12).

⁷ From this formulation, one can also derive the demand for universality.

⁸ Any reference to a concept of the "given", especially when made within the context of critical theory, is suspicious. Rickert is confronted with a situation that finds its parallel in Hegel's interpretation of the beginning. As Hegel observes, immediate or indeterminate expressions are "expressions of reflection". They do not provide a direct characterization of the beginning of philosophy but rather point the way to it. Hans Wagner benefits from this difference in his critique of Hegel's beginning of philosophy (WAGNER, 1980).

⁹ "The word 'given' loses its meaning without the presupposition of an ego or a 'subject' to whom something is given. Only what I immediately have can be immediately given, and therefore, thinking about the world should begin with what is given to me, in order to eliminate everything that I grasp only through mediations." (RICKERT, 1939, p. 18).

as the primary principle, there exists a certainty regarding what is immediately presented to the self. Consequently, the genesis of philosophical inquiry assumes the form of a dichotomy between the self and an entity distinct from it, namely, a non-self: “The truth of the two propositions ‘I am’ and ‘That which is immediately given to me is’ is evident without further mediation” (RICKERT, 1939, p. 21). The immediate beginning of philosophy does not manifest solely as the subject or the object but rather as the original correlation between the two. It becomes apparent that the justification of this concept extends far beyond a mere appreciation of the term “given.”

The terms “subject” and “object” encompass a range of connotations, necessitating clarification regarding which interpretation of “subject” and “object” aligns with the overarching demand of criticism. Rickert’s strategy endeavors to resolve the contradictions surrounding the notion of the self through conceptual elucidation, constituting the third argument he presents.

Rickert’s methodology entails employing a specific form of argumentation to achieve a universal concept. The complexity of Rickert’s third argument necessitates a distinction between two forms of abstraction: generalizing abstraction and isolating abstraction. According to Rickert, these two approaches yield disparate types of concepts: generic concepts and concept-moments.

The concept, in essence, follows a straightforward trajectory. When scrutinizing the notion of the “self” and seeking to abstract it from a specific object, the resultant concept merely encapsulates the characteristic attributes of that object. Such a concept, derived via generalizing abstraction, constitutes a generic concept but may not inherently possess universality. Conversely, isolating abstraction aims to furnish us with “a general concept of a universal” (RICKERT, 1939, p. 29), yielding what Rickert terms a general moment.

Once again, Rickert underscores the central significance of heterothesis in comprehending the concept of the pure self as a moment corresponding to what cannot be categorized as non-self. Thus, the genesis of philosophy materializes as the correlation of two heterothesisistically opposing generic moments: “The

pure self may then be called pure subject in contrast to all objects or universally identical consciousness in contrast to all possible contents of consciousness” (RICKERT, 1939, p. 29).

Rickert’s argumentation elucidates that the inception of philosophy encompasses a broader sense of duality. The concept of the “world of the beginning” reveals a dual nature, intricately intertwined with the explicit delineation of the beginning as correlation, mediated by the heterothetic principle. This principle assumes a pivotal role across Rickert’s arguments, underpinning their conception and elaboration.

Rickert expounds on heterothetis in various instances within his works, although I will reference just one of them. Rickert articulates:

Heterology is already necessary in determining every theoretical object that we intend to logically conceive. Even identity cannot be determined as an independent object solely through A, but only through the formula A is A, thus by another A. Strictly speaking, there is no sentence of identity in a completely adequate formulation. Identity and otherness necessarily go hand in hand (RICKERT, 2020, p. 128).

The alterity or otherness intrinsic to the heterothetic principle does not represent a negation of identity; it does not deny the existence of something but rather facilitates a positive acknowledgment of what stands opposed to the individual. Alterity, when considered in terms of ‘form’, is not nebulous or deficient; rather, it inherently embodies ‘content’. The relationship between the one and the other epitomizes the most fundamental logical connection conceivable:

The Other is just as ‘positive’ as the One, or if one wishes to avoid such terminology: the Other stands alongside the One originally or from the outset, which, of course, is not meant temporally, and constitutes an element within the purely logical or theoretical object as a whole. This element is necessarily connected to the One but cannot be derived from it through something in which alterity is not already contained (RICKERT, 2020, p. 129).

The beginning of philosophy diverges from a determinate negation, instead embodying a heterothetic principle. Rickert articulates this concept by stating: "Thus, the pure self and the immanent non-self together form a 'world,' which may be designated as the comprehensive world of the immediate, and which therefore fulfills the critical demand in the same measure as the universal" (RICKERT, 1939, p. 32). This assertion carries significant ramifications, as it asserts that neither component in this correlation possesses conceptual primacy over the other.

Rickert contends that negation does not entail the provision of positive knowledge regarding the other. Rather, in the context of an exclusive alternative between the one and the other, negation merely indicates the other's presence. It facilitates the recognition or designation of the other. Rickert posits that the creative aspect of negation lies in the confusion arising from conflating negation with the logically antecedent concept of heterothetic opposition. Consequently, philosophy commences with both the pure self and the general object, or more precisely, exclusively with their heterothetic correlation.

Rickert adopts a distinct stance concerning the heterothetic principle in this context. He contends that only his conception of thinking as heterothetis possesses the capacity to set thought in 'motion' (RICKERT, 2020, p. 131). In contrast, speculative thought endeavors to instigate cognition on the basis of pure identity, notwithstanding the indispensable requirement for reference to the other. Nevertheless, Rickert consistently underscores the primacy of duality and relationality, even in light of this hypothetical premise. This interplay of duality corresponds to the initial cognitive act, namely the synthesis of the one and the other within their correlation. Rickert elucidates:

Only in it [the synthesis] do we truly comprehend the 'beginning' of thought itself. Speaking of duality was therefore only provisional. Thesis and heterothesis are conceptually isolated moments of logical thought or the understanding of a theoretical object in general through the analysis of the original synthesis (RICKERT, 2020, p. 132).

The notion of movement applied to the ‘world of beginnings’ presents a distinctive and intricate character. For instance, in the endeavor to delineate the subject and distinguish between a cognizing subject and one appreciating artistic beauty, one must traverse through an objective content presented to consciousness. Consequently, the concept of a beginning via correlation, instead of providing a strict validation of the beginning solely through the self, ultimately entails a ‘turn to the object’. Progress regarding the pure self can only be achieved through the inclusion of this newfound orientation towards the object. In this manner, the trajectory of thought is influenced from beyond pure cognition itself, as Rickert observes: “Where one does not confine oneself to the most general a priori of the pure self but seeks to demonstrate the multiplicity of subject forms, one must consider the intuitively given content of consciousness” (RICKERT, 1939, p. 43).

This shift from the general pure self to the diversification of its forms also signifies, for Rickert, the progression from mere beginning of philosophy to the construction of its system. Consequently, the movement highlighted by Rickert not only entails advancement beyond the inception of philosophy but also the assimilation of a genuinely external element into the initial framework established at the onset of philosophy.

This shift towards the object was implicitly foreshadowed in Rickert’s discourse on epistemology and the philosophy of mathematics. In a general prefatory remark on his own epistemology, Rickert expresses his aspiration to transcend the dichotomy between epistemological empiricism and rationalism, aiming to contribute to the notion of “transcendental empiricism”. It is the experience itself, particularly the experience of an object presented to consciousness, that enables philosophy to transcend the so-called ‘world of beginnings’. According to this empiricism, even if acknowledged merely formally, the transcendental realm necessitates an empirical dimension. The speculative movement of thought appears to be at odds with the movement of experience. While the inception of philosophy encounters mediation, this

mediation does not originate from the cogitation of the inception itself but rather through an external mediation.

Nonetheless, the question remains open as to whether the cost of this comprehension of philosophical progress lies in the transcendental and pure nature of its own systematic framework.

Rickert deems this assertion adequate: “What presents itself as the beginning of the system must be considered in its duality at every stage, indicating a pathway towards the ultimate aim of philosophy, the comprehension of the entire world” (RICKERT, 1939, p. 50).

The mission of philosophy now involves progressively deepening the correlation between the subjective and objective poles. At each juncture, this correlation must be meticulously refined by delineating the subject and object. The achieved equilibrium between objectivism and subjectivism via correlation inevitably prompts a query: What purpose does the Copernican revolution, the fundamental tenet of transcendental philosophy, serve if we ultimately revert to a reorientation towards the object? These questions will be revisited as we explore Flach’s innovative adoption of the heterothetic principle.

WERNER FLACH’S INTERPRETATION OF RICKERT’S THEORY OF THE BEGINNING

Our focal point for the discourse on post-war philosophy resides in the early contributions of Werner Flach. As we shall discern, Flach articulates an original line of reasoning that displays both parallels and deviations from Rickert’s Neo-Kantianism. In his treatise *Negation and Otherness*, Flach once again strives to construct a heterothetic framework of thought, thereby circling back to the foundational discourse underlying Rickert’s essay on the beginning of Philosophy. This reengagement transpires not solely in thematic coherence but also through a doctrinal departure. While Rickert delineates a distinct demarcation between heterology and dialectics, Flach fundamentally entertains

the prospect of their potential connection. Stated differently, Flach assimilates the Hegelian dialectical element as a form of 'rectification' or rather as a complement to the Rickertian model.

Flach delineates the mission of philosophical contemplation as self-justification, implying its quest for elucidating its own genesis in terms of a principle of thought (FLACH, 1959, p. 5). Nonetheless, it merits attention that Flach no longer upholds the notion of an exclusive dichotomy between heterology and dialectics. As aptly noted by Krijnen: "In these investigations [in Flach's work], an endeavor is made to elevate transcendental philosophy to a novel stage of specification while assimilating pivotal aspects of Hegel's philosophy" (KRIJNEN, 2019, p. 37).

What happens with the first aspect, heterology? Flach adopts this principle from Rickert's philosophy by asserting that his own position constitutes an interpretation and defense of the heterological principle of thought. For instance, Flach observes:

The principle that vindicates it [the logical structure of object-oriented thinking] is the heterothetic principle of thinking ... we aim, to emphasize the radicality of this idea even more strongly, to formulate: all thinking is the bringing of the one to the other, and without such bringing, thinking itself would not be possible (FLACH, 1959, p. 17-18).

Due to Flach's extensive use of quotations from Rickert's works, it is possible to overlook subtle differences between their philosophies. However, one such difference is crucial, as it highlights an implicit distinction in Rickert's approach between the "world of the beginning" and the principle of thought. Flach elucidates this distinction by stating: "With the thinking of the One and the Other [heterological principle], thinking in the most daring sense of the word takes the first step not only of its doing but also of its being" (FLACH, 1959, p. 18). Flach's inclusion of the synthesis of the One and the Other as the third moment suggests that the movement and determination of the beginning of

philosophy diverge from Rickert's approach, particularly in terms of a turn to the object.

Flach's presentation sheds light on the ongoing debate regarding the origins of philosophy. While Rickert's discourse on the beginning involves a correlation between the pure subject and the pure object, with these correlated spheres of thought and being synthesizing through philosophical reflection, Flach's heterothetic principle places emphasis on the thought of synthesis. The heterothetic principle clarifies a triadic structure within the world of the beginning, contrasting with Rickert's dual structure (FLACH, 1959, p. 19). This further indicates a departure from Rickert's pattern, particularly regarding a turn to the object in the determination of the beginning of philosophy.

Furthermore, Flach underscores an aspect that was somewhat implicit in Rickert's philosophy but not extensively discussed. As previously elaborated, Rickert presents heterotheticism as a specific method of conceptual thinking that constructs a totality. This method suggests that conceptual determination cannot be achieved solely through internal conceptual development, as it necessitates reference to a negation and thus to an "Other" outside the totality. This process of determination progresses from thought to cognition, as Flach articulates: "The thought of the purely logical... is not yet a determining thought [is heterological thought]. – But we must now admit that all our cognition is determining thought" (FLACH, 1959, p. 34).

In terms of its origin, the heterothetic principle, as Flach articulates, serves as the defining principle of thought's inception: "It is the principle that defines the origin of thought. Wherever something is theoretically thought, it can only be thought as an 'object,' i.e., according to the heterothetic principle of thought" (FLACH, 1959, p. 47). Flach's proposal for the beginning of philosophy also carries a dual character, albeit in a manner distinct from the subject-object duality proposed by Rickert. Flach's delineation of duality revolves around thought and cognition, reflexivity and constitution, analysis and synthesis, as well as pure heterogeneity and homogeneity, positing and determination.

For Flach, the domains of thinking and knowing, positing and determining, delineate distinct tiers within the realm of logical discourse. On one level, there exists an acknowledgment that the fundamental concepts of thought possess a heterological structure, wherein correlated pairs mutually define each other. Conversely, thought transcends mere heterological pairs, expanding into a multitude of coordinated concepts. In navigating the interplay between the heterological origin and this multiplicity, the former is intimately linked with the concrete:

The Absolute is thus this absolute synthetic unity. In this way, thought as a principle is also delineated according to its *content*. All fundamental pairs of concepts denote domain differences of thought (as a principle). They are then to be called principles themselves, principles of possible objective determinacy (FLACH, 1959, p. 46).

The original duality, that is, the heterothetic principle as the principle of thought, must be supplemented in the movement towards cognition by the principle of identity. From this standpoint, Flach attempts to elaborate the relationship between alterity and negation in a positive sense. Alterity is part of the basic structure of thought, while negation constitutes the condition for the possibility of cognition. In this way, the opposition between Hegel's philosophy and Rickert's neo-Kantianism is resolved in one of its basic premises:

Setting and determining are the two basic functions of thought. If this is observed, then there can be no doubt about the positive relationship between heterothetic and determining thought: they belong together; only in the community, in the *koinonia*, in the symbiosis of heterothetic and principle of contradiction, are the higher principles of thought also constituted (FLACH, 1959, p. 54).

So, what is the relationship between dialectics and heterothesis? Dialectics, as Flach elucidates, functions as a methodological principle (FLACH, 1959, p. 56). This principle operates by articulating two contradictory opposites, typically identified as thesis and antithesis, which, in their conflict, engender a third

element. Consequently, dialectics serves as a method facilitating cognitive progress through the emergence of this third element. However, being a methodological principle, it never reaches a definitive conclusion, as the third element necessitated by the contradiction itself can be countered by another antithetical aspect, demanding further resolution. Synthesis, within dialectics, does not negate to expose the falsehood resulting from one-sidedness but instead directs towards a determination enabling the integration of contradictory elements into a higher conceptual framework. While heterothesis delineates a totality emblematic of the ultimate structure of object-oriented thinking and thereby establishes the fundamental relationship, dialectics operates within this totality, engaging in the progressive articulation thereof. Dialectics does not configure the totality itself; rather, it serves as the procedural mechanism for the systematic construction of knowledge.

Flach underscores the necessity of complementing dialectics with heterothetic thinking to attain genuine knowledge. Heterothetic thinking facilitates engagement with the Other, whereas dialectics embodies the mode of implication and determination. It becomes apparent that the concept of heterology, in comparison to Rickert's standpoint, remains incomplete and necessitates additional elements to advance philosophical principles. Whereas Rickert achieves this through the empirical element, Flach accomplishes it through dialectical supplementation.

In summary, the integration of heterology and dialectics represents a creative endeavor within philosophy that falls short of fully satisfying either Rickert's or Hegel's claims.

THE MOVIMENT OF THE BEGINNING

So, let's explore the comparison between dialectics and heterothesis. According to Flach (1959, p. 56), dialectics operates as a methodological principle by articulating two contradictory opposites, commonly referred to as thesis and antithesis, which, in their contradiction, give rise to a third element. This process

facilitates cognitive advancement, as the emergence of a third element amidst contradiction drives intellectual progress. However, being a methodological principle, dialectics remains open-ended because the third element necessitated by the contradiction can be countered by an opposing antithetical element, requiring further synthesis. In this context, synthesis does not negate to reveal falsehood but rather serves as a method guiding us towards determination, aiding in the integration of contradictory elements into a more comprehensive conceptual framework.

In contrast, heterothesis delineates a totality that embodies the ultimate structure of object-oriented thinking, thereby establishing a foundational relationship. Dialectics, however, operates within this totality, progressively elucidating it. While dialectics does not structure the totality itself, it functions as the procedural mechanism for constructing the system of knowledge.

Flach emphasizes the importance of complementing dialectics with heterothetic thinking to attain knowledge. Heterothetic thinking enables engagement with the Other, while dialectics embodies the mode of implication and determination. It becomes apparent that compared to Rickert's standpoint, the concept of heterology remains incomplete and necessitates an additional element to advance philosophical principles. Rickert achieves this through the empirical element, whereas Flach accomplishes it through dialectical supplementation.

In essence, the juxtaposition of heterology and dialectics represents a creative endeavor within philosophy, one that does not fully satisfy the claims of either Rickert or Hegel.

The focal point of Flach's exposition lies in his recognition of Hegel's contribution in unveiling the reflexive dimension inherent within determinate thought itself. Flach interprets the inception of logic, encompassing the transition from pure being to nothingness, as indicative of the notion that unemphasized, unreflected being equates to nothingness. Put differently, "the truth is the reflexivity of thought" (FLACH, 1959, p. 67). This implies a twofold approach to

addressing the problem of the beginning: first, concerning the inception itself (being-nothing-becoming), and second, pertaining to the principle of thought that articulates such a beginning.

While Flach does not explicitly articulate it, the movement is now comprehended from a dual perspective. On one hand, it involves the more static relationship between ‘the One’ and ‘the Other,’ and on the other, it operates within the realm of cognition itself as a determinant where dialectics serves as a method.

In essence, Flach’s stance can be summarized as follows: Unlike Rickert, who excludes dialectics, Flach contends that dialectics holds a place in the moment of determination and cognition. However, this does not imply his acceptance of the determinative structure proposed by Hegel himself in the *Science of Logic*. Flach states:

Negativity leads to its absoluteness. This characterization, which embeds positivity within the movement of negativity itself, is an accurate delineation only for speculative reflection, which does not regard the concept in a truncated manner. In potentiated intellectual reflection, positivity cannot lie within the immanent movement of negation; rather, negativity must transcend itself (once again) to lead to a new (heterogeneous) positivity (FLACH, 1959, p. 73).

Within this distinction lies the reinstatement of dialectics as a complement to heterology. As elucidated earlier, the notion of synthesis between these two facets merely implies a correlation without engendering a new third element. Unlike in Rickert's framework, where one facet refers to the other without generating any additional element, Flach interprets dialectics in a similar vein. He regards dialectics as necessitating contradiction to direct its focus towards a third element – “dialectics... precisely needs contradiction to be able to direct its gaze to a third at all... dialectics is method, is methodological principle” (FLACH, 1959, p. 56). What was once perceived as a defensive stance against dialectics now necessitates supplementation by dialectics as a source of determination.

However, the critique of the specific structure through which Hegel articulated his system, particularly through the utilization of negation, remains intact, as articulated by the Baden Neo-Kantians. The essence of Hegel's philosophy, which transformed logic into reflexive logic, persists.

In this gesture, there seems to be a Neo-Kantian inclination towards a revival of Hegelian philosophy *sui generis*. Windelband and Rickert exhibit a moderate or hesitant approach in this regard, refraining from characterizing it as a resurgence of Hegelianism, as evident in the perspectives of Cohn and Marck. In contrast, their disciples such as Glockner or Kroner openly advocate for this notion. Post-war, Flach rejuvenated interest in the concept of heterothetis as a form of 'Kantian' thought, now under the assumption of a new synthesis with Hegelian philosophy.

Paradoxically, this trajectory appears to regress rather than advance the development of Neo-Kantianism. The evolution of Neo-Kantian philosophy, construed as a fresh interpretation of Kant and a critical transcendence of Hegelian philosophy, ultimately culminates in a notable return to precisely that position. It does not embody a post-Neo-Kantianism but rather a pre-Neo-Kantianism, namely speculative idealism. The principal divergence lies in the understanding of the movement of thought, specifically the transition from the beginning to what has commenced. Rickert refutes the notion that such movement belongs exclusively to identity. Consequently, he posits that the beginning constitutes a correlation. However, subsequent philosophers, implicitly or explicitly, endeavor to champion a pure movement of thought.

In conclusion, the conception of the beginning of philosophy as a pure correlation proves insufficient, and critiques in a certain manner converge on this notion. The conundrum surrounding the conjunction or disjunction of heterology and dialectics furnishes significant insights not only for contemplating the principle of the beginning but also for pondering the feasibility of transcendental philosophy.

From Rickert's formal standpoint, the beginning of philosophy manifests through several dualities. Primarily, there exists the overt duality between pure ego and pure object. Secondly, an implicit dualism emerges between the genesis of philosophy (ego-object) and the principle of thought (heterology). Thirdly, a duality ensues between the commencement and culmination of philosophy, between the generalized and indefinite inception and the systematically concrete culmination. Each of these dualities warrants specific critique, with the latter perhaps holding the utmost significance. The correlation between commencement and culmination, between the structure of philosophical system and the substance of the already articulated system, reveals a lacuna necessitating the integration of experience.

Rickert himself acknowledges that his stance leads to a sort of "transcendental empiricism." In this portrayal, we interpret the so-called "turn to the object" accordingly. However, Flach does not endorse this conclusion. He neither aims for the formulation of an empiricist standpoint, nor a modified empiricism, nor a speculative-rationalist stance. Instead, he amalgamates a heterothetically articulated totality with its dialectically articulated facets. In the quest for a third element resolving the antinomy between thesis and antithesis, it becomes increasingly ambiguous whether this element pertains to empirical or rational domains. In this milieu, deviating from the Neo-Kantian tenets in favor of a resurgence of Hegelian philosophy appears promising.

The assertion of a heterological connection does not circumscribe all philosophical possibilities of Neo-Kantianism. In this particular case, it would be interesting to return to the original question regarding the problem of the beginning, namely the distinction between a logical beginning and a temporal starting point of philosophy. Rickert's premise, which is to some extent also shared by Flach, is that the problem of the beginning requires two things: first, to find an immediacy that can be established as a beginning, and second, to establish a mode of mediation that allows us to move towards the end of philosophy (the system of philosophy). Considering philosophy on this side of

the question is one-sided. Because, in my opinion, the reverse path starting from mediation is not adequately considered. Here, it is helpful to recall the statement of his teacher Windelband: History is the organon of philosophy. Within the Baden School's inner relationship, Windelband stands as a precursor, more as a philosopher-historian, as opposed to Rickert's systematic spirit. In Windelband's philosophy, the general structure of philosophical thought does not progress from an abstract form to an empirically-concrete formulation. Rather, it is the hermeneutic, circular relationship between the history of philosophy and the philosophical system.

By minimizing the concept of the beginning, Rickert sets aside this other consideration, according to which the path of philosophy does not lead from the immediate to the mediated, but is a path that starts from mediation itself and articulates thought and experience in this way. The assertion of a correlational world of the beginning only makes sense, i.e., it can only think the relationship between beginning and end, if it assumes that logic between the two moments will be not progressive but circular.

The whole unfolds, but in an unarticulated way at the starting point, for example in the myriad of philosophical concepts. But this presupposed whole can and must be articulated in terms of an abstract connection (ego-object-world) that gives it meaning in a presupposed way. Then, through synthetic life, all particular moments are again presented as links of this unity. Similarly, philosophy can start from the abstract whole itself, as Rickert and Flach wanted, and then progress in a series of determinations. But only on the condition that the individual determinations are already given something. According to this other model, the assumption of philosophy is not that there is a totality, i.e., that a world of the beginning is possible.

Instead, a structure is presupposed that can be traversed both analytically and synthetically, i.e., from structure to elements and from elements to structure. While Windelband with his idea of the organon of philosophy attempts to ascend

from the particular to the general, which is reason itself, Rickert, in search of a totalizing synthesis, starts directly from the general structure.

The Neo-Kantian response must, at least as far as the philosophy of the Baden School is concerned, lie in a position that mediates between the two approaches. Thus, paradoxically, in Rickert's (and one could also say: in Flach's) emphasis on the more historical character of Windelband's work, the hermeneutic structure between history and system is lost. Because the problem of the beginning, the relationship between starting point and logical beginning, is lost, and the problem of passive waiting for the object, which must appear from outside the sphere of thought to set it in motion, is also brought forth.

Returning to the initial question of this essay: The problem of the beginning of philosophy is essentially a source of continuity between Neo-Kantian and post-Neo-Kantian tradition. In both cases, the development of an answer faces the same question, namely how to do justice to the problematic legacy of Hegel's speculative philosophy. This line of continuity opens up a research direction that attempts to integrate the speculative impulse and the transcendental impulse into the same horizon and to connect them through the same philosophical question: namely, what should be the actual beginning of philosophy. This investigation, still in its infancy, also shows that the Neo-Kantian position itself holds untapped possibilities for a new systematic revision of the problem of the beginning.

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