

## THE 1860S KANT REVIVAL AND THE PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF BERLIN<sup>1</sup>

### Die Wiederbelebung Kants in den 1860er Jahren und die Philosophische Gesellschaft zu Berlin

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**Abstract:** The paper addresses two reactions of the members of the Philosophical Society of Berlin to the 1860s Kant revival. Demands for “getting back to Kant” became common in Germany in the early 1860s. Within the Berlin Society, founded by the pupils of G.W.F. Hegel, reaction towards the emerging neo-Kantianism was mainly critical. However, there was also a kind of Kant-revival within the Society. The paper thematises contributions by C.L. Michelet and Julius Bergmann, the two editors of the Society’s journal *Der Gedanke*. Michelet and Bergmann discussed some classics of the early neo-Kantianism by Eduard Zeller and F.A. Lange.

**Keywords:** neo-Kantianism; German idealism; Eduard Zeller; Friedrich Albert Lange; Carl Ludwig Michelet; Julius Bergmann.

**Zusammenfassung:** Der Beitrag erörtert zwei Reaktionen der Mitglieder der Philosophischen Gesellschaft zu Berlin auf die Wiederbelebung Kants im Laufe der 1860er Jahre. Die Forderungen “zurück zu Kant” wurden populär in Deutschland am Anfang der 1860er Jahre. Innerhalb der Berliner Gesellschaft, die von den Schülern von G.W.F. Hegel gegründet war, waren die meisten Reaktionen kritisch. Tatsächlich aber wuchs das Interesse an Kant auch innerhalb der Gesellschaft. Der Beitrag thematisiert die Texte von C.L. Michelet und Julius Bergmann, die zwei Redakteure der Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft *Der Gedanke*. Michelet und Bergmann diskutierten einige Klassiker des frühen Neukantianismus von Eduard Zeller and F.A. Lange.

**Schlüsselwörter:** Neukantianismus; deutscher Idealismus; Eduard Zeller; Friedrich Albert Lange; Carl Ludwig Michelet; Julius Bergmann.

### 1. Introduction: Kant and the Philosophical Society of Berlin

Neo-Kantianism emerged over the course of the 1860s and occupied a leading position in the German universities from the 1870s until the First World War<sup>2</sup>. Demands for getting “back to Kant” since the early 1860s were also discussed in the meetings of the Philosophical Society of Berlin (*Philosophische Gesellschaft zu Berlin*; PGB),

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<sup>2</sup> See Jensen, 2020, 2. paragraph. The publication of Einstein's theory of relativity since 1905 had an impact on late neo-Kantianism.

which was the international organization of Hegelians<sup>3</sup>. The journal *Der Gedanke*, the organ of the PGB, reported closely how the Königsberger returned to the spotlight of German philosophy. Many classics of the neo-Kantian movement were discussed in the pages of the journal.

In this paper I address two reactions of the PGB members to the 1860s Kant revival. In the first section, I discuss Society's Secretary C.L. Michelet's response to Eduard Zeller's lectures between 1862–72. These lectures gave a general overview on his neo-Kantian philosophic program. In the second section I focus on Julius Bergmann's, Michelet's co-editor of *Der Gedanke*, critique of F.A. Lange, an influential neo-Kantian materialist. Besides the discussion of Bergmann's critique, I trace the similarities and the differences both within the two neo-Kantian standpoints and within the two opposing standpoints.

The aim of the paper is to examine the dispute between the neo-Kantians and their critics within the PGB over three topics: the identity of philosophy, the tension between epistemology and metaphysics and the legacy of Immanuel Kant. The focus of the paper is on the history of philosophy, that is the paper traces the development of the arguments on both sides over the 1860s and the early 1870s.

To begin, few conceptual clarifications are needed. Labelling PGB as "Hegelian" is principally correct, but it can also be somewhat misleading<sup>4</sup>. The Society was founded in 1843 by some former pupils of G.W.F. Hegel and the editors of his collected works. However, the Hegelianism of the Society began to weaken only after couple of years (Michelet, 1884b, p. 189, 194, 234; Michelet, 1884a, pp. 3–4). Instead of any strictly Hegelian standpoint, the interest in the historical approach to philosophy or the general idealist position were the common denominators between the PGB members.

Due to the diversity of the PGB members, their reactions to the Kant revival were not only critical. In fact, there was also a Kant revival within the PGB<sup>5</sup>. Two important progenitors of neo-Kantianism, Zeller and Kuno Fischer, were external

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<sup>3</sup> More than half of the Hegelians listed by Ueberweg (1866, pp. 281–7) were members of the PGB (at least for some time) between 1861–84.

<sup>4</sup> One challenge in exploring the history of the PGB is that it was to a large extent documented solely by Michelet, a loyal Hegelian. The majority of the PGB members published nothing in *Der Gedanke*. I do not argue that Michelet would have heard false witness, but he was also not an unbiased observer.

<sup>5</sup> Following Alan Richardson (1997, p. 423), I find it better to talk about "Back to Kant movements" instead of a movement. See Schnädelbach, 1984, p. 105.

members of the Society, and over the course of the 1860s the interest in Kant among the members grew little by little (Michelet, 1878, p. 41; Michelet, 1884b, p. 218). In 1867 Michelet (1867, pp. 9–10) declared that the members are “Kantians of 1781” (instead of 1787). That is to say that the Hegelianism of the late 1860s proceeded from the speculative interpretation of the first edition of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*. (This thesis is examined in detail later.)

Given that there was a Kant revival within the PGB, one asks whether the PGB should be characterized as neo-Kantian as well. In my view the tension between late German idealism and neo-Kantianism, as illustrated by F.C. Beiser, corresponds to the opposition of the PGB to neo-Kantianism<sup>6</sup>. Late German idealists aimed at preserving the content of the German idealism (objective or absolute idealist metaphysics) but not its method, whereas neo-Kantians rejected both the content and the method of German idealism (justification of idealist metaphysics a priori). According to its constitution (Philosophische Gesellschaft zu Berlin, 1862, p. 143; Michelet, 1867, p. 5), the PGB aimed at preserving the science of the absolute, or the content of German idealism.

As concerns the method, the situation is more complex. Swedish PGB member J.J. Borelius argued (1862, p. 113) that all members agree with Michelet that Hegel’s greatest legacy is his method. But, Borelius continues (1862, p. 114), there are different views on the course of Hegel’s method. I agree with Borelius. Inter alia three important members of the Society – Michelet, Ferdinand Lassalle, Karl Rosenkranz – debated about the course of Hegel’s logic (Kallio, 2018, p. 61, 76). I argue that due to the diverse views of Hegel’s method the PGB attaches rather to the late German idealism than to the classic German idealism.

It is obvious that the labels ‘late German idealism’ and ‘neo-Kantianism’ are not clear-cut concepts, and also this paper exemplifies that the two groups consisted of authors with various motives and backgrounds. Yet, I hope that my paper testifies to the usefulness of these categorizations. That is, I argue that the tension between the two illuminates some interesting developments in German philosophy of the 1860s.

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<sup>6</sup> Beiser, 2014b, p. 193; Beiser, 2013, pp. 1–4. I regard my concept of late German idealism as an extension to Beiser’s, who has mainly discussed Hermann Lotze and F.A. Trendelenburg, the key figures of the movement.

## 2. Michelet's response to Zeller

Zeller's inaugural lecture at the University of Heidelberg in October 1862 – “On the Meaning and Task of Epistemology” – was a significant event in the formation of neo-Kantianism. The term “neo-Kantian” (*neo-Kantianer*) was actually used for the first time in Michelet's commentary on Zeller's lecture, discussed in the PGB meeting in November 1862 and published in *Der Gedanke*<sup>7</sup>. This exemplifies K.C. Köhnke's thesis (1991, p. 137) that the existence of neo-Kantianism was first noticed by its critics.

Zeller returned to the topics of his 1862 lecture in his lectures in 1868 in Heidelberg and in October 1872 in Berlin, the capital of newly founded German Empire. Michelet commented on the latter lecture in his booklet “Hegel and Empiricism” (January 1873). The text appeared separately, but it was meant to be a supplement to *Der Gedanke* (Michelet, 1873, p. IV). Even later, in 1877, Zeller published an addendum to the text of 1862 denouncing some of his earlier views<sup>8</sup>. Yet he paid no attention to Michelet's critique.

In his 1862 lecture Zeller discusses general orientation of philosophy and calls for a new foundation of philosophy, which is to be found in epistemology instead of metaphysics. He motivates this demand by explaining the disastrous state of philosophy in Germany, which is due to the collapse of the speculative idealist systems (Beiser, 2014b, pp. 270–1). This is exemplified by a critique of Hegel, preceded by an excursus to the history of philosophy. The way out of the current crisis is to be found in Kant's philosophy. Yet Zeller renounces all dogmatism regarding Kant and brings up couple of deficiencies in Kant's account. He completes his lecture by sketching his own standpoint, called criticism.

### Reorientation of philosophy

For Zeller (1862, pp. 10–11), epistemology is the formal foundation of philosophy<sup>9</sup>. Epistemology investigates whether and under what conditions human

<sup>7</sup> Köhnke, 1981, p. 210; Jensen, 2020, 4. paragraph. Michelet's commentary does not contain information about the actual discussion (who hold the debate etc.). The fourth issue of *Der Gedanke* (1861) featured Michelet's summary of M.J. Monrad's (PGB member from Norway) critique of Zeller's history of philosophy. Michelet (1873, p. 15) acclaimed the critique also later.

<sup>8</sup> Beiser, 2014b, p. 273. I have found no information, whether Michelet read the addendum.

<sup>9</sup> I refer to the same editions of Zeller's writings as Michelet.

intellect can attain the truth; its concern is the prerequisites of knowledge rather than the objects of knowledge (Beiser, 2015, p. 20). It is thus the fundamental precondition for all scientific procedure (Zeller, 1877b, pp. 460–1).

Zeller's argumentation for the epistemological turn is typical for the 1860s neo-Kantians (e.g. Fischer's lectures in 1860). Zeller's lecture was the first public declaration of his Kantianism and also his break into the theoretical philosophy, since prior to the 1860s he had focused on the history of philosophy and theology (Beiser, 2014b, p. 265, 269; Lang, 1908, p. 178). Unfortunately, there is little evidence of Zeller's 'conversion' to Kantianism. He had a sort of a left-Hegelian background, but distanced himself from Hegel already at the mid-1840s (Beiser, 2014b, p. 256, 259–60; Willey, 1978, p. 72).

The motivation for Zeller's reorientation of philosophy is the undeniable advancement of the individual sciences, which shattered the traditional role of philosophy (Zeller, 1872, p. 922; Zeller, 1877b, p. 447). Zeller is convinced that philosophy maintains its place in the field of science and, in fact, in his lecture of 1872 he argued that the crisis of German philosophy is already to a large extent resolved (Beiser, 2014b, p. 279).

The detour to the history of philosophy is motivated by the same question, which puzzled also other early neo-Kantians: how to explain the aberration of the German philosophy (or German idealism), which was built on the foundation laid by Kant?<sup>10</sup> According to Zeller (1862, p. 14), this was due to the oversimplification of Kant's theory of cognition, or overdressing the subjective side of cognition. The fact that we can perceive objects only according to the characteristic of our cognitive capacities, inspired to question the existence of these objects independently of us. This led through the works of F.W.J. Schelling and J.G. Fichte to the problems, which Hegel aimed at solving with his dialectical method (Ibid., pp. 16–7).

Zeller conceives Hegel's system as a 'natural' consequence of Kant's critical philosophy. Yet in the present Hegel's system and other similar systems of the past 50 years, appear as outdated (Zeller, 1862, pp. 19–20; Zeller, 1872, p. 921). This and referring to Hegel's influence on his time as 'magic circle' makes it evident that in Zeller's view philosophy cannot progress within the Hegelian framework even if it is

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. Liebmann's opinion (Köhnke, 1991, p. 139).

drastically revised. Hegel's idealism still epitomizes the one-sided subjectivity of Fichte's idealism (Zeller, 1872, pp. 923–4). Contrary to late German idealists Zeller maintains that the progress is possible only through an investigation and improvement of the preconditions of the recent German philosophy, or the Kantian framework.

Generally speaking, Zeller's guiding principle was to insist a methodological clarity (Hartung, 2010, p. 173). His critique of Hegel focuses on Hegel's method and on his logic in particular. Already Zeller's choice to use the German term *Erkenntnistheorie* sheds light to the objectives of his lecture, since this term had an anti-Hegelian overtone<sup>11</sup>. Zeller defends (1862, pp. 5–6) the traditional understanding of logic against Hegel's alternative. The latter was meant to be not only logic but also metaphysics and it is grounded on the impossibility to properly distinguish the content and the form. The forms can have objective validity only when they are considered as the determinations of being (and not as mere determinations of thought).

Contrary to Hegel's claim that the thoughts are the essence of things Zeller maintains (Ibid., p. 7) that the things can be investigated also independently of these thoughts. That is, the thoughts are only the objects of our thinking. Through a proper investigation, we can separate different elements of our representations and find out e.g. which of them are linked to appearances. This investigation makes it evident that all 'real knowing' has originated from either inner or outer experience (Zeller, 1877b, pp. 449–50). The forms of our thinking, Zeller continues (1862, pp. 7–8), have yet objective validity, because they apply to thinking per se. So, even if the formal logic lacks content, it is real (*wirklich*), because it deals with thinking as a part of intellectual life of human being. Zeller illustrates these claims by an example of mathematics: mathematics investigates inter alia general characteristics of a number regardless the quality of the counted things and yet it has objective validity.

Michelet agrees (1873, pp. 13–4) with Zeller that thinking is a real process (*realer Vorgang*). But he disputes the priority that Zeller grants to experience. Michelet interprets (1862b, p. 288) Zeller's example of mathematics the opposite way: this example testifies that thoughts are the essence of things, since the correctness of a certain calculation is independent of any physical state of affairs.

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<sup>11</sup> Hartung, 2010, p. 163; Köhnke, 1981, p. 190. On the history of the word *Erkenntnistheorie*, see Köhnke, 1981, p. 186, 206.

Zeller maintains that logic does not blend into any part of the system of science which has to do with the objects of our cognition. He insists (1862, p. 5) that logic is founded on and it completes epistemology. Logic is formal like mathematics or grammar, but it is not formalistic as long as it proceeds from the understanding of its concrete significance (Ibid., p. 10). This significance is revealed through epistemological investigation. The investigation of the forms of thinking as such is not only possible but absolutely necessary (Ibid., p. 8). In order to be scientific, all investigation of reality – and even the most general investigation like metaphysics – has to begin with an analysis of the process of investigation, since all the results are dependent on this process. Hegel did not begin with this investigation, Zeller claims, and confused categories, which apply to the concrete objects, with the categories, which apply merely to the way we think of these objects (Ibid., p. 9). The fundamental flaw in Hegel's account was that it proceeded from top to the bottom (Zeller, 1862, p. 18; Lang, 1908, p. 179).

Michelet associates (1862b, pp. 288–9) Zeller's distinction between logic and metaphysics with Hegel's distinction between subjective and objective logic. This distinction was though eventually abandoned by Hegel. It is evident, Michelet underlines, that the e.g. the categories of the inference apply not only to a thinking subject but also to both societal life (e.g. slavery) and nature (e.g. solar system). Yet Hegel's a priori construction does not concern the content of the concrete concepts (e.g. property), but only their place in the system (Michelet, 1873, p. 10).

Furthermore, Michelet continues (Ibid., p. 7), Zeller would be right, if the a priori development would concern only the subject and thus would be contrasted to the a posteriori experience. But this distinction does not apply to Hegel, because he adheres to the eventual correspondence between the a priori and the a posteriori. This is yet not the starting point of a priori construction but its result (Ibid., pp. 10–11).

According to Michelet (Ibid., p. 9), Zeller's insistence on making the experience the only source of knowing contradicts his objection of a priori construction, because this construction is the same as the inner experience. Or, the logical categories of both Hegel and Kant are results of this inner experiencing. Zeller actually operates with these categories, but he conceives them as a posteriori categories, Michelet claims, and thus

differs from both Kant, who unified a priori and a posteriori with his concept of synthetic a priori, and Hegel, who developed this unity further.

The argumentation above relates to Michelet's distinction between Kantianism of 1781 and -87 mentioned earlier. Michelet mentions the distinction already in the 1830s and addresses it repeatedly thereafter (Michelet, 1937a, p. 50 (footnote), 70–1, 93–4; Michelet, 1870, p. 80). In his article “Has Kant changed his opinions”, published in the same issue of *Der Gedanke* as his commentary on Zeller, Michelet argues that the 1781 Kantianism features the idealist principle that the I and the thing-in-itself could belong to the same thinking substance<sup>12</sup>. Yet Kant presented this principle only hypothetically and left it out of the second version of his *Critique of Pure Reason*. Fichte, Schelling and Hegel were responsible for corroborating this principle, whereas “the great Kantian school” (Michelet, 1862a, p. 242) has unjustifiably ignored this principle. Worth noting is that Kant himself denied (*KrV*, B XXXVII–XLIII) that there are substantial differences between the first and the second version of his *Critique*.

### **Critique of Kant**

Zeller sees Kant as the saviour of German philosophy, who provides the middle path between speculative idealism and materialism (Zeller, 1872, p. 923; Köhnke, 1991, pp. 113–4). For him, the paragon of the investigation characterized above is Kant's theory of cognizing. Zeller aims (1862, p. 21) to reconsider the central questions of Kant's critical philosophy and on the basis of the contemporary science avoid his mistakes.

Zeller disagrees with Kant on his claim that the material that is given to us in the sensation is disorganized. On the contrary this material is given to us “in certain form and order” (Ibid., p. 23). This and Kant's standpoint do not differ widely, because, according to Zeller, we can conceive this material exclusively through our subjective capacities. He insists only that the interaction of the two elements – the objective impression and the subjective operation – must be studied further.

Furthermore, Zeller points out (Ibid., p. 24) that although we can conceive the things only within the forms that are natural to us, it does not exclude the possibility that

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<sup>12</sup> Michelet, 1862a, pp. 241–2. See also Michelet, 1870, pp. 81–3.

we still conceive the things as they are. This possibility should be considered not as unlikely, since we and the things are parts of the one and the same whole (*Naturganze*).

Zeller challenges here the standpoint of Fischer, his fellow neo-Kantian PGB member, whose debate with F.A. Trendelenburg became a milestone in the development of neo-Kantianism. In the debate Trendelenburg defended the so-called neglected alternative, which

contends that Kant unjustifiably moves from the claim that we have a priori intuitions of space and time to what should be viewed as a sceptical conclusion – that space and time are only features of human sensibility and have nothing whatsoever to do with any subject-independent things in themselves (Specht, 2014, p. 515).

Fischer objected (*Ibid.*, pp. 522–3) this view by reconstructing Kant’s argument in the Transcendental Aesthetic. According to his view Kant had all the right to claim that space is just an a priori intuition.

The actual debate began in 1865 with the publication of Fischer’s *System of Logic and Metaphysics*. Yet Trendelenburg had presented the neglected alternative already in 1840. Zeller neither refers to Trendelenburg nor endorses his metaphysics (e.g. his concept of the motion (*Ibid.*, p. 525)), but as concerns the reading of Kant Zeller is on Trendelenburg’s side. Michelet, who devoted a passage to this debate in his *Festschrift* of Hegel (1870, p. 67, 76), defended Fischer.

The fundamental difference between Zeller and Kant is that the former does not adhere to the unknowability of the thing-in-itself. Thus, Zeller’s realism is stronger than Kant’s (Beiser, 2014b, p. 272). Zeller does not claim (1862, p. 25) that the subject could have direct or immediate knowledge of the things-in-themselves, but that there are ways of finding out whether our appearance is a mere illusion or not. We can, for example, collect, systematize and compare several representations. This resembles, of course, the method of the natural sciences, and in fact for Zeller, the method of philosophy is actually the same as the one of the empirical sciences (Beiser, 2008, p. 557). As regards method, philosophy does not thus principally differ from other sciences (Zeller, 1877b, p. 450).

In his later contributions, Zeller elaborates this rather radical view. He stresses (*Ibid.*, p. 456) that the methodological rigor of the natural sciences should be the

example of all scientific practice. But “the exact procedure of the natural sciences” is the example of philosophy only to certain extent. Namely, as the object of philosophy is the spiritual life of human being, philosophy has no analogy with the natural sciences<sup>13</sup>.

Zeller’s own standpoint is eventually between Kant and Hegel (Hartung, 2010, p. 166). Also Michelet argues in 1862 that Zeller does not adhere to a purely Kantian standpoint, while he has converged to empiricist standpoints of the time<sup>14</sup>. Yet, Zeller had to abandon his rather radical idea to make the experience the only source of knowledge: he could not eventually give any preference to the experience, because otherwise all knowledge would be fragmentary (Michelet, 1873, pp. 12–3). He attempted to abandon Hegel’s and develop further Kant’s philosophy, but eventually secretly returned to their idealism, Michelet concludes. That is, according to Michelet’s view, Zeller has not provided a consequent empiricist reading of Kant; he has, *de facto*, relied on Hegel’s *a priori* dialectical method.

Given that Zeller’s standpoint represents stronger realism than Kant’s, it is worth considering, whether Zeller is adhering to the standpoint of late German idealism, whose metaphysics proceeds from renouncing the thing-in-itself in the Kantian sense. But, Zeller argues, Hegel and Schelling aimed at eliminating the thing-in-itself because they erroneously thought that it is unknowable (Beiser, 2014b, p. 274). Besides, the attempt to eliminate (or overcome) the thing-in-itself à la Schelling and Hegel succumbs to the flaws of the 18<sup>th</sup> century rationalism. That is, it is based on blurring the border between the content and the form. Owing to Kant’s critique, Zeller maintains that philosophy cannot provide knowledge of the unconditioned or the absolute (Beiser, 2008, p. 557). But the thing-in-itself is not wholly unknowable and over the course of time we can attain more accurate knowledge of the world (Zeller, 1862, pp. 26–7; Lang, 1908, p. 179).

The preceding discussion leads to the one of the determining questions of the early neo-Kantianism, or the relationship between psychology and philosophy. For many early neo-Kantians philosophy became almost identical with psychology. Also, according to Zeller, all spiritual activity rests upon the rational character of human being (Lang, 1908, p. 182).

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<sup>13</sup> Zeller, 1872, p. 926. Cf. Zeller, 1877b, p. 456.

<sup>14</sup> Michelet, 1862b, p. 291. Michelet refers here to his earlier conception of Trendelenburg's empiricism. See Kallio, 2018, pp. 77–8.

Understanding philosophy essentially as psychology led to question the very identity of philosophy, since psychology had adapted more and more the methods and results of the natural sciences. Zeller clearly objects (1877b, pp. 456–7) the identification of psychology with the natural sciences in his lecture of 1868. The inner realm, which is the object of psychology, cannot be observed similarly to the outer realm. The way of observation of the natural sciences, whose example is mathematics, applies only to the organic requirements of the psychical activity, not to the inner realm itself, which is qualitatively different.

As concerns the relationship of philosophy and psychology, the -68 lecture contains an interesting passage, in which Zeller sketches (Ibid., pp. 463–4) prospects for a philosophy, which could answer to the fundamental questions like the primordial being (*Urwesen*) or the ultimate cause. These topics were to a large extent ignored by the later neo-Kantians until the end of the 1870s. As far as I know, Michelet paid no attention to Zeller's -68 lecture. He would have found this passage interesting, because it sheds some light to Zeller's idea of the natural sciences as the example of philosophy. Michelet was (1873, p. 14) highly discontented with this idea. I do agree with him that Zeller's idea is vague.

### **Criticism and empiricism**

In the time between 1862 and -77 Zeller's stance to our possibility to know the thing-in-itself became more moderate. In 1872 he insists (1872, pp. 925–6) that we cannot take this possibility as self-evident. He calls (1862, pp. 27–8) his own standpoint criticism, which is – first and foremost – a critical attitude towards the given. We must always bear in mind that nothing that is given to us either internally or externally can as such serve as an absolutely certain foundation for knowledge; taking the internal or the external as this kind of foundation for knowledge is dogmatism.

In my reading of Zeller, the pivotal essence of philosophy lies in critically investigating the relationship of the inner and the outer elements of the given. This first step of critical observance is followed by two further steps, the inductive and the deductive (Ibid., pp. 28–9). This is how Zeller defends the role of philosophy in the domain of science, but at the same time both restricts its sphere and attaches it to other branches of science. There is a linkage to Zeller's left-Hegelian background mentioned

above: many left-Hegelians solved the identity crisis of philosophy by making philosophy to criticism of traditional philosophy (Beiser, 2014b, pp. 191–2).

Michelet disputes (1873, p. 8) whether Zeller actually finds any novel solution to the crisis of philosophy. He points out that actually Zeller still ascribes philosophy sovereignty over the other sciences, because philosophy verifies the preconditions of all empirical sciences. Thus, Zeller continues the tradition dating back to Aristotle. This is an apt remark by Michelet. Beiser has alleged that in modern moral philosophy Zeller represents the standpoint of neo-classicism (Beiser, 2014b, p. 280). With Michelet I argue that classicism characterizes also Zeller's standpoint in general<sup>15</sup>.

Zeller's concept of the given is invalid for two reasons, Michelet claims. The first reason is temporal: human being is born with the given, or everything that is given us in the experience can be developed a priori from us. Namely, human being is born within the whole, as also Zeller maintains. Michelet does not question that experience and dialectics could contradict. But Zeller aims to resolve this contradiction by demanding our representations to be in accordance with the objective. But this accordance can only be requested between our thoughts and the objective. The way to comprehend the given is not through cleansing the experienced of all a priori. On the contrary, the a priori elements in the given have to be developed as such (Ibid., p. 290).

As mentioned, Zeller's method has both inductive and deductive side, but for Michelet the problem is the fundamental role that Zeller ascribes to representations. Formulating a priori hypotheses is important for Zeller's model, but these are arbitrary, unlike the eternal truths of thinking. According to Michelet (1862b, pp. 289–90), Zeller's decision to make the epistemology the foundation of philosophy instead of metaphysics reopens the divide between being and thinking (previously bridged by Hegel). Zeller's empiricism provides no solid ground for the future philosophy, Michelet concludes (1873, pp. 14–5).

### **3. Bergmann's response to Lange**

After Zeller's lecture of 1862 Kant's position in Germany continued to consolidate. As indicated earlier, the Kant revival resonated also with the PGB: in 1862 the Society was still committed to the philosophy of absolute; in 1865 Theodor Sträter

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Beiser, 2014b, p. 277.

declared (1865, pp. 271–2) the thematic extension and the reorientation of *Der Gedanke* to the “problem of knowledge” (*Erkenntniss-Problem*), or “the fundamental question of German philosophy”. The 1867 volume featured even a new subtitle, “Journal for scientific research and critique”.

Sträter had joined the Society alongside Julius Bergmann, whose friend Ernst Bratuscheck later followed the two. This triplet diminished former speculative character of the PGB considerably (Michelet, 1884b, pp. 218–20). Bergmann became the secretary and even began to co-edit *Der Gedanke* with (notably older) Michelet. Their views clashed, and after the -67 volume Bergmann left the journal. But *Der Gedanke* never returned to its previous form. After some separate issues (again with a new subtitle) in 1871 and -73 Michelet terminated the publication with the issue of October 1884. To some extent *Der Gedanke* was supplanted by the publication series *Proceedings of the Philosophical Society of Berlin*<sup>16</sup> since 1875.

Around the mid-1860s two important neo-Kantian figures, F.A. Lange and Otto Liebmann came to fame. Former’s seminal work *History of Materialism and Critique of Its Contemporary Significance* (1866) became one of the most read of all works of neo-Kantianism (Köhnke, 1991, p. 151, 160). It was addressed in the PGB meeting in June 1866 alongside the works of Wilhelm Wundt and Heinrich Czolbe. Bergmann’s review of these works was published in *Der Gedanke* next year. His views on Lange and his stance to the problem of knowledge were related to his extensive article “The Real and the Ideal”, published in the same issue as well<sup>17</sup>.

Whereas Zeller’s position as a neo-Kantian classic is undisputed, Lange’s relationship to neo-Kantianism is far from straightforward. This is mainly due to his unorthodox reading of Kant<sup>18</sup>. It is also not uncomplicated to characterize Bergmann’s standpoint. He was involved in two institutions important for neo-Kantianism: he founded the journal *Philosophische Monatshefte* and became professor at the University of Marburg. Yet Bergmann was not neo-Kantian (Sieg, 1994, p. 176). Neither was he Hegelian: he declared that he does not prefer the dialectical method (Bergmann, 1867a,

<sup>16</sup> Verhandlungen der Philosophischen Gesellschaft zu Berlin.

<sup>17</sup> Bergmann’s argumentation (e.g. concerning the concept of being) is clearly related to his 1865 work *The First Problem of Ontology*. For some reason he does not refer to this little book in his articles in *Der Gedanke*, although he presented it to Michelet as they met for the first time (Michelet, 1884b, p. 219).

<sup>18</sup> Lange is known as a precursor of the Marburg school of neo-Kantianism, because he endorsed the founder of the School, Hermann Cohen. Yet Lange’s views differed notably from those of Cohen (Cohen, 1887, pp. IX–XI; Ollig, 1979, p. 19; Anderson, 2005, p. 291, 298, 300).

p. 343). The fact that Bergmann found it reasonable to contribute to *Der Gedanke* testifies to my above-mentioned thesis that the Hegelian character of the PGB was shallow. Like me, Ulrich Sieg labels (1994, p. 174) Bergmann as late idealist – though his concept of late idealism is not exactly the same as mine.

Bergmann had studied under two major figures of late German idealism, Hermann Lotze and Trendelenburg, and both Friedrich Ueberweg and Gerhard Lehmann have associated his standpoint with the Lotzean philosophy<sup>19</sup>. This is in principle correct; yet his texts discussed here are not particularly Lotzean but rather denote certain features of German idealism. This is exemplified below.

As its title suggests, Lange's 1866 work differs from Zeller's programmatic lectures in several respects<sup>20</sup>. First, it provides a keen insight to the history of materialism. At first glance Lange's stance towards materialism appears critical, but in fact, as also Bergmann implies (1867c, p. 32, 44–5), through his critique Lange sketches a foundation for a more defensible kind of materialism. Besides the crude or primitive materialism he criticizes even more vehemently (to paraphrase Bergmann) 'the ontological school of philosophy'<sup>21</sup>. Eventually the book is more than a book about the history of philosophy: it presents an entire worldview (Beiser, 2014b, pp. 363–4). Materialism, which due to the so-called materialism controversy 1854 onwards had inspired the renewed interest in Kant, provided an apt context for this.

But how Lange connects his discussion of materialism to Kant? In short, Kant's critical philosophy marks for Lange a watershed in the history of materialism; it is "the beginning of the end of materialism" (Lange, 1866, p. 241). Lange shares (Ibid., p. 86) Zeller's view that Kant provided the middle path between materialism and speculative idealism and the solution to the crisis of German philosophy (caused by Hegelianism). Yet, on closer examination it appears that Lange's Kantianism is notably 'thinner' than Zeller's. The latter aimed at 'avoiding Kant's mistakes', whereas the former states that Kant's "airy architecture of concepts" has only slightly firmer basis than the ones by

<sup>19</sup> Lehmann, 1931, pp. 218–9; Ueberweg, 1923, p. 367. Bergmann (1867b, pp. 213–4) adopted inter alia Trendelenburg's critique of J. F. Herbart's concept of being.

<sup>20</sup> Lange refers couple of times to Zeller but not to his lectures. Lange's lectures on the history of materialism began already in 1857.

<sup>21</sup> Bergmann, 1867c, 32. See also Willey, 1978, p. 25, 96; Cohen, 1887, p. IX.

other contemporary German figures<sup>22</sup>. Lange argues that Kant is epochal in respect to the history of materialism, whereas his system is a child of its time. Thus, Lange embraces the neo-Kantian principle that “[t]o understand Kant is to go beyond him”<sup>23</sup>. E.g. Lange does not share Kant’s interest in establishing the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge. Bergmann points out (1867c, p. 41) that Lange vitiates Kant’s concept of pure sensibility, the fundamental concept of criticism.

If Lange’s *History* is not just an exposition of the history of philosophy, nor is Bergmann’s text a traditional book review: he is no less than Lange eager to present his own ideas through the critique of other standpoints. For example, Bergmann claims (Ibid., p. 32) that Lange presents his own standpoint in the chapters on Aristotle and Kant in particular. However, on another occasion Bergmann himself considers (1867b, pp. 205–6) Aristotle and Kant as the key figures of the entire history of philosophy.

### **Critique of metaphysics**

Lange detects two major shortcomings in Aristotle’s metaphysics: 1. attributing (*hineintragen*) the concept of possible, which is essentially subjective, to the things 2. the teleology (Lange, 1866, p. 89, 94; Bergmann, 1867c, p. 33; Beiser, 2014b, p. 374). These principles have since Aristotle been reformed for multiple times (also by the materialists). Kant was the first to detect their erroneous essence.

For Lange, Aristotle’s concept of possibility is the source of the most severe metaphysical fallacies. This concept results from the separation between the matter and the form. This separation is untenable, Lange maintains (1866, pp. 89–92), since there is no unformed matter and consequently there is no possibility in nature but only reality. He refers to Kant’s well-known example of hundred thaler: the hundred possible thaler contains no more than the hundred real thaler.

Besides the matter and the form, also other influential Aristotelian pairs of concepts, like substance and accident, are according to Lange valid only within the sphere of abstraction. They do not grasp the objective essence of things. To say, for example, that certain properties of a thing are according to possibility, is erroneous: the

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 233. According to Wilhelm Windelband "the neo-Kantian movement began in the 1860s by emphasizing the negative results of Kant’s philosophy, specifically its critique of metaphysics" (Beiser, 2008, p. 560).

<sup>23</sup> Willey, 1978, p. 37. See Kühn, 2010, pp. 115–6, 126.

possibility is only a form of thought (*Denkform*), not a form of existence (*Existenzform*) (Ibid., p. 92). This erroneous way of thinking characterizes also customary empiricism commonly accepted by the materialists (Ibid., p. 93). To give a priority to the matter instead of the form is to operate with a concept, which is not given in the experience. Materialists, who claim to distance themselves from metaphysics, actually practice metaphysics, as they operate with the concept of matter (Ibid., pp. 85–6).

Bergmann considers Lange's conception of the conflict between Aristotle and Kant as mistaken: Kant's critique does not contradict Aristotle's concept of the possibility as a vivid principle of development<sup>24</sup>. Bergmann accepts though Kant's thesis that the existence is not a real predicate of a thing, but only as far as it concerns only particular things. Every possible particular thing has both inner and outer side: it has a relation both to itself (the predicate of being) and to others (the predicate of being something). Asserting that the outer requirements for the existence of a thing are met does not mean that it exists (Bergmann, 1867c, p. 35). Namely, if the existence of a thing was grounded on the existence of all other things, the existence would be dependent on the existence of an endless number of other beings. If only inner requirements are met, a thing does not exist (to say that a thing exists, adds nothing to it). Thus, the existence is not a predicate of a particular thing.

Bergmann is not claiming that being has no objective meaning. The predicate of being is nothing but the pure form of possibility, which expresses a judgement (Ibid., pp. 35–6). Being is objective and the other of the two primal categories of metaphysics (Ibid., p. 34, 43). On this basis Bergmann separates between two different concepts of possibility (Ibid., pp. 36–7). Lange's critique applies to the attribution of different kinds of possible properties to a thing (Lange's concept of the form of thought). In this sense the possibility is not a real predicate of a thing but a relation between our representations. The possibility is a real predicate only of a real (*wirklich*) thing. Then the possibility adds something to the thing unlike Lange believes.

Bergmann's argumentation exemplifies here that he joins to the tradition of German idealism<sup>25</sup>. His metaphysics is based on the concept of being, from which he

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<sup>24</sup> Bergmann, 1867c, p. 37. Arguing that Hegel's idealism continues the Aristotelian tradition is essential for Michelet's critique of Trendelenburg (Kallio, 2018, p. 62, 65, 70).

<sup>25</sup> Bergmann (1867b, p. 107, 115) also claims that the absolute can be reached in metaphysics. See Ueberweg, 1923, p. 367.

proceeds with the method of a priori deduction (Ueberweg, 1923, p. 372). Thus, he aims to answer questions which Kant regarded as being outside the realm of knowledge (Bergmann, 1867b, p. 109).

On the other hand, at the mid-1860s Bergmann also attached himself to the Kantian tradition, since he begins with Kant's a priori/a posteriori distinction and extends the sphere of a priori. Therefore, he dismisses Michelet's reading of Kant, which implies (Michelet, 1870, pp. 80–1) that initially Kant conceived the distinction not as fixed. According to Bergmann (1867b, p. 229), the main branches of the Kantian tradition are the empiricist (J.F. Herbart) and the idealist branch (Hegel-Fichte-Schelling). In his "The Real and the Ideal" Bergmann ignores the latter, whereas he devotes long passages to Herbart's critique of Kant. He disagrees with Herbart's positive philosophy in many respects, although e.g. defining the concept of being as the basis of metaphysics is common for both.

As mentioned, Lange's point is not just to find fault with elder materialism. Already Aristotle identified occasionally the form with the purpose, which gave rise to the teleological tradition (including Hegel) (Lange, 1866, p. 94). Relative to Lange's chief philosophical point, there is no need to discuss this topic further. The key point, the mistaken identity of being and thinking, brings us to Kant, who first detected it.

### **Kant's legacy**

It was Kant's great achievement, Lange maintains (1866, 234), to replace the absolute objectivity with the objectivity for us (humans). As indicated above, Lange is yet discontent with Kant's conception of objective knowledge. The detailed discussion of it is motivated by Lange's conviction that a deeper understanding of Kant's mistakes elucidates the value of Kant's pivotal idea (Ibid., p. 248).

Kant believed, Lange explains, into the possibility of a priori knowledge and consequently into the possibility of metaphysics. The a priori knowledge is to be grounded on the basic concepts (*Stammbegriffe*) of the pure reason deduced from a single scientific principle (Ibid., p. 248). The belief that the knowledge could be grounded deductively is due to the rigid Aristotelian separation between the content and the form resulting from the separation between understanding and sensibility (Ibid., p.

251, 255). The essential idea that space and time are the necessary forms of our intuition is based on this separation.

Kant failed to see, Lange points out (*Ibid.*, p. 251), that besides the content the sensation could be the source of the form too. This is what made him to believe that the subject would have the ‘ready’ forms prior to any experience of the world. In reality, the subject has only sensations (*Sinnesempfindungen*) prior to every experience (*Ibid.*, p. 255). In this regard Lange elaborates the representation of space. Our sensations offer no ready coordinate system, but we construct it on the basis of multitudinous sensations. (The prerequisite for this is, of course, that we have a basic organic capability to perceive spatially (*Ibid.*, p. 253, 256). In this narrow sense Lange in fact accepts a priori concept of space; he contradicts the transcendental ideality of space à la Kant.)

That the sensation is the source of the form has actually been demonstrated by the latest physiological research, Lange claims (*Ibid.*, p. 251). This exemplifies that he (like Zeller) is keen to complement and correct Kant with the recent findings of the empirical science. H.-L. Ollig describes (1979) Lange’s and Zeller’s standpoint as “physiological neo-Kantianism” (p. 1). It is based on interpreting the Kantian a priori as “an innate species organization” (*Gattungsorganisation*). This idea originated from the work of Hermann von Helmholtz, a famous sense-physiologist, who was Zeller’s friend and Lange’s teacher (Willey, 1978, p. 84, 97; Hartung, 2010, p. 162; Anderson, 2005, pp. 298–99)<sup>26</sup>. Like Helmholtz, Lange and Zeller oppose naïve scientism and objectivism, which characterized the 1850s materialism. Following Helmholtz, Lange stresses that the modern physiology has shown that the subject does not just merely reflect the outside world; the world that the scientist investigates is dependent on us (Lange, 1866, pp. 235–6; Willey, 1978, p. 96, 98; Beiser, 2014b, p. 200). Besides, materialism cannot explain the qualitative dimension of sensation (Lange, 1866, p. 257; Beiser, 2014b, p. 374). In short, Lange’s objection of materialism is epistemological, not spiritual or religious.

It appears that Helmholtz’s work was only touched upon in the PGB meetings, though the 1867 issue of *Der Gedanke* featured an article on Helmholtz’s theory of music. For Bergmann, arguing for the possibility of metaphysics against anti-metaphysicians is the key issue: his main thesis is (1867c, pp. 29–30) that the anti-

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<sup>26</sup> The common ground for Helmholtz, Zeller and Lange was the work of Johannes Müller and especially his theory of sense perception.

metaphysicians practice metaphysics, when they argue for its impossibility. Lange is though not anti-metaphysician in a simple sense: he criticizes the primitive materialism just because of its naïve opposition to metaphysics. Bergmann recognizes this and admits that Lange's critique of a priori metaphysics is original (Ibid., p. 39, 41). Yet Lange's errs in asserting that there is no such principle, which could be the ground for a priori metaphysics. This principle is the principle of identity: that which is in itself contradictory, contradicts also the laws of thought (Ibid., pp. 42–3). This principle is the ground for the necessity of thought (*Denknotwendigkeit*) instead of psychic-physical structure of human being, and it is common for both metaphysics and logic. The two primal categories of metaphysics are – as I read Bergmann – the two sides of this principle: the category of being is the pure form of identity and the category of being something the unity of the pure form of identity. The objects of metaphysics fall under either of these two categories; the object is either identical with itself or qualitatively determined thing.

Bergmann points out that Lange's argumentation is similar to J.F. Fries', an important contributor to the psychologist reading of Kant<sup>27</sup>. This is an apt remark – yet, unfortunately, Bergmann does not refer to Fries' works. Lange would arguably agree with Fries that despite of his criticisms of rationalism Kant still based his philosophy on certain a priori elements, which he regarded as self-evident. His transcendental deduction proceeded from these elements (Fries, 1807, p. XXVI, XXXII, XXXVI). Fries pointed out that these self-evident elements are still vulnerable to the sceptic criticisms like that of David Hume's.

I argue that Bergmann agrees with Lange and Fries in that Kant unjustifiably considered certain a priori elements as self-evident. Bergmann attempted to justify these elements by arguing for a common ground of these elements. This ground is achieved by disputing Kant's conception of the two different kinds of necessity of thought (logical (formal) and metaphysical (material))<sup>28</sup>. Bergmann states (1867b) that “there is only one undividable kind of necessity of thought, which determines not only the concepts but also their objects *a priori*” (pp. 211–2). A purely formal necessity of thought, completely independent of the objects, is impossible (Bergmann, 1867c, p.

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<sup>27</sup> See Fries, 1807, p. XXXVI.

<sup>28</sup> Bergmann (1867b, p. 206 (footnote)) points out that his terminology differs from Kant's.

219). There are no analytic judgements; all thinking is synthetic in its essence (Bergmann, 1867b, pp. 223–4).

The argumentation above explains also Bergmann's absorption in Herbart. Bergmann tells us that Herbart was the first to deny the assumption of the two kinds of necessity of thought. Besides Herbart's critique of Kant, Bergmann claims him to be highly relevant for current discussions and reflects on the 1860s neo-Kantianism in the face of Herbart. Generally speaking, one has to give Bergmann credit for addressing the early precursors of neo-Kantianism, Herbart and Fries. Their contribution to the emergence of neo-Kantianism has often been neglected<sup>29</sup>. Michelet, who had written extensively on the history of philosophy, pays no attention to these figures and thus follows Hegel's unilateral outline of the post-Kantian philosophy<sup>30</sup>.

On the other hand, I do not find the Herbartian point of view to Lange particularly useful. Herbart was one of the precursors of the physiological neo-Kantianism, and there are parallels between Lange's and Herbart's reading of Kant, but by the 1860s Lange considered Herbartianism as belonging to the past. Following paragraphs will demonstrate that Lange does not share Herbart's conception of the metaphysics as exact science, and, in fact, also Bergmann admits (1867c, p. 40) this. Furthermore, although Zeller adheres more to realism than Lange, he shares Lange's discontentment with Herbart. Zeller credits (1862, p. 19) Herbart for thinking comprehensively instead of just criticising Hegel. Yet also Herbart is confined to "the idealist one-sidedness", since he operates "with wholly a priori presuppositions against empirical concepts" and eventually dispels the given as a mere appearance (Zeller, 1872, p. 924).

Neither Lange nor Bergmann refers to the Trendelenburg–Fischer debate by name. Bergmann's lengthy discussion of space and time is tied to his metaphysical presuppositions. Nevertheless, he openly denies the neglected alternative, or that space and time could be in the same sense objective as they are subjective (Bergmann, 1867b, pp. 209–10). He mentions (1867c, p. 39) that Lange's view that space and time are subjective, but continues that his conception of the a priori is not same as Kant's.

<sup>29</sup> Beiser, 2014b, p. 23, 89. Beiser's reading of Herbart as a member of the 'lost tradition' is not unproblematic (Edgar, 2015, p. 1010; Beiser, 2014b, p. 92 (footnote)).

<sup>30</sup> Beiser, 2014a, pp. 9–11. Michelet included a fairly short passage to Herbart into his monumental two-volume work *History of the recent Systems of Philosophy*. This was criticized by Herbart's student G. Hartenstein. Michelet (1937b, pp. III–X) responded to Hartenstein in the preface of the second volume.

Lange's conception of a priori differs also from Zeller's. Though also Zeller did not wholly agree with Kant in his later philosophy, since he argues (1877a, pp. 502–4) that besides space and time also number (*Zahl*) belongs to the necessary forms of intuition. It is not subordinate to our representation of time, as Kant claims.

Lange's other argument against the possibility of a priori knowledge is that there is no absolutely certain method for distinguishing the a priori concepts (e.g. Kant's basic concepts of pure reason) from a posteriori concepts (Lange, 1866, p. 249). The only method for this task is the scientific method, which does not offer absolute truth but merely probability. Metaphysics, whose task is to deduce a positive system a priori, is a pseudo-science. Lange labels (Ibid., pp. 250–1, 261) the metaphysical investigations into general concepts, based on accustomed methods of empiricism and understanding, the philosophical critique instead. To be precise, he is not arguing for the total annihilation of metaphysics; for him metaphysics is essentially poetry (*Dichtung*) (Bergmann, 1867c, p. 41; Beiser, 2014b, p. 396).

Lange's sympathy for materialism is visible here: materialism has been a justified critical reaction against the association of metaphysics with science. Theoretical philosophy is for Lange firstly epistemology, whose main task is to provide the foundation for the natural sciences (Cohen, 1887, p. XI). There is clearly similarity to Zeller here. For both Lange and Zeller, philosophy is essentially critical investigation. They are ready to make 'concession' to materialism and restrict the sphere of philosophy. Zeller's stance to materialism is though less sympathetic than Lange's. He warns (1872, p. 923, 925) not to squander the assets (*Güter*) of idealism; the strength and weakness of the German philosophy lie in its idealism.

As concerns the possibility to acquire a priori metaphysical knowledge, Bergmann's conception is the opposite of Lange's. Yet they agree that there is no specific method for metaphysics: the thinking is the same in philosophy and in individual sciences (Bergmann, 1867c, pp. 43–4). But Bergmann claims that because the object of philosophy (the primal categories of metaphysics) is essentially different from those of individual sciences, the thinking in philosophy is more scientific. That is, the grade of certainty is higher in philosophy than in other sciences. Thus, Bergmann (like Michelet) solves the identity crisis of philosophy by arguing for the scientific

status of philosophy, but his definition of scientificity differs from the early neo-Kantian one.

In general, Lange (like Zeller) is keen to restrict the sphere of philosophy. This tendency among the neo-Kantians reinforced over the course of time, and in fact (Beiser 2015, p. 20) neo-Kantians (by defining philosophy with “proto-analytic terms as the ‘logic of science’” (p. 8)) came close to the standpoint of positivism. However, over the 1860s the neo-Kantian group split into positivist and non-positivist line (Beiser, 2014b, p. 211). Also the opinions of Lange and Zeller divided. Although they both stressed the importance of the empirical study, the latter does not exclude the possibility that philosophy could still maintain its traditional role. For the former, this role involves too much metaphysics. Besides the exclusion of metaphysics, Lange restricts the realm of philosophy also otherwise. E.g. Kant distinguished the philosophical and the physiological approaches to perception. Also, Lange separates between these two, but in his reading the realm of philosophy is very narrow. In this regard Lange’s standpoint is close to that of Helmholtz’, who also employs “research methods and modes of explanation proper to natural sciences” to answer the questions, which Kant regards as philosophical, or transcendental (Hatfield, 1990, p. viii, 4–5).

### **Materialism and scepticism**

In my reading Lange’s stance to materialism is best described with the term “nonmaterialistic or methodological naturalism” (instead of “materialistic naturalism”), which Hatfield uses (1990, pp. 16–17) to describe both Hume’s and Helmholtz’ standpoints. Lange definitely uses the modes of explanation characteristic for the natural science to explain the mind. Nevertheless, he disputes (1866, pp. 256–7) that the mind could be reduced to a material system. He postulates the realm of freedom, which cannot be explained with the laws of natural science. This is the place for moral philosophy, aesthetics and so on.

As concerns conception of truth, the final point of my discussion of Lange, Lange got closer to sceptical conclusion than Zeller or Helmholtz (Ollig, 1979, p. 2). In my reading, Lange’s Kantianism is grounded on two fundamentals: scepticism and materialism (Lange, 1866, p. 240). Both these elements are as such one-sided but essential for the development of science. They are, to be precise, not on the same level,

since the sceptic one is precedential. E.g. Lange does not claim (Ibid., p. 248) that Kant's basic concepts of pure reason could not be absolutely true, but that we cannot know that.

As concerns the thing-in-itself, Lange adopts (1866, p. 267) Ueberweg's argument that Kant uses the law of causality to prove the existence of the thing-in-itself, as he claims that the thing-in-itself causes the experience. That is, to the law of causality is ascribed validity outside the realm of appearances. Lange declares that this has disastrous consequences for the entire Kantian enterprise: if the sole argument for existence of the thing-in-itself is based on the law of causality, which is applicable only in the realm appearances, the border between the thing-in-itself and the appearances vanishes. Thus, the thing-in-itself would be a mere appearance.

Lange maintains that there is no direct way to disprove Ueberweg's argument. However, I accept Beiser's conclusion (2014b, p. 380) that eventually Lange does not refute the existence of the thing-in-itself. His argument is though not clearly worded. He suggests (1866, p. 268) that we can know the limits of our realm of appearances. Or, we know that a creature with different kind of organs would have a different kind of realm of appearances. Thus, we know that there must be a common source for both of these, or the thing-in-itself. Nevertheless, according to Lange, Kant's critique of metaphysics goes further than he believed: it leads to the conclusion that metaphysics as science is impossible. Lange declares that now the realm of concepts is free for creativity, "a strict critique enables also greater freedom" (Ibid., p. 269). His thesis that metaphysics is poetry becomes concrete here.

Michelet does not share Lange's view that Ueberweg's argument has fatal consequences for Kant's philosophy. He argues that Ueberweg's argument applies only to the second edition of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. As concerns the first edition, there cannot be any external causal relation between the subject and the thing-in-itself, since they belong to the same thinking substance; there is only "self-developing activity of the absolute thinking" (Michelet, 1862a, p. 241). Unfortunately, Michelet does not explicate this argument further. Anyway, Ueberweg denies that there are substantial differences between the first and the second edition of the *Critique*. Thus, he would not accept Michelet's argument.

Concerning skepticism, Bergmann's interpretation of Lange is – as I read it – sidetracked. He explains (1867c, p. 44) Lange's skepticism due to his Kantian presuppositions. Yet, Lange's skepticism is more far-reaching than Kant's. Bergmann shortly mentions Lange's impossibility to deal with the mind-body-problem and argues that the mechanistic standpoint cannot explain the relationship between mind (soul) and body. He insists “the objective representation” of this relationship (Ibid., p. 27). But he ignores that Lange argues for our incapability to acquire such representation. He reads Lange as a materialist even though Lange states (1866, p. 276) that his criticism is separate from both idealism and materialism.

Compared to Michelet, Bergmann brings ‘the problem of knowledge’ more into focus. Nevertheless, he aims to establish a system of metaphysics; in his view epistemology is still subordinate to metaphysics. In his reading, Kant is idealist metaphysician; in Lange's reading Kant is the first to set the limits to metaphysical commitments. In stressing his opposition to Lange, Bergmann seems to misinterpret Lange both as a materialist and as a realist. It is telling that in his article “The Real and the Ideal” Bergmann argues (1867b, p. 97, 102) that the different past and present systems of philosophy fall under realist and idealist accounts. There is thus no place for Lange's ‘unorthodox’ Kantianism.

#### **4. Epilogue: Liebmann and the conclusion of the early neo-Kantianism**

Along with his discussion of Lange, Bergmann reviewed Liebmann's *On the individual Proof of the Freedom of the Will in Der Gedanke*. Addressing Liebmann, who was heavily influenced by the PGB member Fischer, would neatly complete our picture of early neo-Kantianism: if Zeller initiated the neo-Kantian program, Liebmann brought it to conclusion<sup>31</sup>.

Liebmann, a representative of the younger generation, already departed from the psychologism characteristic for Lange and Zeller. His reading of Kant “was a prelude to the rejection of psychologism by the Baden and Marburg philosophers”<sup>32</sup>, that is the two schools of German neo-Kantianism. Unfortunately, Bergmann's discussion of Liebmann is short, and even more unfortunate is that Liebmann's famous work *Kant and his Epigones* (1865) was never reviewed in *Der Gedanke*.

<sup>31</sup> Köhnke, 1991, p. 138. Kühn (2010, p. 129 (footnote 3)) slightly disagrees with Köhnke on this point.

<sup>32</sup> Willey, 1978, p. 82. Cf. Beiser, 2014b, p. 285, 292–3; Anderson, 2005, p. 291, 302.

Whereas Zeller added a fairly moderate addendum to his -62 lecture, the second edition of Lange's *History of Materialism* was extended and revised so much that it should be regarded almost as a new work. Inter alia Lange's treatment of Kant was rewritten to a large extent. The quartet of Zeller's contributions discussed here demonstrates that his standpoint became more moderate as the time went by. This concerns especially his view on the most troubling issue of the 1860s neo-Kantianism, the thing-in-itself<sup>33</sup>. Lange, on the contrary, radicalized his early standpoint: in the second edition of his *History* he attempts to eliminate the very thing-in-itself (Beiser, 2014b, pp. 380–1).

Zeller's -77 addendum to his lecture of 1862 can be described as a shout of triumph: after his early insistence on returning to Kant and reorienting philosophy around epistemology the situation had changed remarkably (Zeller, 1877a, pp. 496–7). As concerns the PGB, the base of late idealism, Kant's position was so consolidated already ten years earlier that Bergmann barely mentioned Hegel in his programmatic article on the foundation of idealist philosophy. To what extent Bergmann eventually embraced Kantianism – the key question of Michelet's critique of Bergmann's later standpoint – must be answered, however, in another study<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> Cf. Zeller, 1877a, p. 517–8.

<sup>34</sup> Michelet, 1871, p. 1, 12, 14–5. Cf. Lehmann, 1931, pp. 219–20.

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